



## The End Of Faith — Salvation

In Chapter 1, of I Peter, the apostle describes a salvation which will be a realized possession at **The End Of Faith**. This is the main point of emphasis in the chapter. In fact, in a larger sense, salvation which results from an obedient faith is the theme of the entire New Testament. The Old Testament points to the New Testament and the spiritual blessings which are promised through faith; salvation being the greatest.

For convenience we are printing verses 1-12 of I Peter, Chapter 1. We shall make some references to the remainder of the chapter.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. 5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 **Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.** 10. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; 11. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

Without exception, the greatest blessing ever promised to man by God is that of salvation. As it pertains to the spiritual realm, salvation is of two different natures or types. Salvation which results from obedience to the first principles of the gospel, which includes baptism "for the remission of sins," has reference to the forgiveness of sins committed in the past. This is the type of salvation which is referred to in Mark 16:16. This salvation, which is received when the gospel commands are obeyed, may be maintained by "walk[ing] in the light, as he is in the light" (I Jno. 1:7). When one ceases to "walk in the light" (becomes unfaithful) that salvation will be lost.

The salvation which Peter describes as occurring at "the end of faith" has reference to the salvation of an eternal nature which will be realized only at the coming of Christ, or at "the end of faith." It must be realized that in order to have this salvation of which Peter speaks, one must first have salvation from sins of the past, and then maintain that salvation until the end of life, or be a possessor of salvation when the end of life comes.

What a great blessing it is to "be saved" from the sins of one's past, and then maintain that salvation until the end of life's journey. It is then that one is assured of that salvation which comes at the "end of faith," that which

is eternal in nature. What a cause for rejoicing! Yet, on the other hand, how sad it is when one's faith falters, and that promise of salvation at the end of faith is no longer in force.

The apostle Peter has some important things to say about **faith** and **salvation** in the above chapter, which if we take to heart will embolden our hopes for the future and encourage us to live a life based on true faith. We begin by considering:

### I. PETER'S MESSAGE IS BY GOD'S AUTHORITY

In the beginning, verse 1, we see, "*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ...*" Our Savior had promised the apostles, "*Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...*" (Jno. 16:13). Peter said, "*But the word of the Lord endureth for ever, And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you* (I Pet. 1:25).

How thankful we should be that we have God's infallible guidance in our hands, in the form of His written word. At the same time, how sad it is that billions in the heathen world don't have God's word. "Unless they hear they cannot live." What a precious opportunity we have to take the word to those who haven't heard, and what a serious responsibility we have to do so.

How tragic it is that in our own country, and other countries which have God's word, there are those who pervert God's truth. False promises of salvation are made from many sources. This is sadly true, even though God's word is possessed in its unadulterated form. It is hard to understand why men want to pervert God's truth, and thereby nullify God's provisions for salvation. Yet, there are many warnings in God's word that this very thing will happen. Perversion of Truth is increasing rapidly.

### II. THE APOSTLES' FAITH REESTABLISHED BY THE RESURRECTION

The apostles' faith, which had waned with the crucifixion of Christ, and the dashing of hopes for a literal kingdom, is now made alive by the resurrection of Christ. They had been "*begotten...again unto a lively hope*" (v. 3). This living hope is centered in an **inheritance** (v. 4). This inheritance is so different when compared with earthly inheritances, in which so many in error put their trust. The description of this inheritance, as given by Peter, should make it by far the most desirable of all. Let us note the descriptive words used by Peter:

**Incorruptible.** "Moth and rust" will not corrupt it, and thieves will not "break through and steal." It is so unlike earthly inheritances, which can only be kept for a season. This one will be eternal, not subject to destruction. How could anyone give it up?

**Undeified.** No sin will defile this inheritance. Of this heavenly state it is said: "*And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life*" (Rev. 21:27). There will be no contamination of this heavenly inheritance. What a joy that will be. We can never experience anything comparable to this while we dwell on earth

**Fadeth not away.** Age will not affect this inheritance. It will never grow old. Neither will it wear out. Sickness will not render it undesirable. The word "fade" is from a flower which does not fade away but continues to bloom and display beauty. All earthly inheritances will in time fail, and we know not how soon they will fade away. They will be worthless when we cross over the valley of death. Not so with the heavenly inheritance.

**Reserved in heaven.** Since it is reserved in heaven we cannot have it here. It is for the faithful child of God in the world that is to come. The idea that eternal life is a present possession is not upheld by God's word. It is only by promise here. Our Savior speaks of the blessings to be enjoyed in this life, "*and in the world to come eternal life*" (Mk. 10:30). Jesus has gone to prepare a place for His faithful servants and will come again and receive them (John 14:2-3). What a tragedy to fail to receive the heavenly inheritance reserved for us, due to our own faltering and failure of our faith.

### III. FAITHFUL KEPT (GUARDED) BY GOD THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION

The idea here is that of a military guard which offers protection from possible harm. The means by which the faithful are **kept** is through **faith**. Needless to say, that if one expects to be kept [guarded], faith becomes all important. This is where man's part in salvation is so vitally important. If faith fails, God's promise is no longer in effect. It is strange indeed that some people believe that once a person enjoys salvation from past sins, nothing can then happen to cause one to lose the salvation. There is so much said with regard to faith and the possibility of it growing weak or failing. The writer of Hebrews warns: "*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*" (3:12). Our Savior prayed that Peter's faith "*fail not,*" yet it did as we know (Lk. 22:32). Jude writes: "*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*" (vv. 20-21). This salvation of which Peter speaks will come only at the end of an unailing faith. No one who departs this life with a failing faith may expect to reap this greatest of rewards.

It is so sad that so many people of the world are entering into that "*wide gate*" which leads to "*destruction*" (Matt. 7:13). They will never know that salvation which will be awarded to the faithful at the coming of Christ. Sadder still is the fact that so many of our brethren are being led in directions of error in which their faith cannot be maintained. When people fail to "abide in the doctrine of Christ," God will not be with them (2 Jno. 9). Literally multitudes of members of the Lord's church are ignoring the distinctiveness of the New Testament church, as they engage in soul-destroying error, including fellowship with the man-made churches. In the face of this, so many express little concern. That salvation which comes at "*the end of your faith*" (v. 9) can never be theirs to enjoy in the state of eternity. Added to the above are those who turn back and "walk no more" with Christ.

#### **IV. REJOICE IN TIME OF TRIALS, YOUR REWARD OF SALVATION IS WORTH IT**

Our faith will be tried in different ways. Paul said, "...*all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*" (2 Tim. 3:12). But we can rejoice in the proof of our faith. This proof of faith is worth more than gold which will perish. Our faith, which must endure trials, should "*be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*" (vv. 6-7).

Though we have not known trials and persecutions as did the Christians in the first century, if we truly "stand fast in the faith" we shall face some trials. There seems to be an increasing number today who allow truth to suffer and error to prevail. The flimsy excuse may be given that, "I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings." When more consideration is given to the feelings of someone in error than is given to our Lord's will, something is seriously wrong! How can one who is unwilling to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3) and uphold God's truth, wear the name Christian? Those who "give place to the devil" need not expect eternal salvation.

#### **V. UNYIELDING FAITH IN CHRIST BRINGS ETERNAL SALVATION**

Those Christians of whom Peter writes had a remarkable faith. Peter says of them concerning Christ, "*Whom having not seen, ye love*" (v. 8). Though they did not see Christ, their faith was such that they were able to "*rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" This is the kind of faith which endures trial and afflictions. This is the kind of love which demonstrates itself in full and complete submission to the Lord and His will. This highest type of love is characterized by reverence, awe and respect for a loving Savior. This is a basis for joy unspeakable with glory. Jesus said to Thomas, who wanted to make sure of Christ's reality, "*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*" (Jno. 20:29). We have not seen Christ, except through the eyes of faith, yet we should demonstrate a faith like that above.

The **end** of such **faith** is the **salvation** of our souls (v. 9). When faith fails, however, so does the promise of the salvation of the soul. Yet, so many have drifted away from the shore of faith, ignoring the many warnings given.

As noted earlier, this is the salvation which comes at the **end** of faith. That is, it will become a reality only when our Lord returns at the day of judgment. Whereas the salvation received when the alien sinner obeys the gospel (Acts 2:38) applies to the guilt of sins of the past, the salvation at the **end of faith** will be eternal in nature and can never be lost. If we would but ponder the greatness of this reward, we would surely think seriously before doing anything to destroy our faith. As we sing, "Heaven is surely worth it all," so is the salvation which comes at the end of an unailing faith. We would do well to think of Paul's command to Timothy: "*Fight the good fight, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called...*" (I Tim. 6:12).

#### **VI. PROPHETS DESIRED KNOWLEDGE OF THE SALVATION AT THE END OF FAITH**

The prophets who spoke of the salvation which will come at the end of faith did not fully understand the messages they delivered. They "*searched diligently*" (v. 10) as to the sufferings of Christ, "*and the glory that should follow*" (v. 11). This testifies strongly as to the verbal inspiration of the Bible. That is, the prophets were not speaking their own words but those given by the Holy Spirit.

We, as Christians, are profiting by the things the prophets spoke, in that those things have been made known to us through the gospel (v. 12). How greatly we have been blessed in that the gospel, the all-sufficient word (2 Tim. 3:16-17), has been fully revealed to us. We stand to profit more in this "sunlight age" than did many of those before the gospel was given in its fullness and completeness.

If we are at all concerned about our spiritual well-being, how can we ignore that which has been revealed to us by the goodness of God? How can we go beyond or break God's law and sin? (I Jno. 3:4).

#### **VII. WARNINGS AND ADMONITIONS**

The main emphasis that we have noted in the above passage (vv. 1-12) is that **faith will bring salvation at the end** if it is not weakened or destroyed. Therefore, Peter issues warnings and admonitions which are designed to encourage us to "stand fast in the faith." He begins by saying: "*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (v. 13). This is

when that salvation at the end of faith will be realized. The Hebrew writer says hope is "*an anchor of the soul*" (Heb. 6:19). Earlier we noted that Peter said that they, the apostles, had been "begotten again to a lively hope" by the resurrection of Christ (v. 3). Peter is the apostle best known for encouraging **true hope**, which is based on a strong and enduring faith to the end.

To enjoy and be blessed by that "lively hope," we must be "*As obedient children,*" not fashioning ourselves according to "*former lusts*" which we may have had in our "ignorance" (v. 14). The apostle John warns us to "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world*" (I Jno. 1:15). He goes on to say that "*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (v. 16). It appears that today the love of the world is destroying the faith of as many people as any one thing. We simply cannot love the world and expect the blessing of salvation at the end of faith. "Obedient children" will not.

Rather than living worldly lives, Peter admonishes us to "*be ye holy in all manner of conversation* [living, ASV]" (v. 15). This is to follow the pattern of our Master who called us with the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). Peter calls our attention to a statement which is repeated a number of times in Leviticus, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." Just because it is the norm in a great segment of our society to revel in ungodly living, it gives the God-fearing person no right to engage in such. Moral standards in general have never been lower in our country. Though we are in the world we must not be of the world.

Calling on the Father is to be done with the realization that He judges without respect of persons, and according to man's work (v. 17). This judgment will be with complete fairness. The "fear" here mentioned is not fear in the sense of cowardice, but rather that of reverence, respect and awe. A fear of failure to please the Father in doing His will. Paul wrote the Philippians, "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" (2:12). It is difficult for me to understand why some people do the things they do, when they know they will face a day of judgment, and give an account of their actions. The Psalmist said, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*" (Ps. 111:10). People must often act as they do because they have no fear of the Lord in either sense in which the word is used. They do not have reverence and respect for Him, neither do they fear His wrath, which comes upon the children of disobedience. Evidently, many have been misled to believe that God is only a God of love, but not a God of wrath. He is a God of justice, and justice demands punishment for evil as well as reward for doing that which is right in God's sight.

If anything would motivate us to serve God, surely the fact that we as Christians have been redeemed "*with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot*" (vv. 18-19), would do so. No greater price for redemption could have been paid, than that which Christ paid, that of His precious blood. Silver and gold, the blood of animals, could never serve to ransom our souls from the guilt of sin. As we sing, "Jesus paid it all" as a sacrifice. There is no way that we can fully repay the great favor which has been done for us, but we can do our utmost to try by faithfully serving our Master.

Thanks be to God for the truth by which our souls have been purified. If we allow that truth to prevail in our lives we will have "unfeigned love of the brethren." Our new birth has been by the incorruptible "word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (vv. 22-23). By His word we know how we are to live and serve Him acceptably.

### **SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

In view of all that God and His Son have done for us, how can we fail to serve them in sincerity and truth? The greatest blessing that man can ever know, the salvation which comes at the end of faith, is available only to those who desire it and follow God's plans or conditions. It is difficult for me to understand why Christians turn back. Neither can I understand why elders, preachers, and other members of the body of Christ are leading people away from the faith which is necessary for salvation here in this life and that of an eternal nature, which will become a reality with the return of Christ. The uniqueness of the Lord's church is being denied more and more as church members uphold man-made churches and other errors which will destroy the soul. It is my prayer that we will remember that the eternal salvation of our souls will only come at the end of a true faith, as Peter pointed out clearly.

- - - Walter W. Pigg

## **"Our Holy Hug Line"**

Over the years people have come up with a variety of gimmicks, some of which have been employed by some of our brethren, for the supposed purpose of contributing to spiritual growth or strength. I've given some thought as to why brethren appeal to such things, when there is no Bible reason for doing so. More and more it is my belief that there is a lack of faith in the Gospel to accomplish its God-given purpose. I firmly believe this is why so

many brethren are compromising God's word. They don't believe in the power of the gospel, and they think they can improve upon it.

Several years ago a practice, which I believe was termed Sensitivity Training, caught on with a great many people. Some of our brethren tried it. This practice involved people sitting on the floor in a circle, feeling each other while the lights were dim. I remember a practice advocated by some Sweet Literature several years ago. Someone was to write a note on a piece of paper and slip it under the door of a classroom. The teacher was to tell the students this message was from the Holy Spirit. Another practice advocated was that of a discussion by students, in which various subjects were discussed, including sexual matters. No one in the class was to disagree with or question the idea advanced by any student, regardless of how erroneous it might be. In some instances members in a congregation have been told to tell those near them, "I love you," when they were total strangers. Now, in some places people are waving their arms, clapping their hands, and carrying on in odd ways. I have never known of such things as the above contributing to the spirituality of any congregation. I do know, however, that where such things are done, generally there is evidence of spiritual weakness in various areas.

The "**Holy Hug Line**" is one of the latest gimmicks that I've heard about. The description of this gimmick is revealed in an article by Cecil May III, in the bulletin, Parkway Passages, of Parkway Church of Christ, Fulton, KY, dated Sept. 17, 2000.

Dear Church,

Thank you for being so willing to participate and so cooperative with our new Wednesday evening format and schedule. I thought that the first week we would have people wandering all over the building trying to figure out what to do and where to go during our prayer groups time. Instead, everything went smoothly. I needn't have been so nervous about it.

Our Holy Hug Line was a big hit with most of us. It is a novelty right now. A lot of us are not sure how serious to take it. It makes some of us uncomfortable. The result is that while we are enjoying it, it is also a curious conversation piece and the butt of not a few jokes. That's okay. The time will come when the novelty is gone, but people are still encouraged by and appreciative of the warm greeting they receive as they meet with their family on Wednesday night. Our demonstration of affection will be natural rather than forced. Our love will grow and our unity will be tighter.

It is uncomfortable to walk through the Holy Hug Line if one is cliquish, if one has a grudge against a brother or a sister who is included in the line, or if there is a lack of natural affection for our spiritual family. If you are uncomfortable with the Holy Hug Line for any of those reasons, then you are getting the point (and you need to) on I Corinthians 16:20 and Romans 16:16.

Some people may be uncomfortable for other reasons - like just being squeamish about being touched. That's why we make the line optional. But my hope is that by the time thirteen weeks are up, this church has smaller cliques, fewer grudges, more affection and less squeamishness. See you tonight with open arms.

Cecil May III.

Brethren, in all seriousness, what can we expect next? No longer am I surprised at virtually anything I hear about! It's a pity that Paul didn't know about the **Holy Hug Line**. Had he, perhaps he would have had more success in some of the difficult places. Had I been at Parkway, not only would I have been uncomfortable with such goings on, I wouldn't have been a part of such. Not because of some of the reasons Cecil May III gives, but because of what the New Testament teaches. That's my guide. *Editor*

## **Gospel Preachers Versus Professional Gospel Negotiators**

*Alan Adams, Assistant Editor*

A new generation of brethren, particularly preachers, has arisen. They view themselves as a "wiser" even "kinder and gentler" breed than the crude and crusty preachers of yesterday. In fairly recent times, a smug graduate of one of "our schools" asserted, "The church of Gus Nichols and Foy Wallace is not the church of my generation." They disdain distinctions such as: One is either in the church or he is not; one is either in the world or in the kingdom, one is either a Christian or he is not. They prefer more general descriptions such as "churched and



unchurched, believers and unbelievers." In their vocabulary, the appellation, "believer," is applied not only to one who has indeed "obey[ed] ... the gospel" (2 Thess. 1:8), but also to people who have embraced man-made churches, that is, denominations.

They consider themselves to be of a higher, more professional order. Right there alongside the denominational clergy, the new "professionals" have "hung up their shingles": M. Div., Th.D., Ph.D., Doctor, Professor, Family Minister, Youth Minister, Minister of Involvement, Minister of Body Motion, Singles Minister, Minister of Counseling, etc. Seemingly, they are not convinced that "*All scripture...[is able to make]...the man of God...complete , furnished completely unto every good work*" (2 Tim. 3:16-17; ASV). To them, a "furnished finished" professional needs a few things that the Good Book just doesn't offer. Reference here is not to a person who is trying to learn more; rather, the practice of some in the church, based on the receipt of a formal degree of learning from some school (even denominational schools at that), thereby setting themselves up and apart as "professionals" in moral spiritual matters; that is, matters that "pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).

Instead of viewing the denominations as enemy territory, as the spawn of "*the man of sin*" (2 Thess. 2:3), this new group of professional preachers has thrown away "*the sword of the Spirit. which is the word of God*" (Eph. 6:13). Rather than "*war a good warfare*" (1 Tim. 1:18), they desire to be "negotiators." These new day "gospel negotiators or diplomats" are like Ahab who "*let go out of [his] hand a man whom [God had] appointed to utter destruction*" (1 Ki 20:42). They, like Ahab toward Benhadad, want to find some way to say to the denominationalist, "he is my brother" (1 Ki 20:32). They have discarded the clear terminology of the Bible: "fight, contend, preach, reprove, exhort, prove, convert, no fellowship." Ironically, they will speak derisively of preachers who have memorized and quote profusely from "*the oracles of God*" (1 Pet. 4:11), yet, they themselves, have seemingly memorized huge portions of the Gospel Negotiator's Manual On Non-Offensive Language. They speak of "reaching out to, embracing, finding common ground with our religious neighbors, and the churched and unchurched." Instead of mercifully passing on to the enemy God's demand of unconditional surrender, "*come out from them, and be ye separate...touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you*" (2 Cor. 6:17); these negotiators openly, freely, happily associate with denominational people, leaders, writers, thinkers, and speakers. What's the result? Denominational people, right here in our own area have been heard to remark, "The Church [in the capital 'C' sense, AA) of Christ has really changed." I know of denominational people who have, due to efforts of the "gospel negotiators" within the church, been embolden to remain within and feel good about their man-made churches.

As a history buff, I have come to despise historical revisionists; people, who after-the-fact believe they know all and know better than those who actually lived through the past. With a pasty, smug, self-righteous smile on their faces they presume to rewrite history. The fiasco of the Smithsonian Institution is a case in point. President Truman, having been advised by those who knew the nature and mentality of the Japanese Army, decided that the most humane way to end the war and save both Japanese as well as American lives was to use the A-bomb. Result? The unconditional surrender of Japan, the safe return home of perhaps a million allied soldiers who likely would have been killed or wounded, and, fifty years of peace and prosperity the likes of which the nation of Japan had never known. How dare some sweet-smelling-know-it-all come along fifty years later and suggest that we could have had the same or better results through patience and negotiation?

And, doubly, how dare these new "professional gospel negotiators," toss aside "Yahew-saba," The Lord of Hosts,' Manual On The Art Of War – The Bible, and presume to have come up with a better, a "kinder and gentler" way! Do you think it is by accident that the Holy Spirit recorded the battles and wars of Israel? Was it for no good reason that we're told of God's anger with Saul and, later, with Ahab for their failure to "fight to the finish" (see 1 Sam. 15; 1 Kings 20)?

I have mentioned before, during the Vietnam War, the hot anger I felt when I saw a photo of Jane Fonda sitting astride a piece of enemy artillery. There she was over in Hanoi playing with, performing for, and giving aid and comfort to the enemy. I am no less angry when I see the "gospel negotiators" of today "singing with, playing with, preaching with, and marching with" the enemy. "Oh, but," they say, "our *intent* is not to have fellowship with the enemy, but rather to teach them, to convert them." I know little of people's motives or intents; for all I know, Jane Fonda's *intent* was "good." I do, however, know what the results are: In her case, the prolonging of the war as the enemy was emboldened by seeing that America's military did not have the backing of its people, and, in the case of the church, denominational people are encouraged to stay in their false religions by actions of the "gospel negotiators." You remember those emissaries who went to represent Benhadad before Ahab? Ahab surprised them by saying, "*he is my brother*" (1 Ki. 20:32). The men then said, "*Thy brother Benhadad*" (v. 33). I have no doubt that when the denominations see our "gospel negotiators" willing and eager to play with, perform for, and crusade with them, they likewise say to themselves, "Well, we are their brethren after all."

The Bible still says, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mk. 16:15), *not* "Send your professionals into all the world and negotiate with every creature." God save and protect us from the Professional Gospel Negotiators.

104 South Willow St.  
Cowan, TN 37318

## Election Reflections

A large portion of the Sept. 2000, issue of *Banner of Truth* was devoted to the subject of Christians and Politics. The main emphasis of the discussion was that Christians should use their power and privilege of voting to help elect the officials who stand for the highest moral standards, and not to allow their political party loyalty to be stronger than their loyalty to the Lord and His will. While there are no perfect politicians, it is a clear matter of fact that some politicians are better than others; some stand for higher moral standards than others.

In the past presidential election a number of moral issues were involved. One party generally stood for such things as: Murder by abortion, sexual perversion, unwed motherhood, the supporting of those who are too lazy to work, and opposition to Godly influence in society. The other party generally, as a matter of fact, opposed the above things.

Actually, as I give more thought to the past election, the more apparent to me it is that it was to such a great degree a matter of choosing between moral standards. Any honest person, with any knowledge at all, could see the great differences between the two major political parties, with respect to moral standards or the lack of the same. It has been a bitter disappointment to me that some of my own brethren turned their backs upon our loving Savior who died for them, by voting for the party which upholds immorality in many ways.

It has been a great encouragement that the top leaders of our country have been changed. The new leaders will not be promoting and upholding the ungodly things which so characterized the leaders before them. Though our society will be impeded somewhat in its drift away from God-given moral standards, most serious problems are still faced. When 50 million people voted to uphold murder by abortion, sexual perversion, opposition to Godly influence, unwed motherhood, to name just a few things, we still have a problem of great dimensions, which if it continues and worsens could destroy our country. In the absence of "*Righteousness*" which "*exalteth a nation*" (Prov. 14:34) and in the presence of a nation "*that forget[s] God*" (Ps. 9:17), only evil can come if there is no repentance.

As a society we have reached a very low point when politicians actually solicit support from citizens on the basis that they stand for a number of ungodly things and oppose things which are morally upright. The true picture can be better seen when it is a matter of fact that at least half of the voting citizens cast their lot for ungodliness, and many millions more displayed their complete indifference by failure to participate in the choosing of leaders for our country.

Those who are so bent on upholding immorality are not about to give up. Various political threats have been made since the presidential election was finalized. One of the greatest examples of the determined stand of those who approve immorality was seen in the selection of the Attorney General, former Senator, Ashcroft. A number of his enemies opposed him on the basis of his deep religious convictions. Yet, a number of his opponents declared that opposition to him had nothing to do with his religious convictions. We've come to the point when outright lying is the norm of many.

The moral standards of a society do have something to do with those who choose to live a Christian life. The more ungodly a society is the more difficult it is for the Christian. But if Christians in the first century could live a faithful life in that society, so can we do the same in our time. As Christians we can exert some influence in society. We can help to change things by supporting those leaders and officials to have the highest regard for the God-given moral standards by which all of us will be judged. The New Testament gives many warnings of evil times to come. We are seeing them in our day as predicted.

- - *Walter W. Pigg*

## Looking Back Over 2000

In some cases it is not good to "look back," but in some instances it may be helpful. It is good to seek ways to improve by reviewing the past and by helping to avoid mistakes made in the past. In this case we are reviewing our work and calling attention to happenings within the church.

**Banner of Truth.** We have been very pleased with the way B.O.T. has been received. Our circulation has grown to near 6,000, with readers from several foreign places. Many readers speak of the encouragement the paper has been to them. Negative responses have been very, very few. Brethren, both individuals and congregations, have supplied the financial needs for the paper in a great way. A number of brethren from both the Hickory Grove and Dexter congregations have given many hours of labor in getting *Banner of Truth* ready to mail. As to the content of the paper, a friend called me recently and asked if I had considered making the paper more positive. I give a great deal of thought to the content, and in calling attention to error I try to also set forth the truth on the same subject. I sincerely wish that it was not needful to warn people of the many things which are happening within the church which are in opposition to God's will, but I believe that overlooking reality would not help the cause of Christ. As one reader suggested, "I don't like to hear about those things, but we need to be warned." In my almost fifty years of preaching I have seen so many things happen that I would not have believe earlier on. I'm deeply concerned and trust that my efforts will encourage some to "stand fast in the faith." This involves upholding God's truth and opposing that which is error.

**Changes In The Church.** I noted a statement by someone a few days ago, in which the person said he thought the worst was past in the church. I hear from people all across our country and in some foreign countries, and I cannot see signs of improvement, though I sincerely wish I could. The proliferation of unauthorized innovations continues to increase. One example is the "Holy Hug Line" referred to in another place in this issue of BOT. In the area of worship changes are continuing. Things are happening in worship now that would have been for the most part unheard of forty years ago, and most of them much less than that. "Praise Teams" are in now. Various singing groups, even solos, are being accepted. Hand-clapping, arm-waving and the swaying of bodies is occurring in congregations, in what should be worship periods. Drama Teams "perform" as do the singing groups. It appears that that which is the most entertaining is the most desired in some circles. Women are now participating in roles which are unauthorized by the New Testament.

In the area of the work of the church, you just name it, and there is a pretty good chance that it can be found somewhere. God-ordained work: Evangelism, Edification, and Benevolence, is being ignored on a wide basis.

Our Schools, which at one time were very beneficial, are for the most part now spreading error in a number of areas. We are hearing more often of cases where denominational people are brought in to instruct our young people.

**Denominational Fellowship.** This, along with all the implications, is perhaps the one most serious problems facing the church today. The year 2000 marks the largest increase in denominational fellowship that I've seen. We've been hearing of this in the past but nothing like the extent to which it has occurred in the past year.

**Shelly and Woodmont Hills.** Rubel Shelly has been fellowshiping denominations for many years, but last year marked another stage in his apostasy. Billy Graham has been recognized as a false teacher for as long as I can remember, and few members of the church would have considered him otherwise. Last year the Woodmont Hills group, including Rubel Shelly and the elders, actually helped to carry out the Billy Graham Campaign in June. The Woodmont elders actually helped to get Graham to come for his Crusade. Hundreds of the Woodmont members took part in the Billy Graham work of error. This was not all, however, some five or six other congregations in the Nashville area participated in the denominational activity. This was simply a repudiation of the Lord's church, and the acceptance of man-made religion. What a shame!

Who would have thought of Nashville, Tennessee as the place where brethren would take the lead in denominational fellowship? For many years Nashville was known as a place where the Lord's church was of great, if not the greatest, strength of any place in our country. This is a sad example of how brethren can depart from the faith. But Nashville is not the only place where this tragedy is occurring. It is happening to some degree virtually all across our country.

**Murray, Kentucky and Denominational Fellowship.** I've personally seen the changes which have take place in this area, having lived here some fourteen or more years, and having some information when not living here. Just over thirty years ago, when I first moved to this area, just about all the dozen or more congregations were considered as being sound. Last year marked the biggest step in denominational fellowship of any year that I know. In fact, I had never known of any of our brethren engaging in fellowship with the Catholic Church. But last year changed that. The Glendale Road congregation, the largest one in the state, participated in the "*Jubilee 2000 Revival*" at the Catholic Church. John Dale was the speaker for one night of the *Revival*. On that night the Glendale elders and a great many Glendale members participated in the activities. Brother Richard Guill and I were present and observed the activities from the time the Catholic priest opened the service until he closed it.

John Dale offered no criticism of the Catholic Church in his sermon. He appeared to be enjoying the fellowship in a great way. How a preacher and elders could engage in such fellowship is beyond me. As sad as this event was, there's something that troubles me even more. That is the indifference which has been shown relative to



this departure from the faith. To my knowledge, very little has been said about this sad event. Some who have mentioned it have remarked that John Dale missed a great opportunity. Has God's law on fellowship just been cast aside? With many it seems so.

It is my prayer that faithful brethren will show more concern this year about God's will being violated than was shown last year. Brethren, it is much later than many of us think! - - *Walter W. Pigg*

## **Policies for the Chapman Church of Christ As authorized by the elders, Barrett Chapman and Jarvene Shackelford**

**Editor's Note:** The following material is a portion of the Policies for the Chapman church as set forth by the elders. We have included the portion which we believe is most important, from the standpoint of contributing to the spiritual well-being of congregations generally speaking. This is from *The Chapman Challenger*, February 21, 2001.

As elders of the Chapman church of Christ, we understand the scriptures to teach that there is "one lawgiver," namely, Jesus Christ (James 4:12). We are not in the business of making laws where Jesus has not authorized. However, we also understand that as overseers of the Chapman church of Christ, we have the obligation to see that things done by the church are done in harmony with the laws of the Lawgiver (Acts 20:28). All things must be "done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). Thus, in matters of expediency we elders must, under obligation of the "chief Shepherd" (I Pet. 5:4), "take the oversight" (I Pet. 5:2) and rule well" (I Tim. 5:17) by seeing that the church protects her influence.

We, the elders, believe the following are in the best interest of the church at Chapman.

**SERVICE AND ATTENDANCE.** We, the elders, have decided that any member of the Chapman church who forsakes any and all the assemblings of the saints will be removed from all worship assignments and teaching positions. When such a person repents, and once again proves his love for the Lord, they may be used once again.

**DRESS CODE.** We, the elders, have decided that we would like for all members of the Chapman church to dress appropriately for worship. We ask that all women, when they attend Bible study or worship of the Chapman church, wear dresses, skirts and such like, and please do not wear slacks or pantsuits, and such like. We ask that all men who participate in worship assignments at the front of the auditorium or ushering at the back, do not wear T-shirts. We would like for the men to wear a collard shirt, and would prefer that you wear a tie, but the tie is optional. Absolutely no shorts should be worn to Bible study and worship by children, teenagers, or adults. This exclusion does not include infant children. We, the elders, ask that no one wear clothing with excessive or showing advertisement, especially of a derogatory nature. We ask that all dress modestly and appropriately for worship.

**NURSERY AND CRADLE ROLL ROOMS.** We, the elders, ask that these rooms be used only by mothers and their infants. We ask the congregation not to use these rooms during Bible class or worship hours. We want these rooms to be used for what they were designed, and that is babies' needs. If you need to leave the auditorium during Bible class or worship, please use the rest rooms, the office, or a classroom.

**YOUNG PEOPLE.** We, the elders, have become concerned that some of our young people may not be worshipping God as they ought. Therefore, we are asking our Christian parents to have your young people sit where you can see them in the worship assemblies. We would like for the young people to sit toward the front, if they choose; or else sit with or in front of their parents. We love our young people and want what is best for them.

Signed: The Elders

Over the years I've noted a growing lack of respect with regard to worship services. This is evidenced in a number of ways. One of those ways is the manner of dress often seen. By this I certainly don't mean that a man has to wear a suit and a tie at every service, or that women wear the finest of garments. I do believe, however, that the way we dress has some relation to the occasion. There is no excuse for dressing in a sloppy, or otherwise immodest way. The worship hour should be one of the most important appointments we have during the week. We should not act in a disorderly manner by talking, moving about unnecessarily, paying no attention to the activities of the

worship. The worship period is in no sense of the term a period of entertainment, though some seem inclined that way.

- - Editor

## ***BANNER OF TRUTH LECTURES***

**Murray, Kentucky June 4 - 7, 2001**

**Sponsored by: Dexter and Hickory Grove**

**Theme: Christ and His Church in the 21st Century**

**Schedule: 11:00 a. m. - 9:00 p. m.**

**Monday June 4th - 1:30 p. m. - 9:00 p. m.**

At this time we have a great many speakers confirmed, and several subjects assigned. Our goal is to have both speakers and subjects finalized by the time for the next issue of *Banner of Truth*.

The following speakers are confirmed:

Gary McDade  
Virgil Hale  
Gilbert Gough  
Alan Adams  
Richard Guill  
David Lemmons  
Garland Robinson  
Freddie Clayton  
Ken Bureson  
Jim Boyd  
Walter Pigg

A number of the above speakers will be speaking twice, usually on the same day. We believe this will be as effective as choosing a much larger group of speakers. It will also lessen the expenses of the lectures.

We believe each speaker to be sound in the faith, and an upholder of the truth. There are many, many others who also meet this qualification. We cannot invite all the speakers we would like to participate.

Following are some of the subjects which will be addressed:

The Glorious Church  
The Community Church  
Worship In Spirit And In Truth  
The Holy Spirit - How He Operates Today  
God's Law On Fellowship  
The Moral Obligation To Obey The "Laws Of Thought"  
Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage  
The Danger and Destructiveness of Subjectivism.  
The Work Of The Church  
Changes In The Lord's Church  
Militancy Of God's People  
The Sin Of Sexual Perversion  
The Dangers of Denominationalism  
The Crisis Of Qualified Leadership  
The Schools: Source Of Digression And Apostasy  
Abortion - Legal Murder

Other subjects are yet to be assigned. We believe these to be timely subjects which need to be addressed.

If further information is desired you may call me at (270) 753-3675, or e-mail me at: <wpiggbot@apex.net> - - Walter W. Pigg

## Shall Sinners "Convert," or "Be Converted"?

Alan Adams, Assistant Editor

What does the term "conversion" mean? Do human beings have any part in "conversion"? Is "conversion" something God does to you? Is it a unique experience that we may later testify or give witness to? Is it possible to pinpoint precisely at what point one converts, or is converted? Is there a particular way or process by which **all** people convert, or are converted? We mean, biblically speaking, are all people "converted" the same way? Is "conversion" such a uniquely personal experience—like romantic love—that it simply defies explanation? One may safely say that were we to gather together all the preachers that could be heard on WZYX this week, and put these questions to them, there would **not** be anywhere near a unanimous response. Which is a shame, because nothing can be clearer than that the Bible teaches the necessity of conversion.

Jesus flat out said, "*Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Mt. 18:3). The affirmation is unambiguous: Without "conversion" **shall not enter** into the kingdom of heaven.

It would be good to think about the *what*, the *who*, the *when*, *where*, and *how* of "conversion." Like so many ideas, we have no great problem understanding the idea of "conversion" in everyday parlance. In common usage, "convert" means to change, or to become changed. "Conversion" refers to the process of changing or turning from one state to another. We often speak of converting one form of currency into another; converting our talents into money; or converting iron into steel.

It's really no different in the Scriptures. There the idea is that of turning or changing from one *state* to another. It is the idea of a moral and spiritual change. Specifically, it is the *process* of turning to God, by which and the result of which, one becomes saved, or a Christian. Doubtless, for many people whose whole idea of salvation and Christianity is that of spontaneous experience, this notion of *process* is tantamount to heresy. But, an examination of what the Bible says on the subject will bear out the point.

Paul reminded Christians in Thessalonica "*how they had turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God*" (I Thess. 1:9). And Luke says that "*all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon...turned to the Lord*" (Ac. 9:35). Paul and Barnabas, we are told, went together "*through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles*" (Ac. 15:3).

It's good here to examine the Greek word that is back of our English word "convert" or "conversion." That word is *strephe*. It's used eighteen times in the New Testament. In seventeen of those times, it's translated with the word "turn," and in Matthew 18:3, it is one time translated in the passive voice, "except ye be converted." Perhaps this is why some people think of conversion as something that is done to a person by another. Whereas it is true that God, through His word, motivates, gives us reason and direction as to how we are to "turn," the fact of the matter is, in the New Testament, "convert" **always** denotes an act done by an individual to or for himself. In other words, the sinner is active, rather than passive, in his conversion. The American Standard Version makes this clear when it translates in Matthew 18:3, "Except ye turn...ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Scripture is clear in distinguishing between man's "turning" or "converting," and God's "healing," blotting out of sins," "*having* mercy," or "*pardoning*." It's a classic case of the cart and the horse: God pardons the sinner when he first turns from evil to God. Peter tells an audience in Acts 3:19, "*Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.*" The mechanics of this is found in Peter's words in Acts 2:38: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Verse 41 says they "that received his word were baptized." Thus they "turned," and God "remitted" their sins. This is conversion.

104 S. Willow St., Cowan, TN 37318

I heard a radio announcer say that his wife "Didn't know when she was converted." My question, "How did she know she was converted?" - - *Editor*

# FELLOWHELPERS

November & December 2000

Steve & Sandra Daugherty	150.00
Lou Nell Elkins	50.00
Virgil Poe	25.00
Anonymous	50.00
Anonymous (cash)	10.00
Geneva Lancaster	25.00
Douglas and Vada Bean	75.00
Elizabeth Sublett	20.00
Royce E. Adams	140.00
Jimmie M. Bell	10.00
M/M John H. Brown	50.00
Mrs. Walter M. Veal	25.00
Elmer and June Scott	100.00
Jimmie L. Clark	8.00
Vernon and Bernice Key	200.00
Virginia F. McCoy	20.00
Janis Burkham Dukes	25.00
Murray Cook	50.00
Anonymous	50.00
Anonymous	10.00
Pine Ridge church of Christ	100.00
Green Plain church of Christ	50.00
Alhambra church of Christ	50.00
Oak Ridge church of Christ	100.00
Maple Hill church of Christ	200.00
Anonymous	20.00
Denny Durigan	100.00
R. D. Lawson	20.00
Grace Davis	<u>30.00</u>
Total Nov. and Dec. contribution	1,763.00

## *"That we might be fellowhelpers to the truth" (3rd John 8)*

We are so thankful for our brethren who have made our work with *Banner of Truth* possible. We know we can depend upon you to supply encouragement and the necessary financial needs. We have had a considerable increase in mailing costs this year, but this will in no way hinder our work. The printed page is still one of the best means of communication - - *Editor*

### ***Banner of Truth Financial Report***

November and December 2000

Balance on hand Nov. 1. 2000	13,136.66
Nov. and Dec. Contributions	<u>1,763.00</u>
Total funds available	14,899.66
Nov. and Dec. expenses:	
Mailing Banner of Truth	1,100.61
Address labels	49.42
Paper, envelopes, stamps, tape	81.78
Internet, 6 months	90.00
Computer repair	138.00
Phone calls	<u>12.84</u>
Total expenses for Nov. & Dec.	1,472.65
Total funds available	14,899.66

Less Nov. & Dec. expense 1,472.65  
Balance on hand Dec. 31, 2000 13,427.01

**POSTAGE INCREASE.** This New Year has brought a hefty postage increase for the mailing of B.O.T. The cost for mailing bundles of one pound or less to foreign countries has increased almost 50%, from 1.87 to 2.80. The increase on bundles in the U.S. is about 6.3%. The bar-coded mailing, the individual pieces, has increased but I don't know the percentage.

#### **FREE OFFSET PRESS**

I have an A.B. Dick Offset Press, No. 326. I used it for printing *Banner of Truth* for several years. It would still do good work if someone wanted to run a thousand or couple of thousand sheets each month. With the volume that I now run, about 46,000 sides each month, I needed a more up-to-date press. The press is **FREE** to any faithful brother who could use it. - - *Editor.*

#### **WELCOME NEW READERS !**

Every month we add a number of new readers to our mailing list. We welcome them and we like to hear from them. -*Editor*

#### **JOHN DALE NAMED TO FHU BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

At their February meeting, the Freed-Hardeman University Board of Trustees appointed a new member, John Dale of Murray, Ky. Dale was named Mr. Freed-Hardeman in 1966, the same year he graduated. He is also a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University, where he was named Most Outstanding Senior Ministerial Student in 1968. In addition, he earned a Master of Science degree at Murray State University in 1970 and has done graduate work at Vanderbilt University and Louisiana Baptist University. Dale, who was honored as Citizen of the Year by the Murray Chamber of Commerce in 1999, has served as pulpit minister for the Glendale Road Church of Christ in Murray for 27 years. . . .

In addition to the above information, there is also other information which has been related to John Dale's work "as pulpit minister for the Glendale Road Church of Christ." We shall note some of it.

In the *Glendale News & Notes*, Oct. 21, 1998, John unjustly harshly criticized the Lord's church, and did not back up his criticism with valid evidence.

In a mail-out from David Lipscomb, June 1998, John said: "The slate of speakers for Lipscomb's June Lectures is impressive. I would plan to attend just to hear LaGard Smith, but notice the bonus blessings. Join me for this outstanding program." LaGard Smith believes and hopes God may save people without baptism. He doesn't believe in eternal punishment, as set forth in the New Testament. The "bonus blessings" included rank false teachers.

In recent years Glendale Road dismissed their evening services to support a meeting with Randy Harris at the liberal University congregation.

On Sept. 26, 2000, John Dale, the Glendale elders, and Glendale members engaged in fellowship with the Catholic Church here in Murray, in their *Jubilee 2000 Revival*. John presented a lesson in that *Revival*, in which he took no issue with the Catholics. He had the audacity to say that he believed the activities of himself and Glendale pleased the Lord. John said that the desire of himself and the elders was to oppose error and wrong wherever it is found. If that is the case they must not consider fellowshipping the Catholic Church "error and wrong." Do they actually believe that?

The naming of John Dale to the Board of Trustees tells us a great deal about FHU's concern about truth and the course they have chosen. How can those brethren who claim to love God's truth support FHU, and not rise up in rebuke? A preacher told me a few years back that he was going to stay with Freed-Hardeman regardless of what happens. It is this very way of thinking that has brought Freed-Hardeman to its present state. FHU has been known for its increased support of error in the past several years, but the choosing of a Trustee who fellowships the Catholic Church, seems to be another stage of departure from "the old paths." A sad day indeed!

Brethren who still love the truth should let their voices of concern be heard loudly! Brethren who are the biggest financial supporters of FHU could change the whole picture virtually overnight, if only they would. Let us pray that something will happen to bring Freed-Hardeman back to the state in which it once existed, when a sincere concern for the truth prevailed. Do brethren no longer care? I wonder.

- - *Walter W. Pigg*



## READERS' RESPONSE

"Thank you for sending Banner of Truth to me each month. I thoroughly enjoy all the articles and share the copies with a number of people. I'm enclosing a small donation to help with the postage - **James Willett.**" - **Sask., Canada.** (*We've received a number of requests from Canada, and we are happy to add to our mailing list. Thank for the help with postage.* - Editor).

"Thank you so much for sending your monthly publication. We really appreciate those who are sticking with sound and scriptural doctrine. This quality is rare to find these days. Thanks again - **Kelly Woods.**" - **AR.** (*I believe this is from the Deer church of Christ. We appreciate your generous contribution to help with BOT.* - Ed.).

"Enclosed is a check for Banner of Truth. I hope it will be helpful...The brethren at Beckwith really appreciate B. O. T. .. Please know you're in our thoughts and prayers - **Michael Willey.**" **TN.** (*Thanks much for the check and concern. I think I'm over the pneumonia* - Editor).

"I e-mailed once to receive Banner of Truth. I have received only the Nov. 2000 since then. I am very interested in your articles. I have been raised in the church all my life and was exposed to the BOT through family members. It is EXCELLENT and I would love to receive it - **Cynthia Gulley.**" - **AL.** (*I have been delayed due to sickness. You should soon be receiving the paper again.* - Editor).

"I found the listing for Banner of Truth on Garland's home page. Would you add my name to your mailing list. Thank you - **J. C. Wilder.**" - **KY.**

"I want to thank you for Banner of Truth, The Christian and Politics. . . This idea that 'all politicians are alike' is nothing more than a cop out. Beyond a doubt in my mind this article and Alan Adams, Bob Henson, has helped George Bush in the election. We also received the Oct. Banner of Truth. Thanks again for the good article - **Raymond Thomas.**" - **IN.** (*It is hard to understand how a Christian can fail to support the man who has the highest moral standards. Some politicians are better than others. Who can honestly deny?* Editor).

"May I please have Banner of Truth sent to me? Thank you for your strong stand for the truth - **Marvin Sanders.**" - **AR.** (*Your name added.* Ed.).

"We got a copy of 'Banner of Truth' from the Oil Trough church of Christ. We really enjoyed it and found it so informative, and inspiring. We would appreciate so much being put on your mailing list and have the 'Banner' on a regular basis. God bless you in this work **Mel & Norma Snook.**" - **AR.** (*I preached several times at Oil Trough years ago. We have added your name to mailing list* - Editor).

"Please accept the enclosed contribution for your Banner of Truth publication. We enjoy reading it very much - **Walter M. Veal.**" - **TN.** (*Thanks.* Ed.).

**Editor's e-mail:** [wpiggbot@apex.net](mailto:wpiggbot@apex.net)

View BOT on bro. David Lemmons' web at:

<http://www.hcis.net/users/dlemmons/BOTlist.htm>

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