

# The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

*May/June 2001*

## Christian Relationships

### In the Beginning

*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.—James 1:22*

Christianity is not a religion that is best developed in the monastery of a solitary life. It is forged and molded in countless associations with others. Jesus walked the main thoroughfares of ancient Judea. He rubbed shoulders with thousands. Crowds thronged around him. His social life ranged from meals at the homes of the Pharisees to mingling with the publicans and sinners.

The apostles, in turn, mingled with the common man in their tireless propagation of the good news, the "gospel" of redemption. The apostle Paul, for example, frequented the synagogues on the Sabbath and the "agora" or marketplace the other days of the week. And so it is with the followers of Christ today—they come from all walks of life and they daily mingle with others from all walks of life.

In this issue of The Herald we look at some of these relationships which Christians of the 21st century face and how the principles of Christ guide them in the various stages of life. Articles herein will treat such subjects as:

1. What the Bible requires of those who would claim the name of their Master by assuming the title of "Christian."
2. The relationship with a spouse, whether a believer or non-believer.
3. The conflicts a Christian faces in a secular world as a citizen in a foreign land, and as a good neighbor to all those about him.

4. The challenges for youth in an increasingly liberal and rebellious society.
5. The need to follow a high ethical code of conduct in the workplace, whether as an employer, supervisor or employee.
6. Maturing gracefully while patiently preparing for graduation from this life to a better one to come.

The concluding article of this issue is our monthly verse by verse investigation of another chapter of God's holy Word—this time the second chapter of the first epistle of Peter. It contains the apostle's admonitions to complete submission not only to God, but to all the factors involved with living in a sometimes hostile environment.

We put forth this issue with the desire that it will be a stimulus to each of us to apply ourselves more diligently to live the Christian life, always following in the footsteps of our Redeemer.

## Christian Requirements

# What is a Christian? What are His Standards?

*The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.—Acts 11:26*

Carl Hagensick

Followers of Jesus were called by many names. Dr. R. A. Torrey in his *New Topical Textbook* lists scores of titles for those who sought to walk in the footsteps of their Master, names such as Believers, Children of the Day, Children of Light, and Heirs of God. But no name has been more enduring than that of "Christian."

While Acts 11:26 is definite in stating that this name originated in Antioch, we are not told who it was that first used this name. Some have suggested it was given as a name of derision by their enemies, others that it was a title they assumed themselves. One of the ancient manuscripts, the *Codex Bezae*, suggests that the apostle Paul originated the name and renders verses 25 and 26 as, "Hearing that Saul was at Tarsus, he departed, seeking for him; and having found him, he besought him to come to Antioch; who, when they were come, assembled with the church a whole year, and instructed a great number; and there they first called the disciples at Antioch Christians."

Charles Taze Russell makes a valuable point concerning this appellation: "The name 'Christian' was first applied to the Lord's followers at Antioch. Such a name would not be given to them by the Jews, nor in any place where Judaism was paramount, because the Greek word Christ is the equivalent to the Hebrew word Messiah. And the Jews would be the last in any sense of the word to intimate that Jesus was the Messiah, or that his followers were Christians or Messiahs. We do not read that Christians first assumed this name at Antioch, but that they were first called it by others. Would that the custom had continued to prevail, and that still the only name by which the Lord's followers throughout the world would be known would be his name! Dr. A. McClaren correctly suggests, 'If the men at Antioch had called Christ's followers 'Jesuits' that would have meant the followers of the mere man. They did not know how much deeper they had gone when they said, not 'followers of Jesus' but 'followers of Christ'; for it was not Jesus the man, but Jesus Christ, the man with his office, that makes the center and bond of the Christian church'" (Reprints, p. 4358).

The force of this observation is strong: it is not the man Jesus (perfect and important though he was) but the office of the Messiah that is central to the Christian. "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Corinthians 5:16). Not only does the Christian follow Christ, he is part of Christ. "For as the body is one, and hath many

members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12).

This integration of the body members with their head also intertwines them with each other. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5). Thus there is a mutual interdependency of every individual with every other individual. Every member of that body supplies some certain element which every other member needs. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).

This "compacting," or "knitting together," comes from one source—the acceptance of the Master as the head of this "Messiah" group. Paul writes of some who do not follow the headship of their Lord, saying: "And not holding the Head, **from which** all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:19).

### **The Christian's Call**

The cost of discipleship is high. It is not for everybody. It was never meant for everybody. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he who is called of God, as was Aaron" (Hebrews 5:4). The responsibility to make this selection does not even rely with Jesus, but with God himself. Jesus said in his last public prayer he spoke of his disciples as those which God had given him (John 17:9).

This call is not through a vocal cry, but through a heart tug. It is the reaction of a soul thankful for redemption. Paul describes it in these words, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Such as have this appreciation are urged to present their all as a living sacrifice. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1,2).

Jesus also made just such a commitment. "Lo, I come," he said, "to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:9). Because the natural mind does not understand the things of the spirit (1Corinthians 2:11-16), this Christian growth must come by means of a mental transformation.

This transformation, or change of mind set, only comes about through a diligent search for the will of God in his word, the holy Scriptures. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Such an earnest searching of God's word will be fruitful, revealing the

mind and will of God for the supplicant. Jesus phrased it in these words, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

However, study alone does not make a true Christian. The principles learned through a constant search must be applied. The admonition in James 1:22 is to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only." In Jesus' last message to the church he urged much the same, saying, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

### **Three Important Steps**

The first step, then, in becoming a Christian is to recognize that without his aid we can do nothing. This step is merely the recognition that we are "shapen in iniquity," and that it was "in sin" that we were conceived (Psalm 51:5). It is not only in hearing, but in "receiving" him that there is power to become a son of God (John 1:12).

This step, however, must be quickly followed by the second step of a desire to hear his words, and not only hear, but have them "abide in us." This requires study of his life and character with a desire to emulate the same.

The third step is obedience, not a grudging compliance, but the enthusiasm Jesus had when he quoted the psalmist, "I **delight** to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).

Someone has well illustrated the effect of these steps in this way. Let the three letters "IAN" stand for "I Am Nothing." Put them before the word "Christ" and we have "ianChrist" —gibberish, truly "nothing." But place them after "Christ" as his follower, and we have "Christian." The same truth is illustrated by realizing that the numeric value of nothing is zero. It has no value in and of itself, but it does have value if it follows another number, such as a 1 representing Jesus (producing a ten). A true Christian must always seek to follow, never precede, his Master.

### **Fruit Bearing**

The object of followers, true Christians, is to "bear much fruit" (John 15:8). This fruitage is described as appearing in various forms: "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

The true disciple, then, must learn to demonstrate these traits of character:

- The **love** of God as supreme, but matched by true love and concern for the good of fellow man.
- The **joy** that radiates from a mind so set on its ultimate goals that short-range troubles cannot deflect.
- The **peace** that comes from a full assurance that "all things work together for good" because God has so arranged them (Romans 8:28).
- The **longsuffering** which reckons that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).
- The **gentleness** that seeks not to react to slights, but always to seek the soft answer which "turneth away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1).
- The **goodness** that always seeks to give the benefit of the doubt and ever seeks the paths that will benefit another.
- The **faith** that not only believes in the unseen, but is so committed as to trust the ways which he cannot trace by sight and sense.
- The **meekness** which esteems others "better" than self, and thus is open not only to the Lord's word but seeks the thoughts of others (Philippians 2:3).
- The **temperance** which develops self-control to obey the precepts of God even when they are contrary to self-will.

### **Christian Requirements**

The requirements for true discipleship are high. Jesus said, "strait [difficult] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). For this reason he recommends that this way of life not be entered hastily, but that the candidate first count the cost before embarking on this journey (Luke 14:28).

Three of these requirements are specified in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." These requirements can be compared and contrasted with three elements Jehovah desired in his covenant people of Israel: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD

require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

1. **Deny thyself.** Jesus' synopsis of the Jewish law was to love God supremely and to "love thy neighbor as thyself." The Christian requirement goes deeper: it is not merely to love one's fellowman as one loves one's self, but to deny one's self and love others even more than one's self. The Christian call is to sacrificial love, to follow the pattern of Jesus in giving up life itself for others. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

2. **Take up your cross daily.** The symbol of the cross goes beyond self-denial; it includes a willingness to bear suffering, even unto death. Luke's addition of the adverb "daily" implies a constancy in one's experiences and trials. McClintock and Strong identifies four metaphorical ways the cross is used: "1) the cross of martyrdom, the witness unto death for Christ and the Gospel; 2) the cross of trials, for the preservation of faith, love, and hope; 3) the cross of discipline, for the purification of the heart and the subjection of sinful desires and inclinations; 4) the cross of punishment, for the chastisement of sin; though the aim of punishment also is the improvement of the sinner." This goes beyond the Old Testament requirement of merely "loving mercy," but implies the active practicing of mercy in the individual life.

3. **Follow me.** The Micah passage urged the faithful Jew to "walk humbly with thy God." This implies a commitment to the laws of God, that an Israelite indeed would fully comply with those commandments. But a Christian is required to go beyond the letter of that Mosaic law and to "follow me"—to "magnify the law" (Isaiah 42:21). The true disciple serves the law "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).

While the Israelite of old was "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God," the Christian is to take the next step and "to love justice, to do mercy, and follow Jesus' example of carrying out the spirit of God's laws."

### **The Object of Being a Christian**

While there may be many objects for one becoming a Christian, two stand out in sharp relief. One pertains to this life, and one to the life to come.

The apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 4:9 that the true believer is "a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." In a somewhat similar vein, Paul also writes "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2). A popular adage is a truism when it says "we are the only Bible many will ever read."

Christians must follow the apostle's advice to Timothy to "be an example of the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12).

But it is not only as an example, but for a future work that Christians are being trained. Their life now prepares them to be kings and priests with Christ Jesus in the future. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Timothy 2:11, 12). They are to be "priests of God and of Christ" and "shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

Jesus' qualification as the "high priest of our profession" was to gather sympathy for those who endured similar experiences so as to properly assist them to further godliness (Hebrews 2:17,18; 4:14-16). It is for this reason that the members of the church of Christ only have such experiences as are "common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

"To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach," a statement of our beliefs found on the inside cover of every issue of this journal, puts it succinctly: "That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age.—Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 1:6; 20:6."

These are the objectives which should make each of us strive to live so as to merit the title "Christian." A proverb of our century asks the searching question, "If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" May the lives of each of us produce such evidence.



## The Christian Spouse

# When Believers Marry

*Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.—Matthew 19:6*

Homer Montague

The marriage institution was ordained by God in Eden prior to the entrance of sin into the world. It was established to populate the earth, perpetuate the human family, transmit values conducive to the preservation of social order as well as happiness, and to provide for companionship, intimacy, and appropriate affection between man and woman. When the divine principles controlling marriage are observed, this relationship is a great blessing; if they are disregarded, much sorrow and vexation are certain to follow.

In the Old Testament, marriage is frequently used to symbolize the relationship existing between God and his chosen people Israel. We read for example, "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called" (Isaiah 54:5). As a wife Israel was promised untold blessings by God which ultimately would result in that nation's becoming the spiritual seed of Abraham and a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5,6) if she remained obedient. Regrettably, Israel did not remain loyal to the heavenly Father and history records the fulfillment of her punishments for disobedience and the subsequent destiny foretold in Leviticus 26:17-46.

In preparation for the Israelites' entrance into the promised land, God's commands to his chosen people through Moses read, "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:3-6). Thus, we see another aspect of marriage—compatibility—articulated in this passage. Such attributes as truth, righteousness, reverence for the Creator, and purity which were inherent in the first pair prior to the fall would not be fostered by the Israelites' union in marriage to heathen people. God admonished them to keep separate from idolaters.

God's dealings with Israel in many respects are typical of the mandates he has established for the church. (1 Corinthians 10:11; Romans 15:4). Just as Israel had to meet various requirements under the Law Covenant arrangement, so spirit-begotten believers of this age must fulfill their covenant obligations to the heavenly Father (Psalm 50:5).

An attitude of mind which the consecrated should embody is reflected in these words from the Master: "Anyone who wants to be my follower must love me far more than he does his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters. Yes, more than his own life—otherwise he cannot be my disciple. And no one can be my disciple who does not carry his own cross and follow me" (Luke 14:26,27, Living Bible).

### **The First Obligation**

As new creatures in Christ, whether already married or contemplating marriage, our first obligation is to do the will of our heavenly Father and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Faithfulness on our part will require that we seek to apply Scriptural principles which are pertinent to the state of marriage in our lives.

The married state was given the highest of endorsements when Jesus performed his first miracle by turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana. The apostle Paul acknowledged the propriety of the marriage relationship when he wrote, "marriage is honorable in all" (Hebrews 13:4).

The decision to marry or not to marry is a personal one. Notwithstanding the satisfaction and mutual joy which occurs when serving the Lord with a mate, some of the Lord's dear ones, when studying the apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 7:24-38 as well as other passages of Scripture, may come to the conclusion that for them, it would be to their best advantage in serving the Lord to maintain themselves in the single state.

Each individual believer, however, should seek to determine the Lord's will with regard to the advisability of entering into the matrimonial state. After committing the matter to the heavenly Father in prayer, meditating upon the Scriptural testimony concerning marriage, observing and seeking counsel from brethren who have chosen to marry, and then carefully considering God's overruling providence, if one's consecrated judgment seems to indicate it would be a blessing and a spiritual enhancement to continue serving the Lord within the bonds of matrimony, additional factors should be considered in selecting a mate with whom to spend the remainder of one's consecrated life.

### **Be Not Unequally Yoked**

One important concern would be these words from Paul: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2Corinthians 6:14). This text counsels new creatures to be separate from the aims, ambitions, and spirit of the world as well as the erroneous doctrines and practices generally associated with those who are merely nominal believers. This point is further amplified a few verses later when the apostle writes: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17).

The matter of choosing to be unequally yoked at the start of a marriage relationship is quite different from being unequally yoked by virtue of having become a new creature in

Christ after marriage occurs. The apostle Paul's reference about marrying "only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39) has been viewed by some as a commandment and by others as a suggestion. In Deuteronomy 7:3-6 God warned the Israelites against mixing with the idolatrous people who were inhabiting Canaan. Since the Old Testament explicitly reveals God's will on the subject of marriage concerning natural Israel, such instructions and these underlying principles would surely be of great importance to Christian believers.

### **Seeking the Ideal Mate**

We are surely living in stressful times. For those who desire to enter into marriage, it is often difficult to find a seemingly ideal mate. Certainly none of us is perfect. If a desired spouse must fit certain detailed specifications, such an individual may prove to be non-existent; this may eventually lead to a lowering of expectations.

One should be very reluctant to enter into a union of marriage based mainly upon mutual physical attraction before determining whether there is compatibility spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually, whether each is motivated by a desire to give to the other rather than merely receiving, as well as having a similarity of overall goals and outlook with regard to handling everyday practical matters. Believers who enter into marriage should recognize that their relationship is typical of the future relationship between Christ and the glorified church. Therefore there are certain principles outlined in the Scriptures which should guide an earthly union.

The Bible teaches that in the relationship between the sexes, headship resides in the man: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1Corinthians 11:3). Properly understood, this male headship does not imply tyranny over a woman. In fact if we look at Christ in his relationship to the church, we see that Jesus epitomizes love, care, and helpfulness with regard to the interests of his bride.

As an evidence of our Master's loving concern for the church, a portion of the prayer which he uttered to his father on the night prior to his crucifixion reads: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20,21).

As new creatures both within and outside the marriage arrangement, with our great reverence for God as well as our supreme desire to be obedient to his will, our loving appreciation for the magnificent sacrifice of Christ, and our serious strivings to be conformed to his image given the holy spirit's influence in our lives, we should hearken to the instruction furnished in the Scriptures as we seek to attain this oneness of love, purpose, spirit, and purity which the Master prayed would be manifested in our lives.

## Submission and Its Limits

Ephesians contains another familiar text of Scripture which applies to all new creatures who are married, whether equally yoked or not: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Ephesians 5:22-29).

Note that wives should submit themselves to their husbands in the same manner as the church is to be subject to Christ. Our subjection to Christ is a willing one and is inspired not by fear or force; it is prompted by love, gratitude, veneration, supreme confidence, and trust that he will care for our every interest. With Christ, if we are properly exercised, our subjection will always result in blessings because as our head, in every instance, all that he will do on our behalf is always for our highest good and best interest. On the human plane, that is the ideal, but because of imperfection, such is not always the case. Therefore the apostle Paul gives the special admonition to husbands: "But indeed, let each one of you, individually, so love his own wife as himself, that even the wife may reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33, Diaglott).

A husband's love, concern, faithfulness, and sacrificial attitude toward his wife should have the effect of having her manifest reverence and submission toward him which otherwise could not occur if he did not conduct himself along such lines as taught in the Scriptures.

When Ephesians 5:24 speaks of submitting in everything, the implication is in everything consistent with righteousness, Christian principles, and the spirit of what would be in harmony with the divine arrangement. Acts 5:1-10 contains the account of Ananias and Sapphira. Since she acquiesced in her husband's evil plan to withhold some of the money from the land they sold, both were destroyed.

The apostle's further counsel in Ephesians 5:25-29 makes it clear that the purpose of Christ's supervision of the church and of our submission to him is not designed to limit our spiritual or intellectual abilities, to degrade us, or for any selfish purposes, but rather that we may be completely sanctified, made spotless and without blemish. Ideally, as the husband would care for his own body and all of its interests, he is to demonstrate the same concern for his wife in that he is to provide for her needs, both spiritually and temporally, just as Christ nourishes, protects, counsels, and guides us in his way of holiness.

Sometimes difficulties arise when a wife has superior abilities in areas of the marital relationship. Quite often today, either by virtue of education or work experience, a wife may have much greater capabilities in terms of money management, arranging affairs in the home, or a better awareness of how to handle some situations. In such cases there could be an inclination on her part to assume the place of headship. Such a course, if pursued, could prove detrimental to the marriage. To prevent serious difficulties, it would be incumbent upon her to be extremely tactful by not focusing upon her husband's weaknesses, but to offer suggestions for his consideration in a kindly, appropriate manner so he may thus have greater insights and be built up in addition to appreciating her talents as a helpmate while still retaining his position as the head according to the divine arrangement.

### **Mutual Support**

Some of the consecrated are unequally yoked. In many instances, spouses may not be new creatures but are still supportive of their mate's activities. Surely that is a blessing and if it is the husband who is the new creature, by consideration of his wife's needs and his devotion to biblical principles, he may enjoy a happy union. By his example his wife may subsequently accept the Lord and both are then able to walk together in spiritual matters.

Similarly if the wife is the believer and her husband is a noble and caring individual, he will be supportive of her and appreciate her stand for righteousness. It may be that she will prove to be such a positive influence upon him that he too will ultimately come to make a consecration to the Lord. However, even if that does not occur, although she could not compromise on matters of principle, recognizing the fact that her husband was respectful of and treated her in a kindly and loving manner, she would be obliged to exercise some moderation and to meet the demands of the marriage relationship by the execution of her wifely duties, including providing her husband with a reasonable degree of companionship even if she could not participate in all of the spiritual activities which she might desire.

There are also some cases where a believer is in an extremely difficult marriage. In the world today it is very commonplace to deal with such matters by simply obtaining a divorce because of irreconcilable differences.

### **Divorce**

Considering the immense sense of joy and ecstasy that is so apparent between a couple on their wedding day, it almost seems impossible to conceive that such a relationship could deteriorate to the point where the love which once existed is no longer evident. The apostle Paul addressed such circumstances when he wrote: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace" (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).

Verse 10 emphasizes the marriage bond is not to be put asunder or broken but it is intended to be a permanent arrangement until husband and wife are parted in death (Matthew 19:6). In the Matthew 19 account, the Pharisees said that Moses permitted divorce. Jesus said that although such leniency was permitted under the law, those intent on the Lord's will should embrace a higher standard. He stipulates only adulterous unfaithfulness as the proper grounds for divorce and remarriage. 1 Corinthians 7:11 recognizes that in an extreme case, a wife may deem it necessary to leave her husband. Such separation, however, does not break the bond of marriage. It may furnish an opportunity for healing and reconciliation, but not divorce.

1 Corinthians 7:12-15 specifically addresses the problem where one of the parties is a believer and the other is not. Even in an extremely difficult marriage, to the extent possible, the believing husband is to perform his duties carefully even while he patiently endures this trial, trusting to God that the sanctifying effect of his spiritual life will at least be a testimony to his wife and children. In similar fashion, the believing wife also is to perform her wifely responsibilities in the spirit of meekness, patience, and submission to the extent that she can endure the situation, trusting to God for promised grace and by example, also manifesting the sanctifying influence in the home and upon her children.

Despite a believer's best efforts to maintain the marriage, if the unbelieving husband or wife chooses to depart, it may well be that this is a providential overruling by the heavenly Father for deliverance and, therefore, no hindrance should be placed in the way of leaving or the dissolution of the marriage.

### **Handling Unbearable Spousal Tyranny**

In a union of unequally yoked individuals, sometimes an impossible situation may develop for the believer. If the wife is an unbeliever, she may become so antagonistic toward the husband and his beliefs that she could tyrannize the home by forbidding brethren to visit, destroying truth literature, giving ultimatums which, if followed, would make it impossible for him to attend meetings and undermine his influence with the children. Such a wife would not view the husband as the head of the home and would indeed reduce him to the status of servant, as a captive to her demands. In such an instance where the believing husband could not exercise his proper role within the marital relationship, he would be justified in considering himself as being deserted if all attempts at resolving their differences failed. Such treatment on her part would demonstrate that the concept of oneness had been broken and he would be well advised to physically separate himself from that environment and live elsewhere.

There may be times, too, when the wife is the believer, and the unbelieving husband's treatment of her is unbearable. If he through hostility to her religious views becomes a tyrant, dictatorial, abusive, and demonstrates a lack of love and a loss of respect for her through his treatment of her and, in effect, virtually expects her to function as a slave instead of someone whom he pledged to love, honor, and cherish, the wife would have grounds for considering herself deserted and should prayerfully look to God for his leanings and providences so that he may direct the issue for her highest spiritual welfare and to afford her relief, especially in a situation where children are involved. The Christian wife has an obligation to be submissive, but there are circumstances where the spirit of a sound mind will dictate that the severity of the situation will indicate that the limits of endurance have been reached and a separation may be necessary.

A new creature's first obligation is to strive to do the will of God. Marriage is an institution divinely ordained by the heavenly Father and when ordered along Scriptural lines, it facilitates the spirit of oneness. The decision to marry or not is a personal one but new creatures who do so are advised to marry only in the Lord and thus avoid the difficulties which often occur when believers are unequally yoked. Since marriage is a type of the union between Christ and the church, in our human marriages we should be guided by an application of Scriptural principles which are manifested in this glorious spiritual arrangement.

The hope of becoming a part of the Lamb's wife should serve to strengthen our resolve to be faithful in the doing of God's will as revealed to us through his most precious and holy word.

## The Christian as Citizen and Neighbor

# The Royal Law

*If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,  
ye do well.—James 2:8 (KJV)*

Tim Thomassen

Biblically speaking, the word "Christian" refers to a follower of Christ. The word is found three times in the New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). Nelson's *Bible Dictionary* makes this observation: "In modern times the name Christian has been somewhat emptied of its true meaning as a follower of Christ. To some today, Christian means little more than a European or American who is not Jewish, while others have sought to make its proper use the name of a particular denomination. However, its original meaning is a noble one, of which any follower of Christ can rightly be proud."

Since Christians are followers of Christ, it is important to know what Christ taught and to examine closely any other relevant Scriptural teachings concerning the obligations of Christians.

### **Civic Obligations**

In Matthew 22:17 the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"\* In verse 18 we read: "But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the money for the tax. And they brought him a coin. And Jesus said to them, Whose likeness and inscription is this? They said, Caesar's. Then he said to them, Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

This suggests that Christians should be willing to promote the well-being and maintenance of earthly governments. Certainly it is our duty and responsibility to obey the laws of the land as long as they do not conflict with God's standards. The teachings of Jesus, Paul, and Peter are clear about this.

On at least one other occasion Jesus indicated that his followers should comply with the regulations a ruling civil government imposed regarding the payment of taxes (Matthew 17:25-27). It is significant that Jesus spoke to an audience which included some whose objection to paying taxes was made to look like a religious virtue.

A Christian's foremost responsibility is to live a life that is pleasing to the heavenly Father and in accordance with his divine principles. God expects heart allegiance from his children. But this does not release us from our biblically-delineated earthly responsibilities. "While our citizenship is in heaven ... nevertheless, like all other



foreigners, we are to be subject ... to the laws of the country in which we may be living" (Reprints, p. 5928).

Christians must never do anything that would cause their conscience to be compromised. However, in all other matters, Christians must be submissive to the civil authorities, their laws, and ordinances.

In Romans 12:9-21 Paul outlines some general requirements involved in living a new life in Christ, described by the phrase "new creature" in 2 Corinthians 5:17. In Romans 13 he focuses upon the specific example of the relationship of Christians to the state: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God" (Romans 13:1). We read in verse seven: "Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due."

"Within less than a generation of the founding of the church this [issue of Church-state relationship] had become an urgent problem. It has remained so ever since, but in most ages Christians have tended to ignore it until circumstances have suddenly made it crucially important. A crisis seldom finds the church forearmed with an adequate interpretation of the prerogatives of the state. Under pressure Christians have either granted the ruler too much latitude, or else have refused to concede him what he is fully entitled to claim. As a result they have been unduly subservient in some periods, while in others they have allowed no satisfactory place in their thought for the necessary functions of the state."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 9, p. 598.

The readers of Paul's letter to the Romans were mainly Gentiles. In the two similar situations addressed by Jesus in Matthew 17 and 22 the audience consisted of Jews. Paying taxes to Rome was not unusual. In fact it might be likened to the adage that only two things in life are sure: death and paying taxes.

### **Praying for Governments**

The Roman government played an important role in the life of its citizens and subjects. Paul and others were undoubtedly thankful for Rome's provision of relatively safe roads and seas within the empire's confines. Paul was also most likely grateful for the protection afforded him by the Roman rulers when he was threatened by angry mobs.

Paul wrote: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Timothy 2:1-3). When we pray for our leaders and those in authority, we might feel less prone to criticize them and be more cognizant of the heavy burdens which rest upon them. As the kingdoms of earth continue to crumble and disintegrate, we should expect the task of governance to become increasingly difficult. Arnold J. Toynbee was quoted as having once said that "so long as

original sin remains an element in human nature, Caesar will always have plenty to do" (*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 12, p. 115).

Leaders in their imperfect condition will make mistakes. The psalmist wrote that he "was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). That is true of the whole human race. Therefore Christians should remember that "to err is human; to forgive is divine."

Paul gives us another reason for such prayers. As we pray earnestly for our leaders, we are also furthering our own best interests. Such prayers will better enable us to lead a peaceful and godly life. "Our prayer for them [leaders] should be along the lines that would be most helpful for the interests of the Church" (Reprints, p. 4516).

### **Submission**

Paul instructed Titus to remind the brethren "to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all men" (Titus 3:1,2). These characteristics should be engrained so that they become second nature to us. This will be easier to do if we walk by the spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). "The spirit of submission, rather than of contention, is enjoined upon the whole Church in its relationship to civil ordinances of men" (Reprints, p. 1553).

Peter issued a similar exhortation to the brethren: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor" (1 Peter 2:13-17).

Thus Christians should be law-abiding. Yet this does not mean that we should comply with evil as Peter's statement to the Sanhedrin makes clear: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19, KJV).

"The Christian, wherever he lives, is not a 'man without a country.' He must acknowledge and bear his responsibility to governmental authority and its lesser authorities in the political realm. Whether that authority is a king, a congress representing the will of the people, or a tyrant such as Nero (who was emperor of Rome at the time Peter wrote these words), the Christian is to honor this power as sent by God properly to order human society, to keep social life from chaos, to be a deterrent to evildoers, and to be a rewarder of those who do right."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 12, p. 114.

In addition to informing us of our role as citizens, the Scriptures also contain instruction regarding our responsibility toward our neighbors as well.

## "Who is my Neighbor"

The word neighbor suggests a friend, close associate, or a person who lives nearby. The ninth and tenth commandments (Exodus 20:16,17; Deuteronomy 5:20,21) prohibited the defaming or slandering of a neighbor and condemned the envying of anything possessed by a neighbor. According to the Mosaic law, a Jew was not to cheat or rob his neighbor (Leviticus 19:13). The maiming or disfigurement of a neighbor was punishable by the retribution of an "eye for an eye, tooth for tooth" (Leviticus 24:19,20). We are told that "he who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy" (Proverbs 14:21, NIV).

Consider these majestic words: "These are the things that ye shall do: speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah" (Zechariah 8:16,17, ASV). Paul quotes verse 16: "Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25). "He who is honest with himself will be honest with God, and be honest also with his fellow-men" (Reprints, p. 2944).

Jesus summarized the Law in the words of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. When asked which is the great commandment in the law, he said: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40).

Paul wrote that we should "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8-10). When one loves his neighbor, all of the separate requirements of the Law are fulfilled.

Paul also wrote: "The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:14, NIV). We should love our neighbor not because a commandment disobeyed would result in punishment or if fulfilled would bring reward. No, we should do so because it is our [new] nature to do so. Christians should demonstrate the same love for their neighbor that they would have for themselves, the same desire for his welfare, his prosperity, his happiness, his health, reputation, property and feelings (see Reprints, p. 4401). Love proves a Christian has a positive commitment and sincere desire to obey God.

The New Testament uses three Greek words that are generally translated neighbor: *gei'ton*, "one living in the same land" (Luke 14:12; John 9:8); *pe-ri'ol-kos*, an adjective meaning "dwelling around," used as a noun in Luke 1:58; and *ple-si'on*, "near," used with the article *ho*, "the," as, "the (one) near" (Romans 13:10; Ephesians 4:25).

Jesus deepened the appreciation of the word *ple-si'on* when a lawyer tried to test him with the question: "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). In the mind of many Jews, a "neighbor" was simply a "Jew" in capital letters. The only neighborhood recognized by this group was the narrow community of Hebrew speech and sympathies. Such a Hebrew mind was as insular as its land.

The lawyer may have wished to imply that the Mosaic law did not include everybody as his neighbor. Aware of the reason behind the lawyer's question, Jesus answered by giving the parable of the Good Samaritan. By his answer Jesus showed that the word "neighbor" is a broad word that cannot be circumscribed by any boundary of race or ethnicity. The Samaritans were members of a race against which Jewish sentiments were strong, but they were a people Jesus cared deeply about.

In the end the lawyer answered his own question. After describing the reaction of the priest, Levite, and Samaritan when they came upon a man who was badly beaten by robbers, Jesus asked: "Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among robbers? He said, The one who showed mercy on him. And Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise'" (Luke 10:36,37). The lawyer could not bring himself to pronounce the much despised term, "Samaritan." But that is clearly the one he had in mind as the answer to the question.

This parable is an illustration of the Golden Rule: do to others as you would have them do to you, were the circumstances reversed and your places changed. Put yourself in your neighbor's shoes. The parable also teaches us a lesson of humanity, the neighborhood and brotherhood of man. Mankind is divided into groups with differing customs, languages, and names. But such distinctions are superficial and temporary. God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34) nor should Christians! Jesus did not see humanity as a group of factions, but as a unit.

James wrote: "But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:9,10, NIV). As Christians we are not to serve the letter of the law but its spirit.

Another lesson for Christians concerns the showing of mercy and the sacrificing of self. We should train our eye to see the needs of others, to read their woes. We should be sympathetic, lending a helping hand whenever possible. If we lift a load, bind up the wounds, brighten a life that might otherwise be dark, and put music within our neighbor's soul, we will be "doing likewise." Let us be living examples of the apostle's injunction that "as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

May we take to heart and follow Paul's instructions: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have

against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Colossians 3:12-14, NIV).

We should cultivate the various graces of the spirit which were illustrated for us in the life of our Lord Jesus. We, like him, should manifest a disposition of largeness and generosity of heart toward everybody and everything—toward our brethren, our friends and relatives, our enemies, the animal creation as well as toward our neighbors, whoever and wherever they might be.

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## Pastoral Bible Institute News

### PBI Directors Elected

The members of the Pastoral Bible Institute have elected these seven individuals to serve as directors for the next 12 months:

Francis Earl  
Len Griehs  
Carl Hagensick  
Michael Nekora  
Andrew Polychronis  
George Tabac  
Tim Thomassen

### Letters

I do thank you for The Herald you've subscribed me to. Thanks and blessings. I saw one of your handouts in a prison year when I went there to preach as an evangelist. I found it to be a help and wanted more to enhance my outreach service in my community since I do serve at other institutions. I also found the content very useful since this is not preached in our local churches. I would like your help in my outreach activity. Please send me more hand-outs and also some personal study books to equip me in this calling.

—A reader in Ghana

### World News

#### Religious

The supreme leader of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban movement warned that any Afghan converting to Christianity or promoting other religions will be executed. In his decree, Mullah Mohammed Omar also warned booksellers that they face five years in prison if they sell material insulting Islam or promoting "wrong beliefs." He warned that enemies of Islam based within Afghanistan and outside it—such as in Pakistan—were trying to seduce Muslims through money and other incentives to convert to Christianity or Judaism.

—Los Angeles Times, 1/9/2001

In what was called an important victory for religious freedom in Russia, a Moscow court threw out a case that sought to outlaw the [Jehovah's Witnesses] in the capital. Prosecutors in Moscow's northern district launched the case in early 1999 based on Russia's controversial 1997 law on religion, designed to limit the activities of foreign religious organizations. Human rights groups welcomed Friday's decision but cautioned that harassment of many religious groups by bureaucrats and police remains common in Russia. The court called in five experts to examine the literature of the Jehovah's Witnesses before the judge dismissed the prosecutor's case for the ban. The 1997 religion law forced many denominations to go through a difficult registration process. The only ones excused were those defined as "traditional" to Russia: Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. The Salvation Army's registration was rejected by the city of Moscow in 1999, and it has been struggling since then to have the decision overturned.

—Los Angeles Times, 2/24/2001

Rev. Dirk Ficca of Chicago, delivered a paper at the Presbyterian Peacemaking Conference in Orange, CA. He discussed the criteria for salvation. The Presbyterian (USA) Church's statement of faith affirms that salvation is only possible through belief in Jesus Christ. Rev. Ficca, the director of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago IL suggested that an omnipotent and merciful God might provide other avenues to salvation for Jews and Muslims and other non-believers in Christ. This suggestion ignited a firestorm of protest from conservative elements within the Presbyterian Church. Twenty-one sessions and one presbytery called for the church's General Assembly Council (GAC) to . . . either discipline Ficca or disavow the heretical views he expressed. The GAC approved a document that affirms, "the Lordship of Jesus Christ and our salvation through Christ." However, the GAC did not comment on the salvation status of the other four billion humans on earth.

—Presbyterian Conference USA NEWS, 2/24/2001

## Social

Chinese authorities defying the outcry from international human rights advocates, sell organs taken from executed prisoners. China executes more prisoners than the rest of the world combined [so] it can supply foreigners willing to pay to avoid the long waiting lists for donated organs in their home countries. Though some regulations exist [to curb abuses], they are poorly enforced and not backed up by laws.

—U.S. News & World Report, 2/5/2001

Of the 36 million adults and children in the world living with HIV/AIDS in 2000, more than 70% were in sub-Saharan Africa. 17 million Africans have died since the AIDS epidemic began in the late 1970s, more than 3.7 million of them children. An estimated 36% of adults are infected with HIV/AIDS. in Botswana, the highest rate in Africa. Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho are at 25%.The rate for South Africa is 20%, up from 13% in 1997. Infection soars, stigma hardens, denial hastens death, and the chasm

between knowledge and behavior widens. The present disaster . . . could wreck the region's frail economies, break down civil societies and incite political instability.

—Time, 2/12/2001

Tuberculosis and malaria are raging out of control in much of the world. It is sobering to note that more than 400 million people fall ill with malaria each year; of these, up to 3 million die, most of them children. At present, neither disease is a tremendous problem in the U.S. or Western Europe, but that happy situation may not last forever, especially where TB is concerned. In 1992, at the height of a mini-epidemic in New York City, 3,800 new cases of TB erupted; hardest hit were AIDS sufferers and the homeless, as well as prison and hospital populations, a third of whom showed drug resistance.

—Time, 1/15/2001

Scientists have decoded the DNA of a lethal strain of E. coli bacteria—an advance that could one day save lives and prevent thousands of illnesses each year. The complete genetic blueprint of E. coli type O157:H7 should help guide scientists toward the creation of a vaccine against the germ for cattle and other animals. That, in turn, would lower the risk that people will get sick from contaminated hamburger or other sources. "Now we have the whole picture," said James Kaper, a University of Maryland microbiologist who specializes in E. coli research. The study was done by a team of more than two dozen University of Wisconsin researchers and others. While harmless E. coli lives in the gut of humans, the dangerous type has been responsible for major outbreaks of disease since 1982 when it was first identified in contaminated hamburger. It causes a severe form of bloody diarrhea and can cause serious, even fatal, kidney damage. About 73,000 people were infected last year in the United States, and 60 died, according to the federal government. The infections are most dangerous to young children and the elderly.

—Associated Press, 1/24/2001

## Financial

Sectarian and ethnic violence in Indonesia is accelerating on several fronts, provoking fear that the country may be headed for disaster. The World Bank warned on Friday that Indonesia could face economic collapse unless order is restored. Thousands have been killed in an onslaught by extremist Muslim jihad warriors in the far eastern Maluku archipelago and in fighting between separatist rebels and government troops in Aceh. The extremist Muslim group Laskar Jihad continues to mount an offensive aimed at eradicating Christians from the area. Over the past two years thousands have died and tens of thousands have been displaced. In Laskar Jihad's guidebook, the group maintains it is the duty of all Muslims to liberate their country from the "infidel West" through a holy war against Christians.

—Newsroom.com, 2/23/2001



Leaders of the most populous Muslim nations, some of them entangled in crises at home, aired grievances about globalization at a summit in Cairo. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, taking over chairmanship of the D-8 group of developing countries, opened the one-day gathering with a gripe about unfair terms of trade. "Open markets in today's world are basically accessible for the products of advanced countries, while our exports . . . are faced every day with new protectionist procedures, overt or covert, that impede their access to the advanced countries' markets," [he said]. D-8 members-Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey-have a combined population of 800 million, but only a four percent share in world trade.

—Reuters, 2/27/2001

China has launched a nationwide crackdown on tax fraud that may rank as the country's biggest corruption scandal since the communist revolution in 1949. Government officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the fraud could eclipse a smuggling scam uncovered last year that involved about \$6bn. The scandal appears to have centered around port cities in the southern province of Guangdong. In all, 11 provinces or autonomous regions are being investigated. The scandal, which involves the issue of fake export certificates that allow exporters to claim tax rebates, is disrupting Chinese trading companies and hitting the country's trade balance, traders and officials said. The crackdown, ordered by Zhu Rongji, the premier, in December, is part of frenetic attempts to combat a tide of official corruption and organized crime that appears to have infected almost all of China's body politic. Total exports last year were reported at \$249.2bn, up 27.8 per cent from 1999-an increase that some trade experts believe may be overstated because of the volume of faked export certificates.

—Financial Times, 2/15/2001

## Civil

The U.S. Supreme Court, later this year, is expected to decide whether the use of "thermal imaging" is an unconstitutional invasion of privacy. In 1999, the California legislature decided grocery stores could not sell or share information amassed through store discount cards. The Clinton administration, in its final weeks, issued new rules regulating access to health care information. Those rules, which have not yet taken effect, were intended to boost medical privacy, but critics say the opposite might happen. In short, there are myriad court decisions and existing and proposed state and federal laws that seek to protect the collection and dissemination of personal data. Those laws reflect what public opinion polls consistently show-that people are concerned, especially in the modern digital age, about keeping their personal financial, health care and other consumer information private. In one poll (conducted by the firm Louis Harris for Business Week magazine last year), 70 percent of those surveyed said they've been victimized by what they considered an invasion of privacy.

—CNSNews.com, 2/26/2001

A U.N. tribunal on Monday convicted a Bosnian Croat political leader and a military commander of war crimes for ordering the systematic murder and persecution of Muslim civilians during the Bosnian war. Prosecutors protested that the sentences—25 years and 15 years—were too light for the severity of the crimes. The men could have been sentenced to life imprisonment. Presiding Judge Richard May of Britain said attacks on villages "were characterized by a ruthlessness and savagery and in which no distinction was made as to the age of its victims: young and old were either murdered or expelled and their houses were burned. The total number of dead may never be known, but it runs into hundreds, with thousands expelled," he said. The court convicted Mario Cerkez, 41, a Croat military commander, of leading attacks against Muslim villages during the Bosnian war in 1993-94. He received a 15-year sentence. The tribunal said Dario Kordic, a leader of the nationalist Croatian Democratic Union and of the Croatian Defense Council, helped plan and organize a campaign to drive Muslims from an area the Croats wanted to make part of the newly created state of Croatia. Kordic, 40, was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment. The worst of the massacres was in Ahmici on April 16, 1993, when Croatian militiamen stormed into Muslim homes. Entire families were gunned down and houses set ablaze. Some victims were burned alive. Before the attack, 356 Muslims and 87 Croats lived in the village. Immediately afterward, no Muslims remained. Croat homes were left untouched. Kordic and Cerkez were charged with 44 counts of murder, persecution, plunder and other war crimes or crimes against humanity.

—Associated Press, 2/26/2001

## Israel

As a Jew living in the United States, I have long denied myself the right to intervene in Israel's internal debates. I consider Israel's destiny mine as well, since my own memory is bound up with its history. But the politics of Israel concerns me only indirectly. I find its electoral vagaries interesting, its blunders embarrassing, but as I am not an Israeli citizen, I am not directly involved. Now, though, the topic is Jerusalem. Its fate affects not only Israelis, but also Diaspora Jews like myself. The fact that I do not live in Jerusalem is secondary; Jerusalem lives within me. Forever inherent in my Jewishness, it is at the center of my commitments and my dreams. Jerusalem, forme, is above politics. Mentioned more than 600 times in the Bible, Jerusalem is the national landmark of Jewish tradition. It represents our collective soul. It is Jerusalem that binds one Jew to another. There is not a prayer more beautiful or nostalgic than the one which evokes the splendor of its past and the shattering and enduring memory of its destruction.

—Elie Wiesel (winner, 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, now a professor of humanities at Boston University)

A large concentration of Iraqi troops was recently deployed on the Syrian border under an agreement between Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and Syrian president Bashar Assad. Saddam moved the troops into position after consulting Assad and securing permission. Assad apparently seized this as an opportunity to warn Israel that if it enacts its threat to attack Syria as a response to a strike by Hizbullah, then Israel would have to face a much

larger-scale threat of Syrian forces backed-up by Iraqis. The United States warned Damascus it was playing with fire and the Middle East could take a dangerous turn for the worse. The Iraqis have concentrated troops on the Syrian border twice in the past few weeks. The first time, the Iraqi force was four to five divisions. A short while later the troops were withdrawn deep into Iraqi territory and Baghdad said it was an exercise. A similar maneuver took place a short time afterward with a smaller force.

—IMRA, 1/24/2001

Israel and the Mideast region are under a potential threat from nuclear weapons in Iraq and Iran, the chief adviser to Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon said in an interview in a German newspaper on Friday. The short-term danger was small "but we must not forget that Iraq and Iran are working hard on dangerous weapons," Zalmon Shoval, 70, the former ambassador to the United States, told the mass-circulation Bild Zeitung. He said the two countries were working on carrier systems and nuclear weapons, which represented a threat not only to Israel but to all other states in the region. However, Israel would defend itself "very effectively" if it were attacked, Shoval said.

—Ha' Aretz, Bild Zeitung, 2/23/2001

Ariel Sharon, flush from an election victory seen as a mandate to veto more concessions to the Palestinians, pledged in a symbolic pilgrimage to Judaism's Western Wall on Wednesday that Jerusalem will remain in Israeli hands forever. Sharon's promise, delivered the day after his decisive win over incumbent Prime Minister Ehud Barak, ran directly counter to a key Palestinian demand for control over Jerusalem's walled Old City and its holy shrines. Palestinians said they would not contemplate any Israeli proposals that fall short of Barak's most recent offer—a Palestinian state in virtually all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as parts of Jerusalem. Sharon has ruled out such concessions, and said he wouldn't begin talks until violence ends.

—Associated Press, 2/7/2001

## Book Review

*The Restitution of All Things*, Andrew Jukes, Concordant Publishing Concern, Canyon Country, CA. (Originally published in 1867; reprinted in 1976.) 194 pages.

Andrew Jukes was born in England in 1815 and studied at Trinity College in Cambridge. He was active among the Plymouth Brethren assemblies and authored many works. Many Bible Students have at least one of his popular writings in their library: *The Four Views of Christ*; *The Law of the Offerings*; *Types in Genesis*; *The Names of God*. However, most do not know about Jukes' most unpopular book: *The Second Death and The Restitution of All Things*. Written after many of his other publications, it was suppressed for many years. Kregel Publishing, which has reprinted most of his works, still refuses to publish this one.

For many years, Jukes entertained unpopular thoughts about the destiny of the human race, discussed them with friends, and finally put them down in this treatise. His then unpopular conclusion is best communicated in his own words from the preface:

"Men's hearts, now perhaps more than in any former age, are everywhere moved to enquire into the nature and inspiration of Holy Scriptures, and the destiny of the human race, more especially the future state of sinners, as taught in Holy Scripture. Many are perplexed, hesitating to receive as perfect and divine a revelation which, they are told, in the name of God consigns a large proportion of those who in some sense at least are His offspring to everlasting misery."

*The Restitution of All Things* was written as a letter to a friend who was perplexed by this issue. In it, Jukes supports the propositions that: 1) the purpose of God by the first-fruits or first-born is to save and bless the later-born; 2) this purpose is fulfilled in successive worlds or ages through a resurrection from the dead, not all at once, but in stages; 3) unbelievers will be reconciled to God through a resurrection, not abandoned in torment.

Jukes was born and wrote mostly before the time the harvest message took shape in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He died in 1901. Even this treatise shows a rather rudimentary understanding of truth by today's standards. However, his insights into man's salvation are worthy of note, especially considering the opposition he faced from other prominent scholars. Clearly, sincere seekers of truth at that time were questioning the doctrine of eternal torment, embracing the concept of man's return to his original state, and noting the Scriptures that taught resurrection, not immortality.

The book in photocopy form may be obtained by writing to Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 W. Knochaven, Canyon Country CA 91351.

-Len Griehs

## The Christian Teen

# In the Days of Thy Youth

*Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.—1 Timothy 4:12 (NASB)*

Aaron Marten [age 18]

At the time Paul gave this exhortation, Timothy was a mature adult charged with the supervision of the church at Ephesus. However, he was evidently a generation younger than Paul, and others of the elders at Ephesus, and comparatively young. Thus we can extract from this counsel some good advice for the younger ones among the Lord's people, whether they have made a consecration unto death or not. They are to be an example to the world in their thoughts, words, and actions. Whether or not they are running "for the prize of the high calling" (Philippians 3:14), there is a level of integrity and principle expected of them by God, the brethren, and even the world. But it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly what they are expected to do or how to do it, especially in the transition time of adolescence.

Teens are especially in danger from the temptations of the world. When they were very young, their parents protected them from many evil influences and painful truths about the world in which they live. As they become older they are exposed to such things as sex, drugs, and violence. The adversary knows they are easy prey if they do not have a proper foundation of truth and how to apply it to their lives.

It is hard to see how some elements of truth might play a role in everyday living. Would, foreexample, knowing about the types in the Tabernacle or the 2,520 years in the Times of the Gentiles affect how teens live their lives? Probably not. But these doctrines do have an important role because they are elements in understanding the Divine Plan. The Scriptures should supply the principles given by the Lord for spiritual growth.

### **"Let no one look down on your youthfulness"**

Adults sometimes discriminate against teens and at times it is understandable. We have not lived in the world as long as adults, so when we act as though we know as much as an adult with considerably more experience, we are inevitably looked down upon for our youthfulness.

If we follow the counsel Paul gives, it will help us not to fall into that trap, to not be viewed or treated as a typical, unwise teenager.

## **"An example in speech"**

The language of our society has been steadily degrading. Cursing has become common for many. The Lord's name is taken in vain regularly in the media. One is more likely to stick out in a teenage group if one does not swear. By holding one's tongue from offensive and crude words, a teen can be an example to his friends in the world.

But cursing is probably not the kind of speech to which Paul refers. He is probably reflecting on the words of David: "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile" (Psalm 34:13). Speaking evil of someone is an easy trap to fall into and we all may do it more often than we may realize. It can lead to a cumulative effect and eventually ruin a reputation. It is best to always think twice before speaking of someone who is not present. If it is something one could comfortably say to their face, it is probably all right.

Another aspect of speech teens should control and thus become an example, is respect for those who are older. By just doing such simple things as calling brethren by the titles of "brother" or "sister" or by talking more respectfully to teachers and other adults with whom they speak, we can be examples to our peers and even to many adults.

There is also another kind of speech God would be most pleased to hear. We all can be examples in speech by spreading the precious words of truth that we hold dear. Witnessing is something that many, even many consecrated, do not do easily. If teens start telling friends and family about the truth, it will become easier as the years go by; it may even give older brethren the courage to do more witnessing themselves.

## **"An example in conduct"**

Reverence is a key characteristic of an ambassador of Christ. It accompanies Paul's instructions to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Obviously we cannot be always in a state of extreme reverence, but we should always be thinking of God in everything we do.

A popular phrase commonly seen today is, "What would Jesus do?" It is a wise slogan but it is not always practical. There are many situations where there is no guidance from Jesus. Perhaps a better saying would be, "What would Jesus say if he were having this experience?"

How can we determine the will of our Lord in a given situation? It can only be through the study of the Word of God. To know how to conduct ourselves, we must look to Christ as our example.

A key problem among teenagers is self-control. The lack of self-control can be seen in high teen pregnancy and abortion rates, and escalating levels of drug and alcohol abuse. As Christians we must hold fast to the control we have over ourselves and to the free will given to us as a gift from God.

## **"An example in love"**

Love is the foundation of Christian character. Without it, all else is vain striving (1 Corinthians 13:1-13). This does not mean we should show love just toward those of our own age. We must show love to all the brethren, even to the world.

We manifest our love for our brethren in various ways. We can provide help in innumerable ways to our ecclesias. We can volunteer to help with the work to be done at conventions. We can assist younger children and help in the kitchen at camps. We can become good friends with someone who is perhaps older and lonely. Love for the brethren is something that will be evident by the actions we do for them.

Love for the world is different. It is a kind of love related to loving one's enemy. We are told the world will hate us because of Christ (John 15:19). How can we love people who hate us? The answer lies in the words: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We must look at the world through God's eyes if we are to understand how we can love it. We must study the attributes and character of God. If we ever find ourselves inadvertently forming a hatred towards someone, we need to remember that God sent his son to die for them too.

## **"An example in faith"**

Faith seems to be in short supply in the world. More and more people are losing their faith in God. Citizens lack confidence and faith in government. We must stand as pillars of faith in these times of doubt. We must have faith in God and faith that he will carry out his plans and purposes.

We can demonstrate our faith in God in many ways. Witnessing is the best way to express our faith to those not in the truth. Even something as simple as saying "God willing" when talking of the future can be a wonderful expression of faith to a nonbeliever. We express our faith in God whenever we refute Darwinian theories or any philosophy that contradicts the beautiful truth of the Divine Plan. We show our faith if we pray in a restaurant or cafeteria before a meal. We show faith to the world by attending ecclesia meetings and conventions because we are setting aside worldly appointments. By living a Christian lifestyle we can be pillars of faith.

Our faith in the kingdom affects our thoughts and our actions. When we read of events in Israel or hear of horrible tragedies, we are assured by our faith that the kingdom can and will fix all the problems the world is having today. We know that all the pain and emptiness our friends in the world may have will be healed when they are resurrected in that glorious day. The knowledge of the kingdom affects many decisions we make in our life. It forces us to think in the context of eternity instead of an average human life span. We realize it really is more important to store treasures in heaven than on earth because earthly treasures will soon pass away. It makes us think about time from God's standpoint.

## **"An example in purity"**

None of us is truly pure. If we were, we would not need the ransom. Nonetheless we are to strive to be free from sin and fleshly desires. We should seek to be both physically pure and mentally pure. Although harder to obtain, mental purity is the key to building a Christ-like character.

Physical purity involves keeping the body pure. We are admonished to do this because we are temples of the holy spirit: "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy spirit that is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:18,19, NASB) In verse 18, Paul specifically addresses sexual purity. Abstinence from sexual activity was once the norm; now it is the exception in social relationships. Yet it is a key principle and a type of the virgin bride of Christ. We can be examples of purity to those in the world by clearly making known our decisions on this subject.

Mental purity involves keeping one's mind from all evil and sinful thoughts so that one may focus more on God. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). This Scripture should test what we choose to see, hear, do, or think of to determine if it is pure and will help us maintain the purity of character God wants to see in us.

## **"Show yourself an example of those who believe"**

It is most important to remember that what we do is a reflection of other believers. If we appear to be hypocrites, those in the world may think all the brethren are hypocrites. If we show no love, those in the world may think our heavenly Father has no love. We are truly ambassadors for Christ in every thing we do and every word we say. It is vitally important for us as babes in Christ to study God's word and maintain our focus on God and his coming kingdom.



## Christianity in the Workplace

# Applied Christianity at the Office

*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—Matthew 6:33 (KJV)*

Leonard Griehs

As consecrated believers we ought always to represent that which we really believe. Our actions ought to reflect the beliefs and principles we hold most precious. Christianity is an exercise in self-discipline throughout every aspect of our life (1Corinthians 9:24-27). If Christians reach a position of importance in the business world or other sphere of influence, they must battle hard to distinguish themselves from other successful people. Affluence is preached as a goal by society; indulgence is easy to rationalize. As suggested by the opening text, the Lord's people are expected to live always for the Lord first and for the world last.

Jesus said, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"\* (Matthew 16:26). When one's heart stops beating, the things that required so much work—big cars, lavish homes, expensive vacations, and large bank accounts—are of no use. What should really matter to consecrated Christians is how they have represented the Lord in all of life's affairs.

Jesus warned about the dangers of failing to get our priorities straight: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

## Christian Principles in Business

While Jesus focused primarily on our spiritual development, we can find principles and lessons for the workplace in his teaching. Two recent books use Jesus' words in approaching the workplace. *Leadership by the Book* by Ken Blanchard, Bill Hybels, and Phil Hodges, and *Jesus in the Midst of Success* by Charles and Janet Morris, use the leadership style of Jesus to teach business people to build a strong, ethical workplace.

First, as a leader, Jesus served. He told his disciples, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43,44). How should Christians serve others in the workplace?

- Think carefully about customers and employees when facing a decision. Some actions that might seem to improve a firm's bottom line could harm people and morale along the way. Be aware.
- Listen to employees and customers. Get feedback.
- Be accountable for one's actions. Do the right thing.

Jesus went so far as to wash the feet of his disciples—his workers. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord' and rightly so. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example." (John 13:13-15) Simply because one is a leader or manager does not mean one ought to neglect serving those who are in a lesser position.

The competitiveness of the workplace can sometimes result in our being excelled by a colleague. This can be difficult to take and even result in feelings of resentment. Yet resentment only creates bitterness or envy. "But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice" (James 3:14,16).

Jesus taught us to reach out to those with whom we have strife. When someone in the workplace gets the best of us, or gets the credit at our expense, we can overcome the tendency toward resentment by asking him or her to teach us how they did that for which they were commended. Hard feelings will dissipate and at the same time, we will set an example for others. "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. . . . If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink, in doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:17-21)

## Settling Differences

Workplace difficulties and conflicts are inevitable from time to time. When they occur, the attempt to exercise Christian principles may be greatly challenged. Jesus gives specific advice that is difficult to practice, but when it is followed, it usually has a positive outcome: "You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:43,44). In their book Charles and Janet Morris tell the story of a Philadelphia department store executive who clashed with the local Teamsters Union after hiring a non-union delivery firm. A three-month strike resulted, the store lost \$2 million, and several strikers and non-strikers were injured. Finally, a labor arbitrator worked out an agreement under which the department store hired a new trucking firm with Teamsters drivers.

The executive regarded the president of the local union as the villain and would have nothing to do with him. One day, after someone quoted the Matthew 5 text to the executive, he suddenly had a change of heart. He decided to ask the Teamsters president to lunch. Although he didn't agree with all the principles at work in the union's decision to strike, through talking with the president he was able to understand and sympathize with the union's point of view. The talk eventually turned to their families and their mutual faith in God. The two shook hands and agreed never to take action without speaking face to face.

## Six Basic Principles for Employees

Many companies today publish a "Code of Conduct" under which they expect to operate. Generally the words are fairly general and often perfunctory and do not address specific situations one may face in the workplace.

It is important for Christians to delineate the principles under which they operate as representatives of an employer, and to communicate these principles so that a common ground of understanding can be reached when conflicts arise. We suggest six "pillars of character" that represent ethical values and constitute standards of conduct for all individual decision making. These terms not only represent ethical concepts that function as moral guidelines, but are consistent with biblical standards laid down for a Christian in conducting life's affairs.

**Trustworthiness.** When we are trusted, others give us more latitude because they don't feel they need contracts to be sure we'll meet our obligations. They believe in us. Just refraining from lies and deception is not enough (1 Peter 3:10-12). There is no more fundamental Christian value than honesty. Paul says, "For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men" (2 Corinthians 8:21).

But honesty is broader than just telling the truth; it means operating on the basis of total integrity. It not only requires a good-faith intent to convey the truth as we know it, but to also avoid communicating in a way that is meant to mislead or deceive others. The word integrity comes from the word integer, meaning "one" or "wholeness." There should be no divisions in a Christian's life, no difference in the way decisions are made from one situation to another, no difference in the way one acts at work, at home, in public, and alone.

Integrity is built on values. Events, crises, and the seeming necessities of the day should not determine the course of our conduct. When we make promises or commitments that create a legitimate basis for another to rely upon us to do something, we have a moral responsibility to carry them out. Trustworthiness means keeping that commitment even if the circumstances since making the commitment have changed. We must avoid unwise and unclear commitments. While an employer-employee relationship creates an expectation of allegiance, fidelity, and devotion, loyalties must be prioritized—the most important loyalty for Christians is their relationship to God and Christ.

**Respect.** The essence of respect is a regard for the worth of people regardless of their station in life (Ephesians 6:1-9; Philippians 2:3). We should be attentive listeners, treat others with consideration, conform to accepted notions of taste and propriety, and never resort to intimidation, coercion, or violence. We must accept individual differences and beliefs without prejudice and should judge others only on the content of their character (James 2:1-9).

**Responsibility.** Our work life is full of choices. Being responsible means we are in charge of our choices and that we are accountable for what we do and who we are. Responsibility makes demands on us as employees to do what we can, not because we are being paid or because we will be fired if we don't, but because it is our obligation. Responsibility means finishing what we start and overcoming obstacles and excuses rather than surrendering to them (Galatians 6:5).

**Fairness.** Fairness and justice involve issues of equality, impartiality, and openness. It is unfair to handle similar matters inconsistently (Proverbs 24:23). It is unfair to impose punishment that is not commensurate with an offense. We must employ open and impartial processes for gathering the truth in matters for which we must make decisions. Fairness also requires that we correct mistakes, promptly and voluntarily (John 7:24).

**Caring.** There are many who love humanity but not individuals, who exhibit a big gap between ideals and behavior. While embracing ideals, they show insensitivity to individual needs and the views of others. A Christian must be genuinely concerned with the welfare of others (1 Thessalonians 3:12). Genuine concern means feeling an emotional response to both the pain and pleasure of others. While some decisions in the workplace, such as the need to dismiss workers due to a lack of performance or staff reductions, do cause pain, Christians must consciously cause no more harm than is reasonably necessary to perform their duties.

**Citizenship.** Although our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), the laws of the land bind us and we must obey them (1 Peter 2:13-17). But that is not all. As "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20) we are to conduct ourselves as representatives of our country in a foreign land. We should stay informed on the issues of the day to be sympathetic to the problems of those with whom we work. We should represent God's principles in helping solve those problems.

## Six Basic Principles for Employers

Some consider the Ten Commandments as the basic tenets of Scripture that are to be used in business dealings. But for those who have consecrated their life and their means to the Lord, there are other principles that Jesus taught that should set them apart from others in the business world.

These are particularly difficult to follow because others we encounter in business—even co-workers—rarely follow the same principles. Since Jesus spoke of doing unto others as

we would have them do unto us, we must exercise these principles as employers even if others do not.

**Reflect Christ in business practices.** Anyone operating in a manner that glorifies Christ will be faced with many opportunities to suffer as a result. Take the practice of total honesty. Proverbs 3:32 says, "For the Lord detests a perverse man but takes the upright into his confidence." If the issue were just to steal or not steal, most Christians would have no problem. But in real-life, that principle becomes more difficult.

**Be Accountable.** Those in positions of authority must be accountable. Too often those with authority surround themselves with people who support their decisions without question. While this may seem like an asset, in the long run it is a great liability. Without a system of checks and balances, leaders will eventually drift off course. Even David, a king chosen by God, went off course when he listened to his generals who told him he was too valuable to risk his life in battle.

**Provide a quality product or service at a fair price.** When a Christian accepts a standard for service and products that the Scriptures prescribe, the end result will be the best product at a fair price. This is in contrast to the norm in society which is to deliver the minimum acceptable at the highest possible price. When a Christian shows good value, clients will be happy and satisfied.

**Honor creditors.** "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow, when you now have it with you" (Proverbs 3:27,28). Too often, suppliers are treated as no-interest sources of operating capital. When business is slow, it is considered normal to delay paying others to make up for one's own reduced cash flow. The Scriptures teach that our implied promise to pay must be honored.

**Treat employees fairly.** The first step in recognizing fairness is to adhere to the principle that all people are important regardless of their position. During the early part of our country's history, slavery defined the role of boss as taskmaster. This is not to say that everyone should be paid equally or given the same benefits. However, James gives some good advice: "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. If you really keep the royal law found in the Scripture, Love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin" (James 2:1,8,9). People should always be respected for the job they do, no matter what that job is. They ought to be treated with honor and paid fairly.

**Treat customers fairly.** Customers should see that Christians living according to their principles provide a good product or service at a fair price, and are conscientious in making customers satisfied. Paul writes, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3,4). This applies beyond the conduct in an ecclesia or with those of like precious faith. It is a

principle of life that Paul urges us to apply all the time. If we truly care for others, we will not want customers to feel we took advantage of them.

**Set an Example.** Character in the workplace begins by examining ourselves. When it comes to helping co-workers become better people, the most powerful tool is how we live our life. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). How do we best reflect our light in the workplace?

Approach a crisis or conflict with a level head. If we react to a situation based on mood, we may teach others it is acceptable to be rude or dramatic. In dealing with customers, whether internal or external, we want people to be objective. Even if a crisis has just occurred, even if a shipment is late, even if the last batch of burgers got burned, people need to be off an emotional roller coaster. We should be the model for that, especially if we have managerial responsibilities.

**Temper criticism of others.** Avoid unnecessary criticism and correction. It is easy for managers to feel like they need to correct everyone all the time, but that sends people the signal that they are not good enough. Constructive criticism is often necessary, but it should be helpful and warranted.

**Balance work and personal pursuits.** We need to balance how much we work and how much we don't work. Burnout sometimes undermines integrity. Experts believe that the pressure of an overloaded schedule might be one cause of unethical or illegal behavior in the workplace. If possible, it is beneficial to create a private space within one's office or workplace. Put the Bible on display. Take a few minutes away from work periodically to be refreshed. While being sure to give an employer the full time for which we are paid, it is possible to do better work and teach others the importance of staying balanced.

**Strive to understand others.** If we go out of our way to see things from a point of view other than our own, we can instill a spirit of responsibility in others and in the organization. Consider the prayer of Francis of Assisi which reads in part: "O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

## Preparing for Graduation

*The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.—Proverbs 16:31*

David Bruce

According to the laws of the United States, anyone who has reached the age of 65 is a "Senior Citizen." These may begin collecting full Social Security benefits, are eligible for Medicare which provides payment for many health care needs, and receive discounts on many goods and services. They may stop working and retire to a world of leisure and learn to relax. Sounds wonderful!

The word "senior" also may apply to those who have completed three years of high school or college. Such seniors look forward to the end of that phase of their schooling and to graduation. But some may find they lack enough credits to graduate. Then they must really work, skip their vacations, and spend their time catching up on the studies they either failed or did not bother to take during earlier years. This is not quite so wonderful. Instead of being able to relax, their situation is much the opposite.

What about a "Christian senior"? Christian seniors are not the ones contemplating idleness in a leisure world. They are certainly not retired in this sense, nor are they doing nothing. An age of 65 is not unreasonable for a Christian senior. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10). The lesson of this fact is emphasized in verse 12, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

### **Nearing Graduation**

The word "senior" as it applies to a student seems to be the best fit for a "Christian senior." These are approaching the period when they must examine themselves to see if they meet the requirements for graduation. Certain questions come to mind. Have we done all that we could? Have we made mistakes that can still be corrected? Can we better serve our brethren in our declining years? Is our "house in order"? We may have to cancel our plans for a family re-union or a trip to a popular vacation spot. We have work to do and it is later than we think. These are just a few of the things we may have to put aside, especially as seniors. We must go through all the experiences needed to graduate and learn our needed lessons.

If we are honest with ourselves, we will find we are like a student who does not have the needed credits to graduate. It is time to settle down and catch up. At times, terrible thoughts may come to mind: Maybe it is too late to get back into the race we once started.

Perhaps the die is cast. What has happened to us? As seniors have we left it to others to "carry the torch"? It is so natural to let the younger ones do the things we used to do and feel that as we age we have the right to relax.

### **Don't Give Up**

Yet we must not judge ourselves too harshly. The apostle Paul speaks to us: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self" (1 Corinthians 4:3). Paul is saying we are sometimes our own worst judges. We know ourselves so well that we may judge ourselves too harshly; we will become completely discouraged and just give up. We must not do this; it is the very trap that Satan loves to get us into.

Our God is a merciful God, he is patient with us, he is too wise to err. He would not have called us if we would fail the test of aging. James comforts us all by saying, "But this wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). He is reminding us that although we have slacked off a bit, our early years have taught us much. The apostle Paul writes, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10).

### **Recalling the Memories**

The past years—ah! what memories they have for us! We older ones have memories that cannot be bought with money. They're worth MILLIONS. Those were the days when we might have helped our parents put on a Photo-Drama presentation—helping, perhaps, to carry the equipment into a rented hall, and the phonograph with the record of Bro. Russell's voice explaining the pictures.

There were the tracting parties when we were given a map and went from house to house, putting a tract in a doorway or handing it to someone on a porch. We went up one street and down another until we had covered the territory that had been assigned to us. We always went in pairs, one on one side of the street and one on the other. We kept a watch on each other, ready to help in case of a dog, or if a person, objecting to our tract, would tell us to "Get out!" When we came to an apartment house we would go to the top floor and work down.

There are memories of far-away conventions (any place over 20 miles was "far away") reached in a Model "T" or later a Model "A." We always had to worry about flat tires and mechanical problems. But nonetheless, it was always an exciting time.

Then times changed. The "Society" placed great emphasis on selling books, and there seemed to be a new one every year. But a few old timers (of that day) got us back on track. The truth was once more the important thing, plus searching for whatever "wheat"



might remain. Radio took the place of the Photo-Drama, then television, and now computer internet web sites are the new modern way to "bring in the sheaves."

### **Now What?**

As seniors it is important to keep in mind the words of the apostle Paul: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10).

The vital part is the last phrase "and do minister." We cannot rest on our laurels. We must do what we can. Even though we may not have much strength, we must go on. The old bones may tire more easily and we may not necessarily hear everything (perhaps because people do not speak as clearly as they once did). We may not be able to cook meals and entertain as in the days of old. We may have to have the food catered at our conventions and the visitors may stay at motels and hotels. But if we have financial ability, perhaps we can subsidize a part of the cost.

### **The Example of Jesus**

When Jesus knew his time was short, he did not rest by taking a vacation. He kept on doing what he was sent to do. He organized his apostles, he taught the disciples, he added to their faith, he opened the Scriptures to them, he prayed for them. Most importantly he did not think of self. Beginning in John 14 he told his followers of the days to come when he would not be with them. He would send a comforter. He told John to take care of his mother. He was not thinking of self, but of others. He was going to prepare a place for them. What a comfort that was to them and still is to us. What an example he left us, as seniors, to follow him and do what we still can do until he calls us home—until we graduate.

As seniors we must follow the example he left us. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1Peter 2:21).

Jesus did not live to be a senior in the same sense that some of us have by reaching an old age. But with all he had to endure, it took a great toll on his life and strength which few of us have had to experience. He packed into his 33 years more than enough to fill an ordinary lifetime of ours consisting of seventy or more years. In the last 40 days with his disciples, between his resurrection and his ascension, he reminded his disciples of the prophecies of Moses and all the prophets, that THE Christ (including his body members) also must suffer, and then enter into a state of glory.

### **Using Our Talents**

Those of us who feel, especially in our latter years, that we have so little talent, should rejoice! The person with few talents has in some respects a better opportunity to make his calling and election sure. Solomon was undoubtedly wise in his request of the Lord:

"Give me neither poverty or riches" (Proverbs 30:8). In other words, perhaps the two-talented servant would have a natural advantage of being neither so likely to be discouraged or puffed up with pride.

A person with five talents has the responsibility of keeping all of them fully employed, fully devoted, and fully separated from worldly ambitions. If we are a five-talented person, we need to pray for and exercise even more diligence in the use of our gifts, "for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48).

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee" (1 Timothy 4:14); "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee" (2 Timothy 1:6). "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10).

Therefore, my dear brethren, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 3:10). That is the promise. May we, who cherish and love it, be found worthy.

## The Doctrine of Submission

# Building a Spiritual Temple

A verse by verse study in 1 Peter 2

The message of the second epistle of Peter is two-fold: to comfort the Jewish brethren scattered throughout the provinces of Asia Minor and to encourage them to endure their trials with patient submission. We are not informed of their particular trial, but the time of writing suggests a wave of persecution sometime between Paul's imprisonment in Rome and his execution.

In the second chapter, he develops his admonitions on the basis of two doctrines: the present training of his readers to be a part of a future priesthood and the doctrine of submission as it applies to the various walks of life.

### **Peter's Transition—Verses 1 to 3**

*"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."*

The classic Greek writing style was to write in complete sentences and proceed from one subject to the next in an orderly fashion. Peter, however, as an uneducated fisherman, uses a more provincial approach, and works with transitional phrases, basing his reasoning on his previously expressed thought.

The "wherefore" of his opening sentence thus connects with his closing words of chapter 1. There he refers to their having developed "unfeigned love for the brethren" and being "begotten again" of "incorruptible seed" (1 Peter 1:22-25, ASC; 1 Peter 2:1-3, ASV), thus having an enduring faith in contrast with the grass that fades away.

The encouragement in the opening verse is to repel five characteristics which would hinder their spiritual development in the trials they were facing. These are:

**1. Malice.** This Greek word (*kakia*, Strong's 2549) literally means anything of an inherently bad nature. Here it may be a subject heading for the four vices to follow, or indicating the avoiding of an evil intent in the mind. Under persecution, it is most difficult to have a good feeling toward one's detractors.

**2. Guile.** Rather than to be deceptive to their accusers, they were to develop the opposite traits of sincerity and openness. Following such a path they would have the opportunity to be a witness to their magistrates (Luke 12:11,12).

**3. Hypocrisies.** It takes strong faith to refuse all compromises in the face of severe opposition. It is these compromises that cause a Christian to assume an identity somewhat less than a full follower of the Master.

**4. Envy.** It is easy in the best of times when, seeing the superior possessions or position of another, to ask, "Why am I not so similarly favored?" The temptation to envy increases still further when one suffers loss, and another does not. Then the question, "Why me?" must be changed to "Why not me?"

**5. Evil speaking.** The United Bible Society translator's handbook states that though the word literally means to speak evil, it "primarily describes the act of speaking about others in order to belittle or defame them" (compare NAB "disparaging remark of any kind"). This sets a high standard for the Christian in all circumstances.

Peter, speaking of these scattered Christians as "newborn babes," either indicates that they were recent converts or, more likely, that Peter was quite aged at the time he wrote this epistle. His encouragement for them to grow with the "sincere milk of the word" is not in conflict with Paul's rebuke in his epistle to the Hebrews, that they had become "such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12, 13). Peter is merely encouraging them toward spiritual growth.

## A Spiritual Temple—Verses 4 through 9

*"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

Peter now turns to metaphorical language. His use of the temple is parallel to the Lord's use of the vine and branches in John 15. Jesus, as the chief corner stone of the temple, is the base of all Christian building, just as the vine is the source of growth for all branches.

In the twin metaphors of "living stones" and an "holy priesthood," Peter not only shows the close relationship of Christ and his church, but also the relationship of present experiences to their future work.

The one chosen to be this "living stone," who is, to the believer, both "elect" (chosen) and "precious" (the Hebrew tense is the intensive form, "most valuable") is none other than Jesus of Nazareth. The words "chief corner stone" mean literally "the head of the corner," a cornerstone on which two walls are founded. The uniqueness of this stone is well illustrated by the southeast corner stone of the platform for Solomon's temple. Since this corner lies over the hillside descending to the Kidron valley, it is irregular in shape, perfectly shaped to fit the topographical contour of Mt. Zion. As a "keystone" in modern architecture, the entire structure would collapse if this particular stone were removed.

Whether the words "spiritual house" are to be taken literally as the temple building or metaphorically for "household," the priesthood which occupies the temple, is debatable. Perhaps both are intended. The individual members of the body of Christ are well compared to the temple stones for they are taken from the same quarry and there shaped before being transported to the final site for their particular place in the structure. Like the temple stones of old, their shaping is done so perfectly that they slide into their pre-assigned position with "neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building" (1 Kings 6:7).

But the church is to be, with their Lord, the "royal priesthood" which will offer the sacrifices in this antitypical temple of the future. While the authenticity of the word "spiritual" before "sacrifices" is challenged by some, the overwhelming evidence is that it appears in the most ancient manuscripts.\*

In this passage the thought is apparently "antitypical" sacrifices. The promise of being a "holy nation" in Exodus 19:6 is here transferred to the church as the "royal priesthood." In fact, verse 9 is a specific allusion to this text. This promise finds its reality in the Melchizedek priesthood when the church with their Lord shall "reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6). Their ministry, illustrated by their life and teachings of the present time, will be "to show forth the praises of him who hath called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Peter then returns to the analogy of the corner stone, demonstrating that Christ as that stone is precious only to the believers. To the non-believers he becomes both a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." The picture is still that of the temple corner stone. As an unfortunate individual stumbling upon the overhanging temple corner stone would die in his precipitous fall upon the stone below, so the Jew who stumbled over Jesus being the antitypical corner stone would be judged thereby. The "rock of offense" picture is even more dramatic. Barnes, in his Notes, states that it was at this corner stone where Jewish executions were carried out. He writes: "A scaffold was erected twice the height of the man to be stoned. Standing on its edge, he was violently struck off by one of the witnesses: if he died by the blow and the fall, nothing further was done; if not, a heavy stone was thrown down on him, which at once killed him. So the Saviour speaks of the "falling" of the stone on his enemies. They who oppose him, who reject him, and who continue impenitent, shall be CRUSHED by him in the day of judgment, and perish forever."

### **The Second Transition—Verses 10 through 12**

*"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

In this transition of thought Peter alludes to Hosea 1:9,10 and 2:23. He makes the same application of the Hosea text as Paul does in Romans 9:25. Contextually, however, the prophecy is of natural Israel being returned to God's favor at the second advent of Jesus. This is one of several examples of Old Testament prophecies having a dual fulfillment; they possess applications at both the first and second advent of Christ.

Although they have this honored position of being a royal priesthood, they must patiently await that distinguished title until a future life. Therefore they should regard themselves, as Abraham did in the land of Canaan, as pilgrims and sojourners. Though beset on every side, the Christian must be an example of pure and holy living, recognizing that the desires of the flesh are at war with the desires of the spirit.

The word "honest" does not cover the full meaning of the Greek. Rather the thought is "honorable," the living of a life that is in full accord with their commitment to follow in

the footsteps of the Master. Seeing that the Christians of Asia Minor were undergoing particularly strong persecutions at that time, this honorable living would be made all the more difficult by the fact that they were looked down upon and evil spoken of by their pagan neighbors. Their admonition was the same as that of the apostle Paul in Romans 12:20,21, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

### **Submission to Civil Authorities—Verses 13 through 17**

***"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."***

The subject matter now turns to the concept of submission:

1. To Civil Authorities—Verses 13-17 -- [chapter two]
2. Servants to Masters—Verses 18-25
3. Wives to Husbands—Verses 1-6 -- [chapter three]
4. Husbands to Wives—Verse 7
5. Submission One to Another—Verse 8

The submission to civil authorities, especially Rome, was particularly difficult for the Christian Jews of the dispersion. Rome ruled with a heavy hand. Though governed by a system of relatively enlightened laws, the rulers expected and demanded strict obedience. The Jewish religion was being increasingly discouraged as unrest and rebellion by zealots increased and Christianity was watched with even greater suspicion.

Submission, Peter admonishes, was not because of Roman power, but "for the Lord's sake." There was a legitimacy to foreign rule which the Christian was to respect. Governments are established to maintain law and order, punishing the violators and protecting those who comply. The apostle Paul is even more direct on this point: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath

upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."—Romans 13:1-5

How does this operate, however, in such cases as the Christians were facing in Asia Minor, when the powers that be were punishing them for their good works? This is the dilemma a disciple must sometimes face. These texts do not speak to the issue of compliance with civil law in cases of conscience, but appear to enjoin the spirit of submission to the penalties such non-compliance imposes. A Christian is to be submissive and neither pro-active or reactive when laws interfere with his duties to God.

The verbs in verse 17 should be noted. Both the king and "all men" are put in the same position. They should be "honored" or "respected." It is always tempting to disparage or put down those in authority because of their transparent political maneuvering or for the graft and corruption that so often occupies positions of power. Nevertheless, even if we cannot respect the man, his office is worthy of our esteem.

But respect is not sufficient for the "brotherhood." They are to be loved, both with the purest sense of disinterested agape love and with the warmth of true *phileo* love. Their position, as a brother or sister in Christ, warrants a higher place in our minds than even those in authority. Above everyone is the person and position of God who is to be "feared," not in cringing terror as before a mighty potentate, but in complete awe of his majesty and goodness.

### **Submission to Masters—Verses 18 through 25**

*"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."*

Society has changed considerably since the days of the early church. Slavery, though it still exists, is not the rule. However, many profitable lessons can be learned by applying the principles of this section of the epistle to Christian attitudes in the workplace.

"Office politics" is well-known today, especially in larger firms. It often results in unfair practices and unjust treatment of conscientious workers. Peter describes such ill treatment as being "thankworthy"—worthy of our appreciation. As one has well phrased it, "Don't waste your trials; they're worth millions." The apostle claims that acceptance and



submission in such circumstances is "acceptable with God." It is part of the "good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" which Paul says would come from a transformed mind (Romans 12:2).

Peter goes even further. Such submission is not only acceptable, but he adds "hereunto were ye called." Patient submission and suffering are part of the prescribed curricula in the school of Christ. Since Jesus suffered "the just for the unjust" (1 Peter 3:18), to follow in his steps may also require the unjustified bearing of harsh or unkind treatment—in the office or wherever a Christian comes into contact with the world.

Finally, we are told by Peter that we have been "as sheep that have gone astray" and that it is incumbent to realize that in our practice of Christian submission we are returning to one who can both correct and protect us, "the Shepherd and Bishop" of our souls.

Space prohibits the continuing of our examining this concept of submission as it relates to wives, husbands, and as a universal principal of divine law. These relationships form the subject matter of the first part of chapter 3.

Let us be constantly on the lookout to keep our bodies under and bring them into subjection by submitting to whatever experiences our heavenly Father permits (1 Corinthians 9:27).

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\* The word *pneumatikos*, translated "spiritual," appears in approximately 500 of the oldest manuscripts, including the Vatican 1209, Manuscript 1739, and Papyrus p72, three of the most reliable. Only the Sinaitic manuscript omits the word.