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IGNORANCE RELATIVE TO CHRIST And Other Articles

By Duane V. Maxey

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INTRODUCTION

This is a compilation of articles by Duane V. Maxey, most (if not all) of which have been published via HDM emails. Not much effort has been made to arrange these -- none so far as the chronological order in which they were written and published via email, and little regarding their subject content. I have chosen to title the entire collection after the name of the article that I have placed at the top. -- DVM

* * * * *

01 -- IGNORANCE RELATIVE TO CHRIST

John 8:19 "Ye neither know me, nor my Father..."

John 8:25 "Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

John 14:9 "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

Acts 9:5 "And he [Saul of Tarsus] said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

* * *

Introduction

The story has been related of how a teacher once asked one of her pupils: "What is ignorance?" -- and in reply he said: "Ignorance is when you don't know anything, and then somebody finds out."

This may strike the reader as humorous, but of course the child's definition went too far: -- ignorance is "when you do not know a certain thing, whether you yourself, or any other human being is aware of your lack of knowledge, or not."

Ignorance of many things in this world and in this life is not crucial, and contrary to what some may want others to believe, "Mr. Know-it-all" does not reside in this world. Most who would like to be known as such are sooner or later seen to be ignorant of this or that when "somebody finds out" how uninformed they really are on the subject.

Christ realizes that even the best and most sincere among his followers are liable to errors and mistakes in their efforts to serve him, and thus He is a Great High Priest "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," (Heb. 5:2), and failures of

ignorance are covered by his blood, never charged against those who would have done differently if they had known better.

But the Bible makes it clear that there is much ignorance relative to Christ that is very culpable, for example, "willing ignorance" -- an ignorance about Christ and His Truth that is the result of a purposeful turning away from that knowledge: 2 Peter 3:5 "For this they willingly are ignorant." Of such ignorance, it can never be said, "Ignorance is Bliss," for knowledge that one could have had about Christ, but of which one has been willingly ignorant, will be charged against the knowledge rejecter as fully as if he or she had come into that knowledge. The blood of Christ will not cover such the Judgment.

The following stories illustrate various aspects of men's ignorance relative to Christ, ignorance which is mostly of the culpable sort:

* * *

I. Christ Was Slain Through Ignorance

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.." Luke 23:34

"Ye..killed the Prince of life..through ignorance.." Acts 3:14,15,17

The story has been told of a young trapper who lived alone in the wilderness with Prince, his huge sled dog that was more wolf than malamute. The dog was very devoted to Pete, his master, and was content to be with the trapper without regard for the hardships or dangers which that companionship cost him in their remote environment. And, the dog only revealed the savagery of his wolf ancestry when he was zealous to defend his close friend.

When Pete married, Prince showed that he was not a "one-man dog" by making room in his heart for Margaret upon her entrance into the cabin household. And, when the baby, little Pete, came along Prince included him also in his canine affection. But when the first snow fell Margaret's strength failed and she passed away, leaving behind the heartbroken trapper, the baby, and the big, gray wolf-dog.

Pete managed to get Prince to understand that he must now remain at home while he (Pete) went out to tend the trap lines, and, though Prince was disappointed at not being allowed to accompany his adored friend, the dog was faithful to watch the baby. When the child awoke or whimpered he was there to provide soft fur for the baby's hand to stroke and to give the quick caress of his warm tongue to comfort.

One day while Pete was far from home a blizzard struck, and he couldn't make it back to the cabin by nightfall. Reflecting upon the matter, the trapper thought that surely Prince would keep the baby warm. At dawn the gale ceased and Pete made it through the snow into the cabin clearing. He whistled for the dog. Always before when Prince heard this signal he would come out to greet his master with the enthusiastic antics of a canine welcome. This time there was no such response. The dog did not show himself nor make a sound.

Realizing that something was wrong, Pete ran across the clearing and entered the cabin through a half-open door. He saw that the baby's crib was empty. The blankets were red with blood and great smears of blood were upon the floor. As the trapper stood transfixed by the horror of this scene, his wolf-dog crept out from under the bed. Prince's muzzle was also red with blood and the fur of his neck was matted. He didn't look at his master, nor did he approach the man, but simply lay there in silence with his head down and his eyes avoiding Pete's gaze.

Suddenly it came to Pete. Once wolf, always wolf! No doubt hunger had aroused the Primitive instinct of the wolf-dog. The trapper raised his ax with a cry and with all of his might he buried the ax in the dog's huge head. Then, he heard a whimper from somewhere behind Prince's body. Stooping down he found his child beneath the bed and drew him out with trembling hands. The child's clothing was torn and bloodstained, but he was unhurt.

Dazedly the father now stared about the cabin, and for the first time he saw in a dark corner the carcass of a gaunt timber wolf with its throat torn out. A piece of Prince's bloody fur was still clenched in its teeth. Too late, the trapper realized that he had slain "through ignorance" the loving deliverer of his child. How sad! But how much infinitely greater was the injustice done to the Loving Jesus when He, the Prince Of Life, was slain "through ignorance" by fallen mankind! And, no less undue our kind, faithful Saviour is the blind, spiritual ignorance through which multitudes today "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh". Too many shall discover too late that they have failed to comprehend His loving sacrifice in the defense and deliverance of their souls, and they shall eternally regret this their greatest and saddest mistake. (adapted from R.D., original author of the dog story unknown)

* * *

II. Christ's Self-Sacrificial Benevolence Maligned Through Ignorance

"The Miser of Marseilles" in the following two account was a man whose motives were long and sadly misjudged. His story typifies well how Christ is maligned and misrepresented by the devil as one who is selfishly "out to get" for himself -- as one who does not really care about the difficulties of the world. Of course, Satan's maligning of Jesus' character is a lie that is 180 degrees opposite from the real truth about Christ, but Satan has no doubt convinced many who are ignorant of Christ's true, self-sacrificial benevolence to all, that he is an hard taskmaster.

* * *

The Miser of Marseilles (Account #1)

The Miser of Marseilles (an illustration of how Christ's ministry and sacrificial death were maligned and misunderstood by his contemporaries) A man of the name of Guyo lived and died in the town of Marseilles, in France. He amassed a large fortune by laborious industry and severe habits of abstinence and privation. His neighbors considered him a miser, and thought that he was hoarding up money from mean and avaricious motives. The populace pursued him, whenever he appeared, with hootings and execrations, and the boys sometimes threw stones at him. He at length

died, and in his will were found the following words: "Having observed from my infancy that the poor of Marseilles were ill supplied with water, which can only be purchased at a great price, I have cheerfully labored the whole of my life to procure for them the great blessing; and I direct that the whole of my property shall be laid out in building an aqueduct for their use."

* * *

The Miser of Marseilles (Account #2)

I remember hearing about "The Miser of Marseilles." About twenty-three years ago, he was a figure on the streets of that town. He lived for nothing but money. He gripped, and he grabbed, and he kept. A miser, a moneygrub, and very wealthy he was known to be. He was the object of derision throughout the whole of Marseilles, and the South of France. When he appeared in the streets, the boys hooted at him. When he was mentioned among his business associates, they jeered at him, the old skinflint, the miserable old wretch, heaping up money, storing it up. Ah, he was contented thus to live, and thus to die; and his body was carried to the grave without a single attendant. There was not a soul in Marseilles but gave a kind of sneer, and a kind of curse, as he passed the body of the miser on the way to the grave.

Ah, yes, but when his will was read, what is this that brings mourning and lamentation to the whole city: It is this: "From my infancy, I noticed that the poor of Marseilles had great difficulty in getting water. I noticed that water, the gift of God, was very dear, and very difficult to obtain in this city, pure and sweet: and I vowed before God that I would live but for one purpose, for one end. I would save money, money, money; and now I give it to the city, on one condition, that an aqueduct be made from yonder lake on the hills to Marseilles."

As they drink the sweet, luscious, fresh water of that city, I believe the poor say, "Ah, when he lived we misunderstood him, but he did it for us." The bubbling fountain in Marseilles was the gift of the man who was misunderstood and jeered at.

Do you catch it? Jesus was there on the Cross, and the priests said: "If you be the Son of God, come down from the cross," and they all mocked Him, and jeered at Him. Yet, it is from this despised One, this Christ, that the souls, needy and thirsty and despairing, are drinking tonight the water of life. --John Robertson

* * *

III. Ignorance of Christ's Motive in Approaching the Condemned

This story illustrates the tragic results of the blind ignorance of those, who under the condemnation of God, drive away the Spirit of Christ as He approaches to bring salvation.

"If Thou Hadst Known"

In His earthly life among men, Jesus, more than once, virtually said that if they had really known who He was their course of action would have been widely different. It was so of the

whole Jewish nation. They had long waited and sighed for the coming of their Prince, but when He came they knew Him not.

A young man was taken prisoner and was to be shot at sunrise. As he lay upon the ground that night between his sleeping guards, his heart was full of bitter thoughts. Oh for a single sight of the dear ones at home! What would he not give to be free once more?

Suddenly, he saw a solitary figure steal out from behind a clump of bushes. The man saw that he was awake and began to make signs, as though trying to communicate with him. He crept nearer and nearer. The soldier thought he could see a grin of derision on the man's face. Evidently, one of his enemies had heard of his plight and had come there to taunt him. He was mad with rage. It was enough to have to die like a dog, but this cruel mocking was more than he could endure. With a shriek of anger, he sprang up. In a moment, his guards had awakened and the entire camp was in an uproar. In the midst of the excitement, the stranger had fled, and the condemned man never knew that the one he repulsed was a friend who had come to deliver him from the hands of his enemies. --McCartney

* * *

IV. Ignorance of Christ's Love-Bought Salvation

Below are two stories that are vivid illustrations of how ungrateful men are ignorant of the love that has brought Christ's salvation to them personally -- the first story showing the heartless rejection of Christ after learning of that personal salvation, the second story showing how the realization of what He has done for one personally can move one to tears of repentance.

* * *

A Savior Rebuffed By Callused Ingratitude

An illiterate fisherman and pilot gave to Mark Guy Pearse a touching chapter from his personal experience, and the application he made of it. Mr. Pearse says he passed it along to D. L. Moody, and the latter was so affected by it that he buried his face in his hands and wept. The fisherman told how he was lying aboard his boat in Plymouth Sound when he heard a splash in the water not far off. He jumped out of his berth, for he thought he knew what it was; there was another fishing boat not far off, and the man with it was a drinking man. He rowed there in his small boat with all speed, leaning over the side and praying God for help.

Presently he got hold of the other man's arm and pulled him up, and he was drunk, sure enough. He lifted him back onto his boat and put him in his berth and worked over him and rubbed him an hour or more, till he began to come to himself. Doing everything possible to make the man comfortable, he came away.

The next morning he pulled over to see how the man was. He was standing leaning over the side of his craft. To a "good morning," he returned no answer. "How are you this morning?"

his rescuer said. "What's that to you?" was the surly response. "Why," said the first man, "I can't help taking an interest in you. I saved your life last night." "Get out," responded the other, and roundly cursed him for a liar.

"I turned round my little boat and pulled away to my craft," he said in telling Mr. Pearse. "My heart was like a thing broke. The tears ran down my cheeks. I looked up to Heaven and could hardly get out the words that choked me. 'O Lord Jesus,' I said, 'my blessed Lord Jesus, I am sorry for Thee! I know now how Thou dost feel. That is how the world is always treating Thee. I am terribly sorry for Thee, my dear Lord.'" --The King's Business

* * *

"I Didn't Know Who You Were!" -- (The Story of "Old Rattle Bones")

Many years ago a poor cripple was cruelly nicknamed "Old Rattle Bones" by a group of boys on the street. The ringleader named Freddie was quite worried, however, when the man headed straight toward his home one day. Because his friends were with him, the boy tried to hide his anxiety. "Go on, Old Rattle Bones," he shouted, "see who cares if you talk to my mother." The man said with sadness as he continued on his way, "You wouldn't call me names if you knew what caused my condition." Arriving at his destination, he was welcomed by the boy's mother. She told her son to come in also.

Turning to Freddie, the man said, "Years ago when you were just a baby, your nurse took you out in your carriage for a ride near the river. When she let go of the handle for a moment, it suddenly began to careen down the hill. Before she could catch up with it, the buggy had plunged into the water below. I jumped into the river and after a difficult struggle brought you safely to shore, but I left before anyone could ask my name. The water that day was frigid, and it aggravated my rheumatic condition. Now, 10 years later, I can scarcely hobble along." Freddie hung his head and began to cry. "Thank you for saving me. And forgive me for calling you 'Old Rattle Bones.' I didn't know who you were!"

* * *

V. Ignorance of How Personal is His Gift of Salvation

The preceding two stories illustrate how personal is Christ's salvation for each individual. Far beyond the imagination of millions, Christ has tailor-made His gift of salvation to each soul -- ever so personally. This story also is a good illustration of that -- the story of Rossini, whose gift from the King of France was perhaps valued far more than ever before when he learned how personal it was.

* * *

Rossini was once presented with a watch by the King of France -- of which he was justly proud. Several years after, showing it to a friend, he was told that though he had possessed it so long, he did not know its real value. "Impossible," said Rossini, whereupon the friend, taking the

watch, touched a secret spring, at which an inner case flew open, disclosing a beautiful miniature painting of Rossini himself. This is characteristic of a certain type of modern Christianity. It values its ethics and is acquainted with and appreciates much of its teaching, but it has not discovered the inner secret which gives it its supreme value. The portrait of Christ is still hidden. When the secret spring is touched and the Face of Christ is recognized, the whole attitude of mind and theory of values is changed. It is characteristic also of much avowed discipleship. "Have I been so long a time with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip?" said Christ to one who called himself a disciple and an intimate.

* * *

VI. Christ's Provision Neglected Through Ignorance

The next two stories illustrate how ignorance of what Christ has already provided and made available can cause one to long neglect using that provision -- the first story might be applied to the neglect for earthly provision, and the second story applied to the long neglect of salvation.

* * *

A poor old widow, living in the Scottish Highlands, was called upon one day by a gentleman who had heard that she was in need. The old lady complained of her condition and remarked that her son was in Australia and doing well. "But does he do nothing to help you?" inquired the visitor. "No, nothing." was the reply. "He writes to me regularly once a month, but only sends me little picture with his letter." "The gentleman asked to see one of the pictures that she had received, and found each of them to be a draft of ten pounds. All the old lady needed was to be able to recognize those "pictures" and she could have had the bodily comforts she needed so much. That is the condition of many of God's children. Our Heavenly Father has given us many "exceeding great and precious promises" of which we are either ignorant or which we fail to take as our own. --The Sunday Circle

* * *

During the revival in Ireland in 1853, an aged convert at Achile, a poor man, one hundred and four years old, walked ten miles to make a public profession of his faith, at a confirmation held by the Protestant Bishop of Tuam.

Mr. E. had a most interesting conversation with this aged man. He said: "I lived one hundred and three years and six months in total darkness, knowing nothing of the way to heaven, blind, and ignorant." "And now," said Mr. E., "what is your hope?" "My hope, sir, is in the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Oh, to think that I have gone on one hundred and three years and six months, caring not for my soul, and then that this blessed truth should have burst upon me! How can I praise Him enough for His wondrous love towards such a poor, old sinner!"

* * *

VII. Ignorance of the Peace Christ Has Made

This story could be used to illustrate why bloodshed continues on earth -- why in spite of man's futile efforts in many ways to bring peace on earth, war continues through an ignorance that peace has already been brought by Christ, inward peace of heart and soul, the only peace that can cause men on earth to "learn war no more".

* * *

Canada and the United States have long been the best of friends, justly proud of the undefended border between them. It has not always been so. During the War of 1812, between the United States and Britain, the Americans crossed the border and destroyed York, modern day Toronto. The British retaliated by burning Washington, D. C. Finally, on December 24, 1814, representatives of the two countries, who had been meeting in Belgium signed the Treaty of Ghent, which agreed on the details of an armistice. Unfortunately, the news of the peace was delayed, and, on January 8, 1815, unaware of the armistice, the two armies met in the Battle of New Orleans. More than 2,000 men lost their lives in a totally unnecessary battle, because they were ignorant of the peace treaty.

* * *

VIII. Ignorance of Christ's Warnings

This story illustrates the danger of "tuning out" the warnings of Christ's Spirit as annoyances, when he that "walketh about seeking whom he may devour" is stalking a soul.

* * *

A former park ranger at Yellowstone National Park tells the story of a ranger leading a group of hikers to a fire lookout. The ranger was so intent on telling the hikers about the flowers and animals that he considered the messages on his two-way radio distracting, so he switched it off. Nearing the tower, the ranger was met by a nearly breathless lookout, who asked why he hadn't responded to the messages on his radio. A grizzly bear had been seen stalking the group, and the authorities were trying to warn them of the danger. Any time we tune out the messages God has sent us, we put at peril not only ourselves, but also those around us. How important it is that we never turn off God's saving communication! -- Harold M. Wiest

* * *

IX. Willingly Ignorant of Christ's Truth

This story is a very good illustration of being "willingly ignorant" of Christ's truth.

* * *

I have read somewhere of a British scientist in India who years ago, was greatly troubled by the Hindu custom of drinking the water of their sacred river Ganges. He knew the water was

full of impurities and most harmful to those who persisted in taking it. He wondered what he could do to stop the stupid practice. So he arranged an experiment and invited a leading Hindu priest, supposing that if he could only show the good man conclusively what foul drinking water it was, the priest would use his influence to save his people from disease.

The day came. By means of powerful glasses the scientist magnified the foreign bodies in the water and invited the priest to look through the eyepiece and see what dreadful dangers were there. It was terrible water. It was like the water Kipling mentions in Gunga Din. "It was crawling, green, and stunk." But in the midst of the examination, when the scientist turned his back to get another specimen glass, swift as thought, the Hindu priest snatched the apparatus from the bench and dashed it to a dozen pieces on the floor. It was the answer of ignorance, and only the strong-nerved could see him and not shudder.

Frederick Treves, the distinguished author and surgeon, in whose kindly care the Elephant Man spent the last years of his life, had an iron rule that no mirror of any kind ever be allowed in the Elephant Man's room. In that grotesque body there dwelt, as Treves discovered, a shy and sensitive soul. "At all costs," said Frederick, "he must not see himself."

There is no counterpart to that in the spiritual world. There is no one of us whom God will shield from the truth. He holds the mirror of Jesus before us, and, when we see ourselves in Him it is absurd to turn in anger or cowardice away from him. He reflects to us what is our true, spiritual likeness--the likeness which we must face at the Judgment.

* * *

X. Ignorance of the Fact That Christ is the One Who Makes Things "Tick"

This story is a good illustration of how it is Christ Who is "upholding all things by the word of his power," (Hebrews 1:3), so that "by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). He is the one who made the "Universe Clock," and He alone can make it stop and start again at will. Being ignorant that it is Christ Who makes things tick, men vainly delve into the secrets of life and the secrets of the Universe. But when God touches their mainspring they will stop, never to start again until he repairs the works.

The famous clock in Strasburg Cathedral had a mechanism so complicated that it seemed to the ignorant and superstitious almost a work of superhuman skill. The abused and offended maker, while as yet unpaid for his work, came one day and touched its secret springs, and it stopped. All the patience and ingenuity of a nation's mechanics and artisans failed to restore its disordered mechanism and set it in motion.

Afterward, when his grievances were redressed, that maker came again, touched the inner springs, and set it again in motion, and all its multiplied parts revolved again obedient to his will. When thus by a touch, he suspended and restored those marvelous movements, he gave to any doubting mind proof that he was the maker, and certainly the master, of that clock.

When Jesus of Nazareth brings to a stop the mechanism of nature, makes its mighty wheels turn back, or in any way arrests its grand movement--more than all, when He cannot only stop, but start again, the mysterious clock of human life--He gives to an honest mind overwhelming proof that He is God. For a malignant power might arrest or destroy, but only God could reconstruct and restore. --A. T. Pierson.

* * *

XI. What Christ Was Willing to Pay to Enlighten Men From Their Spiritual Ignorance

Abraham Bininger, a Swiss boy from Zurich, came with his parents to this country on the same ship that brought John Wesley. The father and mother of the lad both died on the voyage and were buried at sea, and he stepped alone from the gangway onto a strange continent where there was not a single familiar face. This solitude of his childhood drove him closer to the Friend in whom religion had early taught him to trust. The orphaned condition of the gentle boy must have appealed strongly to the sympathy of Mr. Wesley, and it was probably the great preacher himself who took him from the ship to the Methodist orphan school in Georgia where he was educated.

In his youth, Bininger gave proof of singularly devout and tender feeling, and this character was intensified with added years. When he had grown to manhood, he asked to be sent to tell the story of the cross to the Negroes of the island of St. Thomas, having heard of their great misery and degradation. When he arrived at the island, he learned that it was against the law for any person but a slave to preach to the slaves. It was the policy of the planters to keep the blacks in ignorance and superstition. Shortly after this, the governor of St. Thomas received a letter signed by Abraham Bininger, in which the writer begged urgently to become a slave for the rest of his life, promising to serve as a slave faithfully provided he could give his leisure time to preaching to his fellowslaves. The governor sent the letter to the King of Denmark, who was so touched by it that he sent an edict empowering Abraham Bininger to tell the story of the Messiah when and where he chose--to black or white bond or free. --Youth's Companion

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XII. The Pearl of Great Price Sold Cheaply Through Ignorance

This story illustrates how that through a profound spiritual ignorance, men are often willing to "sell-out" their interest in Christ for the paltry and cheap toys of time.

* * *

One of the first diamonds found on the South African diamond fields was picked up by the child of a small farmer as he was playing beside a brook near his father's cottage. Some months afterwards, a peddler came to the cottage with a pack on his back. As he was displaying his wares, the peddler spied the stone on a shelf in the room. He took it up and examined it, and then asked the mother what she would take for it. She pointed to the child and said, laughing, "It belongs to that bairn, not to me." The peddler then offered the boy a box of wooden soldiers worth a few cents in exchange for the stone, and the child gladly accepted the offer.

That stone, was a very precious jewel. The peddler took it to Capetown where he sold it for a large sum to a jeweler. When the jeweler sent it to Europe to be sold, he obtained \$125,000 for it, and it now adorns a royal neck.

Neither the child nor its parents were wise enough to know its value. Similarly, multitudes barter away, for a mess of pottage, the Pearl of Great Price which is within the reach of all.

--Topical Illustrations

* * *

XIII. Ignorance of the Power and Glory of Christ

This story can be used to illustrate how men underrate and underestimate the power and glory of Christ. The jealous Jews of Jesus day told Him: "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." (John 10:33) Christ's claims of Who He is and what he is able to do seem preposterous to many highminded, but ignorant, men of this world. And, strike out against Christ and the stories of his miraculous power.

* * *

A North American Indian returned to his tribe to recount the wonders he had witnessed in the white man's capitol city, Washington D. C.. His fellow tribesmen listened to him with doubt, until he declared that he had seen the white people attach a great ball to a canoe and so rise into the clouds and travel the heavens. This was pronounced to be an impossibility, and a young warrior, in a paroxysm of anger, leveled a rifle at his head and shot him dead on the spot, as too great a liar to be permitted to live.

Even thus, multitudes have, in deep spiritual ignorance, rejected the truth of the gospel and put to death many who have borne witness of its power and accomplishments in their own lives.

--Dictionary Of Illustrations

* * *

XIV. The Enfeebled Among the Enlightened not Ignorant of Christ

Perhaps quite often it has been shown, as below, that one who has been enlightened by Christ, but who has become enfeebled by age and decline, is still not ignorant of Christ -- that even though such are unable to identify others who were near to them, they yet "know Who Jesus is"!

* * *

When Bishop Beveredge was dying, one of his closest friends said to him, "Bishop Beveredge, do you know me?" The bishop asked, "Who are you?" And when the name was mentioned he said, "No." Then they said to him, "Don't you know your wife?" "What is her name?" he again asked. His wife came forward and said, "I am your wife, do you not know me?" "No, I

did not know I had a wife." The old man's mental machinery was breaking down. Then one knelt by him and whispered in his ear, "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" At that the dying man's face lighted up, and he answered, "Yes, I have known him for the last forty years, and I can never forget him. " Ah, yes; when memory's cords are all snapping, and the mind wanders in a maze, still the name of this Friend, the name of Jesus, will sound with sweet meaning in the believer's ear. The cord of memory that binds to Christ will still hold, and along it will flash messages of cheer and strength which shall establish your soul in the last darkness. --McCartney

* * *

XV. How a Professed Ignorance of Christ That Disowns Him Crushes His Loving Heart

On that night when all hell was marshaled against Christ and His Disciples, just before His crucifixion, Peter caved in to the satanic pressure, and he denied Christ with an oath, saying "I do not know the man" (Matthew 26:72). And, while Jesus later readily forgave Peter, that professed ignorance of Who and What Jesus was (and ever is), no doubt crushed Jesus' heart. This sad truth is vividly illustrated in the following story.

* * *

Doctor Torrey used to have an illustration, that was repeated to me, of an old father and mother who determined to give their boy an education. They were as poor as they could be. They had a conference in their home, and decided to send their boy to the university. They knew he must be away three years in his preparatory work, and four years in his college work, seven years in all. In the summer vacation he must work near the school, and could not come home. Every dollar sent to him increased the pinch of poverty at home. Finally, the old father said: "Wife, I cannot stand it; I am going to see him."

He did not have money enough to go by train, so he drove by horse and wagon across the hills. It took him days and days, and the horse he drove was ridiculous in appearance. The wagon in which he drove provoked a smile from all who saw him come into the university yard. He never knew that his boy had drifted. He had not been told that he had forgotten his father's God.

Three young fellows came swinging down the sidewalk in the university town. When they saw the old man, they laughed at him. He saw them in the distance too, and his old heart began to beat rapidly. He recognized one of them as his boy. He threw down his lines, sprang out of his wagon. and ran to meet his boy. They told me in the south that, that boy looked at him for only a moment, then, in the presence of his friends who had jeered at this old man, told him he did not know him, He said: "You are not my father!"

The old man turned, without a word; he did not touch his boy; he did not kiss him. He got into his wagon, rode away back over the hills, went into the old farmhouse, sat down in the old chair; his head drooped forward on his breast, and he was dead.

I wondered when I heard the story, why the boy did not have a vision of the old days, when his father said he would educate him; I wondered why the recollection of his father's prayers did

not stir him. But I can explain that, better than that you should be indifferent to Christ. --J. Wilbur Chapman

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XVI. The Sadness of Christ When the Knowledge of Him is Replaced by Spiritual Ignorance

This story can be used to illustrate the sadness of Christ when one who has formerly known Him and been very near to him has lost the knowledge of Christ. The parable will not "walk on all fours," but can be used to illustrate this truth.

* * *

A devoted mother, in her old age, failed in her mind. Her son had left home, a stalwart, bright lad, and he went away to Jamaica to seek his fortune. He stayed there a good many years, and after he had accumulated wealth he came home. Traveling was not so easy and luxurious in those days, but he felt he must come home to see his mother. When he entered the old home, those many years in Jamaica had written their marks on the buoyant frame, and had sprinkled grey hairs thickly upon his once raven locks. When he came in, the old lady said she did not know him. She looked at him, but she did not know him.

He had only a few days to spend with his old mother and the white-haired man who had left his mother's side, a bright young lad, said: "Mother, do you not know me? I am your son." "No, no, you are not my son. My son was a bright young lad. You are not my son." "Mother," he said. "I am your son John." "No, no! You are not my son. Go away! Go away! My son was a bright young lad." Positively, with a breaking heart, he went back to Jamaica without his mother having recognized him. They said that at the station, his heart was so sore and sad that he could hardly bear up for the journey. He was stricken with illness through sheer sorrow, that she whom he loved had, never received him.

Ah, Jesus Christ, in that picture of human life we can get a little inkling of what Thou didst feel, when Thou didst come to Thine own, and they refused Thee, when they would not have Thee. I know now why Thy soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. --John Robertson.

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XVII. How Ignorance of Christ Delays the Bright Blessings of Spiritual Light

Here is a story that tells of how a woman's sight was needlessly delayed, through ignorance of what could have been hers 20 years earlier -- a good illustration of the sad consequences of remaining spiritually blind when "the true Light now shineth."

A woman named Rose Crawford had been blind for 50 years. "I just can't believe it!" she gasped as the doctor lifted the bandages from her eyes after her recovery from delicate surgery in an Ontario hospital. She wept for joy when for the first time in her life a dazzling and beautiful world of form and color greeted eyes that now were able to see. The amazing thing about the

story, however, is that 20 years of her blindness had been unnecessary. She didn't know that surgical techniques had been developed, and that an operation could have restored her vision at the age of 30. The doctor said, "She just figured there was nothing that could be done about her condition. Much of her life could have been different."

As I read the news account of her case, some questions came to mind. Why did she continue to assume that her situation was hopeless? Had no one told her about the wonderful advances in eye surgery? Then I thought of the plight of those unreached by the Gospel. How many will go on living in moral blindness unless we bring them to the Savior? Millions will never know anything but spiritual darkness because no one has shared with them the Light that has come into the world. (Romans 10:14)

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XVIII. How Pride Can Blind One to Who Jesus Really Is

Those who glory in self-importance are often grossly ignorant of Who Jesus really is, and of Who should really be giving the orders. This story illustrates that, and also how those who truly reflect the Spirit of Christ are more willing to help than to bark orders.

During the American Revolution, it is said that an officer not wearing his military uniform was passing by where a small company of soldiers were at work making some repairs on a small fortification. The leader of the little squad was giving orders to those who were under him relative to a timber which they were endeavoring to raise to the top of the works. The timber went up hard, and on this account the voice of their little leader was the oftener heard in his regular vociferations of "Heave away! There she goes! Heave ho!

The officer before spoken of stopped his horse when he came to the place, and seeing the timber some times scarcely move, asked the squad leader why he did not take hold and render a little aid. The latter appeared to be somewhat astonished, and turning to the officer with the pomp of an emperor, said "Sir, I am a corporal! You are not though, are you?" said the pompous little corporal." "I was not aware of that," said the out-of-uniform officer, taking off his hat and bowing, I ask your pardon, Mr. Corporal!" Upon this, the officer dismounted from his elegant steed, flung the bridle over a post, and helped the laboring soldiers lift the timber till the sweat stood in drops upon his forehead.

When the timber was elevated to its proper station, turning to the proud little squad leader, the officer said: "Mr. Corporal Commander, when you have another such job and have not men enough, send to your Commander-in-chief, and I will come and help you a second time." The corporal was thunderstruck. The out-of-uniform officer was General George Washington. --Paxton Hood

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XIX. Ignorance of the Boundless Inheritance in Christ

Evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman recounted a testimony given by a man in one of his meetings. The man said: I got off at the train depot one day as a tramp. For a year I had begged on the streets. Badly in need of food, I touched a man on the shoulder and said, "Mister, please give me a dime." As soon as I saw his face, I recognized my aging father. "Don't you know me?" I asked. Throwing his arms around me, he cried, "Oh, my son, I have found you at last! All I have is yours!" Think of it -- I was a tramp who begged for 10 cents from a man I didn't know was my father, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all he possessed!

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XX. We Didn't Know Who You Was

I quote the words below from memory, part of an old Negro Spiritual that amplifies the theme of this composition. We have a record whereon Bev Shea sings the song, but since we do not presently have a record player I will have to rely on my memory.

"Poor little Jesus Child,
Born in a manger,
Poor little Holy Child,
We didn't know Who You was!

"Didn't know you come to save us, Lord
To take our sins away,
Our eyes were blind, Lord,
We didn't know Who You was!

"The world treat You mean, Lord
And treat us mean, too,
But that's how things is
Down here, Lord.

"They don't know Who you are!"

Yes, "that's how thing is, down here," but the dawning of a brighter, and eternal, prospect draweth nigh. Even now, "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18), -- a day when all ignorance of Christ shall be banished forever by the effulgence and splendor of His Appearing!

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02 -- "LET IT NOT BE" -- IT MEANS WHAT IT SAYS -- IN BOTH CASES!

I have read, or heard, it said, "None are so blind as they who WILL NOT see." Is it not "passing strange" how the very same words, found twice in the New Testament, "LET IT NOT BE," can, in relationship to one subject, be taken at face value -- (meaning exactly what they say)

-- and at the same time, relative to another subject be construed to mean something less than exactly what they say?

God lamented through the prophet Ezekiel: "O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?" (Ezekiel 18:29). It is "Unequal Interpretation" of the Scriptures to take one instance of those words in the New Testament at face value, and then, where they apply to another subject, to say that they don't mean what they say. The solemn fact is, however, the God-inspired command, "LET IT NOT BE," -- MEANS EXACTLY WHAT IT SAYS IN BOTH CASES!

1. IN THE FIRST CASE: -- Let us note the apostle Paul's use of this phrase in Ephesians 5:3 -- **RELATIVE TO SEXUAL FILTHINESS AND UNCLEANNES**: -- "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, LET IT NOT BE once named among you, as becometh saints."

Where is the professed, fundamental Christian anywhere on this earth who would dare to presume, after reading the above, that a little bit of fornication, uncleanness, or covetousness is acceptable in God's sight? -- that times have changed, that we must be realistic, and keep in step with the prevailing customs of the day, and therefore, a little sexual filthiness is all right. Hog-wash! Obviously, God, through Paul, meant exactly what He said here, and so strongly is God opposed to sexual filthiness that He burned it on Paul's heart to write that it must NOT EVEN ONCE be practiced, seen, or condoned in Christ's Church.

Read how strongly even the NIV translates Ephesians 5:3 -- "But among you THERE MUST NOT BE EVEN A HINT of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people."

Do I hear virtually every professed, fundamental Christian who reads this saying, "AMEN! AMEN! IT MEANS WHAT IT SAYS: GOD DOES NOT CONDONE EVEN A HINT of immorality and impurity among those who are true Christians!"

If that is so, -- and it is, -- then how could one possibly interpret the following instance where God inspired that same command to mean that "a little bit of the forbidden" is permissible? Please read on.

2. IN THE SECOND CASE: -- Let us note where Peter used this phrase in 1 Peter 3:3-4 **RELATIVE TO OUTWARD ADORNMENT**: -- "Whose adorning LET IT NOT BE that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

As applied to IMMORALITY and IMPURITY, all professed, fundamental Christians seem to agree: "LET IT NOT BE" means that "not once" can it be tolerated, yea "not even a hint" of such is permissible to God's people.

As applied to OUTWARD ADORNMENT, however, many professed, fundamental Christians interpret those same words to mean something different than what they say: -- that they

mean "A little bit of jewelry is permissible; maybe one ring, one gold wedding band, or a small string of beads doesn't matter to God; a slight hint of rouge and lipstick is allowable, just as long as you don't over-do it!"

Friend, the apostle Peter was no legalist -- BUT HE MEANT WHAT HE SAID!!!! -- and the God who inspired him to say it in writing meant exactly what is written: Christians must not, may not, cannot, ornament and adorn themselves outwardly with the bobbles and bangles of the world: -- proud and gaudy hair-dos, the wearing of gold, costly apparel, pearls, and such like -- are clearly, and explicitly forbidden -- PERIOD. End of the statement -- no exceptions.

The NIV translates the Divine Command in 1 Peter 3:3-4 thus: "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."

This sounds a little "watered down" to me, but still, the logic is inescapable: Anyone who is willing to "equally" and honestly interpret the command "Let it not be" as found in Ephesians 5:3 with the same command, "Let it not be," found in 1 Peter 3:3-4 -- must come to this conclusion: If there is no excuse for the slightest hint of immorality in a Christian's conduct, then there is also no excuse for the slightest hint of worldly, outward adornment to be seen on a Christian's body. That's it -- plain and simple, -- but simply "too plain," I fear, to suit many professed Christians and Holiness folks today!

Sparkling gems and bobbles, ear-rings, lipstick, rouge, necklaces, bracelets, wearing of gold (wedding bands not excepted), pearls, outlandish hair-dos and hair-styles, along with gaudy, costly, and immodest apparel may fit Jezebel and Ahab's crowd, but the apostle Peter says, "Let it not be" seen among those who profess to be Christians.

Furthermore, the loving, not legalistic, apostle Paul echoed those same commands when he wrote in 1 Timothy 2:9 -- "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array."

Those who look for some way around the command regarding sexual immorality, "LET IT NOT BE once named among you," are easily seen and tagged as Hypocritical Sinners, but, sad to say, many who look for some way around God's "equal" command regarding outward adornment, "LET IT NOT BE that outward adorning," are often seen as Holiness Saints! -- realistic, in step with the times, and Christians who have sense enough to know that such New Testament commandments do not apply in our times!

Strange, isn't it? -- how many -- who WOULD NEVER ASSERT that because times have changed, and immoral looseness is in vogue, a Christian can indulge in "a little bit of the same" and still be a Christian, -- WILL ASSERT that because times have changed and worldly, outward adornment is in vogue, a Christian can put on "a little bit of the same" and still be a Christian -- yea, even a sanctified saint!

This, I declare -- is NOT "RIGHTLY DIVIDING the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15)!

Can you not hear the Great Head of the Church saying to today's Laodicean crowd: "O professed, but proud, Laodicean Christians, are not my ways of commanding you in My Word equal? are not your ways of interpreting my commandments unequal?"

When Christ twice inspired an apostle to write: "Let it not be," He meant exactly what He said in both cases, and if some were as consistent about avoiding "even a hint" of worldly, outward adornment on their person as they are about avoiding "even a hint" of immorality in their lives, then a number of professed Christians would take off their paint, their pearls, their gold (including their wedding bands), their ear-rings, their necklaces, their bracelets, their flashy cuff-links, belt-buckles, even their showy tie-clasps and dazzlingly ornamented wristwatches, along with all other such bobbles and bangles that smack of worldly pride.

One can become a Christian without immediately shedding all such, but after reading and correctly understanding Christ's commands in 1 Peter 3:3-4 and 1 Timothy 2:9, a new Christian can only retain inwardly "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" by putting off all proud and showy, outward adornments in obedience to Christ's plain commands. Plainly written, it must be plainly followed, for "Let it not be" means exactly what it says in both places where God commands it. Regarding that fact, "Let God be true, and every man a liar" who disputes it. -- (Romans 3:4).

It is generally not the "newborn babes in Christ" who get upset by reading such articles as this or by hearing such sermons. More often, those who become rankled by this kind of teaching are those who at one time put off all such things, but who later put them back on after drifting back into the way of the world while still retaining their profession of salvation and holiness.

Some who are "all decked out" with the trappings of the world may justify themselves by saying in respect to some outward adornment, "God has not told me to take it off, so it must be all right to wear it." One rugged, holiness evangelist's reply to this was: "Why should He tell you to take it off, when He told you NOT TO PUT IT ON?" Selah.

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03 -- LET ALL THE EARTH KEEP SILENCE

"The Lord is in his holy temple: Let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Hab. 2:20).

"Stand in awe... sin not... and BE STILL" (Psalms 4:4).

"BE STILL, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalms 46:10).

"How long will it be ere thou BE QUIET?" (Jeremiah 47:6).

* * *

02 -- IT IS TIME FOR A LOUD-MOUTH, NOISY WORLD TO "KEEP SILENCE" AND "BE QUIET"!

Never before have men had more to say, with less reason to say it! Never has louder volume emanated from less virtue in those who speak! -- Never has there been less restraint to be "Quick-Spoken" when there was more reason to "Be Quiet"! -- Never has there been more "Shouting" with greater reasons to "Shut Up" -- than today!

At a time when the world could be morally and spiritually enriched through a "Silence that is Golden," it is instead being robbed of those treasures through Satan's deafening crescendo of "Sounding Brass and Tinkling Cymbals," the noise of which clamor renders it impossible to hear voice of God, drowns out the appeals of Truth and Reason, and effectively silences the sirens of Divine Warning.

Satan walketh about like a Loud, Roaring Lion and "The Din of the Devil" sounds forth in deafening shock-waves around the globe. He employs virtually every modern technology to transmit his calls to fleshly transgression and to angry aggression. Over the air-waves, Television channels, and on CDs and cassettes, Loud-Mouth Rappers voice their angry utterances in a rapid fire staccato like machine-guns spraying forth hails of verbal bullets aimed to kill what they hate and inciting hostile youths to turn up the volume, make themselves heard, resent authority, hate government, despise parents, kill cops, shoot dope, have a ball, and blast into oblivion all that stands in their way!

Day and night, -- like the startling thunder of an approaching storm -- punk youths drive down city streets with the volume of their boom-box car-speakers so loud that you can hear them coming from afar and, as they pass, the merciless-decibels rattle your window panes with sound-waves that rival a clap of thunder following a lightning flash right over your roof-top!

The drivers of these four-wheel thunder-storms cruise through town bent on making everyone within half-a-mile hear them -- like it or not! If their booming and startling thunder comes and passes during the day, one may heave a sigh of relief as the noise fades into the distance and then go back to work, but if it passes in the wee hours of the morning, the nerves of the wakened sleeper may be so jangled that more sleep is impossible. No matter to these Night-Time Nomads of Noise -- **THEY MUST BE HEARD!**

I remember as a lad in Payette, Idaho, when I heard such loud booming coming from blocks away from me, I knew that it was the thunder from a big bass drum in some marching band, and seldom was such man-made thunder heard. Today, however, such approaching sounds are less likely to be accompanied by the "strains" of "John Philip Sousa" and more likely to be accompanied by the "strain" of "Just Plain Satanic" disturbance of the peace!

Adding insult to injury, perhaps many of these young noise-makers will not be troubled by such rolling thunder when they themselves are older -- for by then, as a result of subjecting their ear-drums to such high volume in their youth, they will be too deaf to hear it, or -- they will be able to simply turn off their hearing aid!

Unfortunately, the Hellish-Vice of High-Volume Votaries is not all on wheels -- sometimes it is RIGHT NEXT DOOR! -- or even worse; if you dwell in an apartment, it can be RIGHT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL! -- pounding your ear-drums, vibrating the building, jangling your nerves, and driving you to distraction! Knock on their door and kindly ask them if they would mind turning down the music and you may get punched in the nose and/or told to "mind your own business!" Call the Landlord or the Police, and the noise will often begin again shortly after the authorities have left -- and BE MUCH LOUDER! Move out -- and you may move into an even worse situation!

The sad fact is: -- many in today's young generation can't even enjoy hearing "Silent Night" at Christmas-time unless its played LOUDLY with a fast beat! Thousands of so-called religious songs today are nothing more than loud "Rock and Roll," whose origin is not from the "Rock of Ages," but from the Gravel-Pit of Hell! There IS such a thing as "Religious Rock" music, but there IS NO SUCH THING AS "RIGHTEOUS ROCK MUSIC"! Including millions of today's professed Christians, the Votaries of Demonic Decibels are every bit as addicted to High Volume as they are to every other Hellish Vice. Even in many churches, if it doesn't jerk and twist, shake and shriek, rock and roll, thump and thunder -- it's not "music to their ears!"

Probably millions who condemn the enslaved Voyeurs of pornography are themselves Hooked on High Volume. But it matters not to Satan whether one becomes ensnared with wicked sights or with wicked sounds -- the net result is the same, and Hell is the final consequence.

Psalms 94:9 "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" Notice in this verse, THE EAR IS MENTIONED FIRST, and then THE EYE. Satan first got Eve's "ear" and then her "eye". FIRST SHE LISTENED to evil, then SHE LOOKED at the forbidden. That which gets man's ear will next catch his eye! If a man hears God, and hears Him long enough, he will look to God, and if a man hears that which emanates from the pit, he will soon be looking at evil and then doing evil.

As with Eve, the steps in Satanic enticement often are: (1) The Ear Listens (2) The Eye Looks (3) The Soul Sins. No wonder satan competes so vigorously to get the attention of mankind's ear! No wonder also, then, that God wants man to get quiet, so that he can once more hear God's Voice.

As God listens to the noxious noise and devilish din now amplified in high decibels from earth to heaven, can you not hear Him ask: "How long will it be ere thou BE QUIET?" (Jeremiah 47:6) The louder and noisier this world becomes, the more sinful it becomes. Satan knows that, and it is the very reason he does his utmost to keep the volume turned up high. In complete contrast, as the world rushes on, God admonishes the loud revelers to Turn Down the Volume, Stop the Noisy Din, "Stand in awe... sin not... and BE STILL" (Psalms 4:4). Yea, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalms 46:10).

God does exist! 2 Timothy 2:13 "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny himself."

God does still speak: Jeremiah 22:29 "O earth, Earth, EARTH, hear the word of the Lord."

It is far past time for wicked mankind to "Shut Up"! and "Be Quiet"! For, whether He is believed in or not, whether He is heard or not, even NOW "The Lord IS in His holy temple: LET ALL THE EARTH KEEP SILENCE before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20).

Soon He shall "descend from Heaven with a SHOUT!" (1 Thess. 4:16). No, there was no such thing, in reality, as "the SHOT that was heard around the world," but you had better believe it: there shall be such a thing as "THE SHOUT THAT IS HEARD AROUND THE WORLD"! -- and that shout shall be none other than THE SHOUT OF JESUS CHRIST, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS! at his Second Coming!

John 5:25, 28 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming... when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God... Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear his voice."

And believe you me, if that SOVEREIGN SHOUT OF CHRIST shall awake the dead, then, ALL THAT ARE LIVING SHALL ALSO HEAR HIS VOICE! and in that Day of All Days, His August Presence shall totally "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men!" (1 Peter 2:15) The Devilish Din shall cease; the "noisome pestilence" shall be replaced with a SILENT AWE -- so still that even a "pin-drop" could be heard, as it were, throughout the universe.

At His Omnipotent Command, the boisterous waves of Galilee instantly obeyed when Jesus said: "Peace, Be Still"! (Mark 4:39) And you can be certain that ALL shall HUSH, when at His Return, Christ commands: "BE SILENT, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up out of his holy habitation" (Zechariah 2:13).

At the Great White Throne Judgment, no unwanted noise shall interrupt the proceedings. Matthew 22:12 tells of the one "not having a wedding garment," that "he was speechless"! On the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord, while all in the awe-struck crowd at the Judgment utterly hold their peace, CHRIST JESUS shall "execute judgment upon all" and "convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 1:15).

He Who "stopped the mouths of lions" for Daniel (Heb. 11:33), shall utterly put to silence "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers... whose mouths must be stopped" and whose teachings now "subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake"! (Titus 1:10-11).

Those on Christ's Right Hand shall be bidden with joy into his Everlasting Kingdom. But those on His Left, in stunned awe, shall be Divinely ordered: "SIT THOU SILENT, AND GET THEE INTO DARKNESS!" (Isaiah 47:5) 1 Samuel 2:9 tells us that while "He will keep the feet of his saints... the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

Today, "many unruly and vain talkers" stoutly and loudly argue against Christ and the Bible -- their bellicose and godless harangues being heard from the Halls of Congress on down to the Hamlets all across our nation, but no matter how strong their voices now, their mouths shall be stopped at the Judgment, "for by [puny human] strength shall no man prevail" against Him that sitteth upon the Throne! And a fate far worse than that which has already befallen Madaline Murray O'Hare awaits both her and them.

When all of this occurs, "The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and ALL INIQUITY SHALL STOP HER MOUTH"! (Psalms 107:42). Heaven will loudly and eternally rejoice, when Hell is forever "Shut Up"! There will be much noise in Hell, with its endless cries, groans, weeping and wailing, but when Hell is "Shut Up" none of those sounds shall ever reach the ears of those in the New Jerusalem. For, "Whoso hearkeneth unto [Christ] shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" -- world without end! (Proverbs 1:33)

In contemplation of these things, how fitting is Paul's admonition found in 1 Thess. 4:11 that Christians "study to be quiet" in this present, loud-mouth, noisy, raucous, and wicked world.

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04 -- DON'T DRINK FROM THE SPIGOT OF A BIGOT!

Job 12:2-3 "No doubt but ye are THE people, and WISDOM SHALL DIE WITH YOU. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?"

Romans 2:17, 19-20 Behold, THOU... makest thy boast of God, and ART CONFIDENT THAT THOU thyself ART A GUIDE of the blind, A LIGHT of them which are in darkness, AN INSTRUCTOR of the foolish, A TEACHER of babes, which hast THE FORM of knowledge and of the truth in the law."

John 7:37 "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME, and drink!"

* * *

WHAT IS A BIGOT?

The Oxford Dictionary on my computer defines a bigot as: "an obstinate and intolerant believer in a religion, political theory, etc." And, the American Heritage Dictionary also on my computer defines a bigot as: "One who is strongly partial to one's own group, religion, race, or politics and is intolerant of those who differ."

It is easy to see, from the modern definition of the word, that THERE IS A HUGE AMOUNT OF EGOTISM INVOLVED IN BIGOTRY! -- and this is true with bigots of all sorts: racial bigots, political bigots, and even RELIGIOUS BIGOTS.

Job complained that his bigoted, "miserable comforters" had such an high opinion of their own views that they thought themselves to be "THE people," and that when they passed on the world would forever lose, as it were, the key to all truth! Sounds an awful lot like Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health, with KEY to the Scriptures." Such was the ego of the false prophetess of so-called, "Christian" Science that she thought herself to be "THE ONE" who held "THE KEY" that unlocked all of the truth in the Bible. IF you didn't use "HER KEY" then Bible Truth would forever remain behind a locked door!

Pretty "Heady" stuff! -- especially when Jesus said, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE, NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT -- BY ME"!! (John 14:6). I assert that Mary Baker Eddy claimed for herself what only belongs to Christ, for He declared of Himself in Revelation 3:7 "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, HE THAT HATH THE KEY of David, HE THAT OPENETH, and no man shutteth; AND SHUTTETH, and no man openeth!" Christ holds the Key to Truth, and he did not give it, even temporarily, into the hand of such as Mary Baker Eddy. Of that, you can be sure!

After Saul of Tarsus was "knocked off of his high horse" on the road to Damascus by the Blazing Manifestation of Christ, brighter than the noon-day sun, he ceased being a bigot and became an humble follower of Jesus. Then, he ran "smack-dab" into the same bigotry in the Jews that he had once had himself! He had once thought "he knew it all," but after Christ knocked all of that nonsense out of him, he wrote in 1 Cor. 8:2 "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Paul had learned this truth himself -- the hard way!

In Romans 2:17, 19-20, he described the bigotry that yet remained among the unbelieving, Jewish Scribes and Pharisees -- how they were boastfully confident that they were THE guides, THE lights, THE instructors, and THE teachers, who had THE form of knowledge and truth! And, they fancied, NONE COULD BE SAVED WHO DID NOT "KOWTOW" TO THEIR TEACHINGS!

Again, it was easy for the apostle Paul to see through their bigotry, for before God knocked the starch out of him on the Damascus road he was himself perhaps the BIGGEST BIGOT in all Israel at that time. After his encounter with the blinding splendor of Christ on the Damascus road, then it was, that Saul of Tarsus perceived that he had "known nothing yet as he ought to know" it. And even later, after he had been "caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," (2 Cor 12:4), he still recognized that HE DIDN'T KNOW IT ALL, and placed himself among those who must needs confess that "now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

If ever there was a Holiness Preacher, Paul was it! -- but he was no longer a bigot, nor should any Holiness Preacher be such. Most fundamental Christians have little trouble in discerning the egotistical bigotry of such false prophets as Joseph Smith, Father Divine, Judge Russell, Ellen G. White, and Mary Baker Eddy. What is more difficult for them to discern is bigotry in Fundamental Preachers, and especially in Holiness Preachers!

Bigotry in a Holiness Preacher!!?? How could that be!!?? I thought you said Paul got the bigotry knocked out of him when he was saved and sanctified. My answer to that is: Carnality is purged from the human heart in the second work of grace, for it has all of its roots in the heart; whereas, Bigotry has some of its roots in those parts of the human mind and ego that are not related to Carnality. To be sure, much Bigotry is rooted in Carnality, and is purged from the heart when one is genuinely sanctified -- but not all Bigotry automatically ceases to exist when a man is sanctified wholly.

The fact that zealous Holiness Preachers and Teachers are sometimes bigoted in their notions is not only possible, but sometimes all too obvious. I once read or heard a fictional story of what happened after all of a farmer's chickens got out of the pen. It went something like this: After discovering that his chickens were all out of the pen, he opened the pen-door and began to shoo them back in. Quite soon, he had managed to get all of them rounded up and shooed back into the pen -- all except for one elusive rooster. Long after all of the other chickens were back in the pen, he chased and chased that rooster all around the barn yard, until FINALLY, he got him back into the pen, and closed the door. Whereupon, the rooster boastfully crowed to the other chickens, "I GOT IN!" "So what?" they replied, WE ALL GOT IN!" "Yes, replied the boasting rooster," BUT YOU DIDN'T GET IN LIKE I GOT IN!!"

Unfortunately, this little fictional story illustrates all too clearly the attitude of some Holiness Preachers, viz. -- IF YOU DIDN'T GET IN LIKE I GOT IN, YOU HAVEN'T GOT IT! It took me nine days of groaning and confessing out, and dying-out like a yellow dog under the back porch before I GOT IN! AND IF YOU DON'T TAKE THE ROUTE I TOOK YOU'LL NEVER GET IT, and if you haven't sought the way I sought, you don't have it!

Does God demand death to self before one is sanctified wholly? Absolutely! But, it is the PRODUCT (death to self) that is necessary -- and not a long, drawn-out PROCESS of dying. The death of Christ is the ULTIMATE TYPE of how death to self should occur, and listen to this: Jesus died so quickly that "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead!" (Mark 15:44). Jesus offered Himself up to God willingly, and thus died quickly -- his life not being taken by force, but offered by faith!

Nevertheless, some Holiness Preachers seem to think that because God had to "chase them all over the barnyard" for nine days or two weeks before they died out and got the blessing, therefore, everyone must take the same route and go through the same drawn-out process. This mistaken notion may next become a passion. Then, after some success is seen in getting people into the experience of entire sanctification while preaching such things, a certain degree of human ego gets involved and the preacher can become quite bigoted in his persuasion that HE, and a FEW OTHER SELECT people who think as he does on the subject are, as Job put it, "THE PEOPLE" who hold the KEY into the blessing! Use our KEY, or be forever shut out of heart holiness!

Further, Fundamental and Holiness preachers and teachers can be thus bigoted about any number of things pertaining to salvation, entire sanctification, and various aspects of the Christian life. Indeed, I will go so far as to say that perhaps most zealous preachers of the Gospel are a bit bigoted about this or that. Therefore, it is wise for any follower of Christ to do like those in Berea of whom it is written in Acts 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that

they received the word with all readiness of mind, and SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES daily, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO."

Job 32:9 warns, that "Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment." Even the best, the most holy, the most mature, men of God still "see through a glass darkly" sometimes, and it is altogether possible that while they think that they see clearly what must be the case, sometimes they unwittingly err! The fact that a man is a "Great Man of God" does not mean that he is infallible. He does not always speak "ex-cathedra" -- he is not a Pope, and should not be taken as such, nor behave like one.

In writing these things, I do not suggest that any God-called, Spirit-filled, preacher of the Gospel should be taken lightly, or that his messages should be totally ignored, or he himself be treated with disrespect. There is great danger in this opposite extreme. I only advise:-- be careful that you "don't drink from the spigot of a bigot" -- don't drink in as irrefutable truth all that every preacher says or writes without first being sure that it squares with the Scriptures.

There is only ONE from Whose "Spigot" all may drink without fear of any admixture of error: John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, JESUS stood and cried, saying, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME, AND DRINK."

* * * * *

05 -- EITHER A BLESSING OR A FOOL

His name was "Ab-----" and it was said to him: "thou shalt be a blessing" (Genesis 12:2).

And again:

His name was "Ab-----" and it was said to him: "thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel" (2 Samuel 13:13).

Similarity is seen at the beginning of their names, but an eternal contrast is seen in their very opposite characters and destinies. The former followed the leadership of God -- the latter followed the lust of the flesh. The former walked by faith -- the latter walked by sight. The former left home permanently to mind God -- the latter left home temporarily to escape punishment. The former was probably ordinary in appearance -- the latter was striking in appearance. The former sought to inherit the Heavenly Jerusalem and Heavenly Kingdom -- the latter sought to steal the Earthly Jerusalem and Earthly Kingdom. The former lived for God -- The Latter lived for Self. The former was a giver -- the latter a taker. The former was a preserver of life and rescued a family member -- the latter was a murderer and sought to slay his father. As the father of a great nation, the former raised up a numberless multitude for God who emulated his walk. -- As the father of none, the latter reared up a single pillar for Himself to perpetuate his memory. The former died in honor -- the latter died in reproach. In short, THE FORMER WAS A BLESSING -- THE LATTER WAS A FOOL. The former was Abraham -- the latter was Absalom.

There are no other alternatives from God for a man, for a woman, for one in Israel, for anyone. Depending upon one's personal choice relative to following God, one will be EITHER, OR -- EITHER A BLESSING OR A FOOL -- a blessing by following God, or a fool for following self and Satan. There is no middle ground; one cannot be half one and half the other. There is no double ground; one cannot be both. And this "Either -- Or" being is true of everyone of flesh and blood Israel, of everyone whether religious or irreligious, of everyone whether male or female, of everyone whether young or old, whether rich or poor, whether white or black, whether ignorant or highly educated -- it is an universal fact of all accountable human existence that cannot be avoided -- you must be by choice "either" a Blessing "or" a Fool.

It may seem to millions that it should be possible to be something other than a fool if one is not a blessing, but in very truth there simply are no other possibilities for those who are accountable before God. There is no such place as "Hellven" -- half way between Hell below and Heaven above for those who are supposedly too good to be in Hell and too sinful to be in heaven. I read recently a song title: "Hell ain't for Heroes," as if simply being some sort of hero automatically qualifies one for some eternal dwelling place above Hell. However, the solemn fact is, all heroes who were spiritual fools will be in hell, and all heroes who were a spiritual blessing (as God defines being a blessing) will be in Heaven, with no heroes of any sort in between!

One songwriter, in debunking certain myths, said: "There ain't no California (as dreamily and mythically envisioned by many) -- ain't no Big Rock Candy Mountain -- ain't no Gulf of Mexico!" (again, as dreamily and mythically envisioned by many).

I remember hearing of the mythical "Big Rock Candy Mountain" when as a boy I saw pieces of hard candy that were made to look like stones. My, I thought! what a delicious place that sounded like! Just think how wonderful it would be to visit "The Big Rock Candy Mountain" and be able to pick up candy rocks! -- stuff your pockets full, eat all you could hold! -- My! what a place that sounded like. And "California"! Oh, how heavenly it must be! -- a place where there's fun in the sun, not a cloud in the sky, where the golden sand meets the blue rolling waves of the Pacific -- Oh! surely it must be like heaven to live in California! where all are healthy, and wealthy, and carefree!

But, of course, it was all a figment of my imagination -- "There ain't no California" like that, and "There ain't no Big Rock Candy Mountain" anywhere in God's universe! -- and, "There ain't no Hellven" halfway between Hell below and Heaven above! There simply is no such place anywhere in God's universe, past, present, or future! (See my article "Ya Can't Get to Hellven From Here" -- hdm0123, Article 35)

Furthermore, one's spiritual character cannot be somewhere between that of being a true spiritual Blessing, qualifying one for Heaven, and a true spiritual fool, qualifying one for Hell. I read story something like this: A man who was not a Christian was dying, but refused to believe that hell must be his lot and said to the one who was endeavoring to help him get saved: "There must be some better place for a man of my respectability." No, there is no Hellven for men of "respectability" who were in fact "fools" in God's sight, and who were not the "blessing" they should have been by walking in the steps of faithful Abraham. It is "Either -- Or" in God's sight, with no place in between for a man to be something less than a Blessing and yet something above a

Fool, or to abide forever in a place somewhere below Heaven and yet above Hell -- whether he be a hero, a man of respectability, or whatever!

Someone asked, "Where is Hell"? -- back came the simple, but profound reply: "Any place outside of Heaven!" Someone might also ask, "Who is a fool?" -- and likewise, back could come the simple, but profound reply: "Anyone who is not a Blessing as God defines a Blessing," which is synonymous with being one of his true children, one of his true followers. God's children are a real Blessing on earth, no matter how humble their lot and how obscure their place, and all others are Fools in God's sight, no matter how elevated their position and how widely they are known and revered by men.

Every person spoken of in the Bible who is a genuine Blessing has his or her anti-type in another person mentioned within the Sacred Pages who is a real Fool. Beyond the striking contrasts between AB-raham and AB-salom are plenty of other pairs of such Blessing/Fool types and anti-types. Naturally, the first two letters of their names are not all the same, but the contrasts and dissimilarities in their characters can be just as easily delineated.

Abel was a Blessing -- Cain was a fool, and the contrasts between them are vivid. Job was a Blessing -- His wife was a fool. Job was willing to trust God and suffer -- His wife wanted him to curse God and die. Jacob was a Blessing -- Esau was a Fool. Jacob valued things unseen and spiritual -- Esau valued things visible and sensual, and once again the contrast between these two twin brothers are striking. And, one could go on and on... Moses (who could have been Pharoah himself) was a Blessing -- Pharoah was a Fool. David was a Blessing -- Saul was a Fool, even testifying the very same of himself saying in 1 Samuel 26:21, "I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." Mordecai was a Blessing -- Haman was a Fool. Jesus was a Blessing -- Herod, Judas, and Pilate were Fools. Paul was a Blessing -- Nero was a Fool.

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of " others in the Bible and throughout the history of God's Church who were a Heaven-made Blessing on earth, who in

righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens... received their dead raised to life again: and others" who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection, still others who "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." These saved and sanctified Blessings on earth "were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all" might have made fools of themselves as the millions of others around them, but instead, through obedience to God, faith in Christ, and perseverance through all of life's trials and vicissitudes, as God's dear Children they have been, are now, and ever shall be, a Blessing. (Hebrews 11:32-40).

The words of the first verse and chorus of the following hymn fit the theme of this article and contain a good prayer for the reader in closing:

Out on the Highways and byways of life,
Many are weary and sad:
Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife,
Making the sorrowing glad.

Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing,
Out of my life, may Jesus shine.
Make me a blessing, O Savior, I pray,
Make me a blessing to someone today.

-- Ira B. Wilson

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06 -- PENTECOST -- MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT VS. MINOR ACCOMPANIMENTS

Hebrews 6:9 "Things that accompany salvation"

Acts 2:1-4 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came A SOUND from heaven as OF A RUSHING MIGHTY WIND, and IT FILLED ALL THE HOUSE where they were sitting. 3 And there APPEARED unto them CLOVEN TONGUES LIKE AS OF FIRE, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And THEY were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Acts 11:17 & 15:9 "God gave them the like gift as he did unto us .. purifying their hearts by faith."

SALVATION is God's GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT in mankind, received by faith in Christ as His free gift in two distinct works of grace: Regeneration and Entire Sanctification. And, along with the GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS of Regeneration and Entire Sanctification, there are relatively MINOR ACCOMPANIMENTS with those crisis experiences. One could not term as minor those things that accompany salvation in one's life following the crisis experiences, but in using the term "things that accompany salvation" in this treatise I refer only to those things that accompany the immediate occasions when one receives the New Birth and when one receives the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

One of Satan's great ploys relative to salvation is to get those who receive it to "Major on Minors" and to "Minor on Majors". Thus, accompanying both the initial experience of the New Birth and the subsequent experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost there are definitely some MINOR ACCOMPANIMENTS upon which one should not Major, and a MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT upon which one should not Minor!

When one receives the New Birth, the MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT is that one becomes spiritually and knowingly a new creature in Christ Jesus, born of the Spirit and washed in the blood. The recipient of initial salvation is Born Again, and knows it -- clearly. This is the primary

thing -- the Major Accomplishment of the First Work of grace. However, there are numerous but varying and relatively MINOR ACCOMPANIMENTS that are often manifested at the time people are born again: -- (1) Tears of joy may accompany one person's new birth and yet be entirely absent when another is born of the Spirit; (2) Loud shouts of praise may be utterly unrestrainable with one, and another may feel awed into a profound, holy silence; (3) A gushing love for all may flood one man, impelling him to give a hearty, brotherly hug to every spiritual brother in the house, while another may feel like quickly removing himself from all others to utter repeated praise to God alone; (4) One may feel ecstatic and light as a feather and want to run the aisles realizing the heavy load of sin sweetly removed, while another may feel no such ecstasy, having instead a feeling of deep, inward peace and a desire to drink in the blessed quietness of that tranquillity. In regard to these relatively Minor Accompaniments that affect the emotions, each New Birth experience is different, and Divinely tailored to the individual.

The Minor Accompaniments of the First Work of grace, therefore, should not be majored upon, nor insisted upon as the required evidence that one is genuinely Born Again. Yet, too often well-meaning saints have given the impression, intentionally or unintentionally, that others who are really saved will feel the same as did they. As a result, some who mistakenly look for those same signs may conclude that they must not be born again when in fact they should not doubt their experience one iota. The Major Accomplishment of the New Birth is that inward regeneration that makes one quickened and alive unto God, and the assurance that the work is done, may or may not be accompanied by any of the above-mentioned emotions. However, even though one has received at the crisis a clear assurance of initial salvation, it is possible to fall quickly into doubt about its genuineness if one is made to believe that "if" it was real it must have been accompanied by this or that feeling or sign, when that accompaniment was lacking.

The fact is, there is nothing visible, audible, tangible, or emotional that must accompany the New Birth. I know, such sayings as: "If ya ain't seen nothin', heard nothin', and felt nothin', brother you ain't got nothin'!" sound awfully convincing sometimes, but declarations of this type can be misleading. One can be definitely assured of salvation without once having shed a tear or experiencing more than a clear, unmistakable knowledge that the work is done. In most cases, probably, if such be the case initially it won't be long until some other emotion will be touched and moved, but it is important to realize that those emotions are the Minor Accompaniments and not the Major Accomplishment of the First Work of grace.

It is likewise regarding the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. On the day of PENTECOST, the MINOR ACCOMPANIMENTS of (1) A Sound of a Rushing Mighty Wind, (2) A Sight of Cloven Tongues of Fire, and (3) A Spirit-evoked Speaking in Tongues, were manifest, but it is important to realize that these things were NOT the MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT of Pentecost, and that none of them is to be taken as the evidence that one has received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

We must admit that one of these Minor Accompaniments of Pentecost was manifest at the house of Cornelius when the Gentiles first received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, -- i.e. Spirit-evoked speaking in tongues. And, in describing what happened at Cornelius' house, Peter does say that the Gentiles there did receive "THE LIKE GIFT" as that which the 120 had received at Pentecost. But in describing the MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT at Pentecost, Peter says that it consisted in "purifying their hearts by faith". THIS was the Major Accomplishment of Pentecost --

heart purity; THIS was the MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT at the house of Cornelius -- heart purity; and THIS has ever been, is now, and ever shall be until Jesus comes, THE MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST -- HEART PURITY.

The fact that "the like gift" received by those of Cornelius' house was, first and foremost, heart purity is borne out by other testimony from Peter as well: "And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath CLEANSED, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). -- "But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath CLEANSED, that call not thou common" (Acts 11:9-10). The Major Accomplishment upon those at Pentecost and those at Cornelius' house consisted, not their speaking in tongues, but in the divine cleansing of their hearts from all sin. In comparison with this Major Accomplishment, all other Minor Accompaniments fade into relative insignificance.

But, what about the "filling" with the Holy Ghost? Was it not a Major Accomplishment? Yes indeed, but it was done at the same moment their hearts were cleansed. God never "fills" what He has not first "cleansed," and it would be impossible to separate the two in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. What the Holy Ghost purged he filled -- all in the twinkling of an eye. So, when I speak of cleansing and heart purifying at Pentecost being the Major Accomplishment, I include in that statement the fact that they were instantaneously filled with the Holy Ghost at the same instant.

In order to better understand why the sounds, sights, and utterances of Pentecost were not the Major Accomplishment of that day, we should realize that Pentecost was the time of great transition from the era of the Law to the era of the Spirit. During the era of the Law, God always witnessed to His people through their physical senses: -- something visible like lightning or fire, something audible like thunder or a loud voice, or something tangible like water out of a rock, and many other things that could be seen, heard, or touched.

The writer to the Hebrews asserts that these visible, audible, and tangible witnesses to the physical senses are not the Witness or essence of the New Covenant. [caps and bracketed comments mine]: "For ye are NOT come unto the mount that might be TOUCHED, and that burned with [VISIBLE] fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the SOUND of a trumpet, and the [AUDIBLE] voice of words; which voice they that HEARD entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast TOUCH the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the SIGHT, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:18-24).

In contrast with the audible, visible, and tangible witnesses given during the days of the Old Covenant is the inner witness of the Holy Ghost during the era of the Spirit. Paul describes this New Covenant Witness in these words: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). This is nothing that can be heard with the ears, seen

with the eyes, nor touched with the hands, but it is very real nonetheless, and when God thus bears witness to a penitent believer, he knows very certainly that he is born again.

Furthermore, as God's witness to regeneration is nothing perceived by the physical senses, even so God's witness to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is nothing like a visible fire or an audible "voice of words" either spoken to the receiver or by him. God's witness to the believer that he is genuinely baptized by the Holy Ghost is an inward witness by the Spirit Himself: "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6) How does one know clearly and definitely that he has received the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Not by having spoken audibly in some tongue or language, for "it is the Spirit that beareth witness" under the New Covenant! -- both to one's regeneration and one's entire sanctification, or baptism of the Holy Ghost.

When one has received the true baptism of the Holy Ghost, he needs no other outward evidence whatsoever, for the Holy Ghost bears witness of Himself as both refining and residing in His fullness within one's heart. One moment after its occurrence, I would have had to lie to say that I did not know that I had received the mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost when He purged and filled my heart during a great revival at BMI the winter of 1959-60. The moment He came, I cried out, "He's Here! He's Here!" -- and in holy rapture I "tore up the patch" skipping and praising God over the knowledge and realization that I was Baptized with the Holy Ghost and Fire!" It was some time before I quieted down -- but not once did I speak an unknown tongue, nor did I hear a rushing wind, nor were cloven tongues of fire seen on my head. I needed none of that! I knew I had received the mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost because "it was the Spirit" Who gloriously told me so and made me joyously conscious of that fact!

That was in Rock Island, Illinois, but during this Era of the Spirit "the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city," (Acts 20:23), in every spot on earth, to every man and woman, boy or girl -- yea witnesseth Himself to every heart when that soul has been born again and when that soul is Baptized with the Holy Ghost and Fire! Furthermore, when one gets the real thing that spiritual, inner knowledge is so clear that you would have to lie to deny that you know it, and, believe me -- you not only need no witness to your physical senses, but you would actually consider it an insult to the Holy Ghost to seek for such. Why would a man seek to know by his physical senses what he already KNOWS CLEARLY, BEYOND QUESTION BY THE RINGING, RESOUNDING WITNESS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN HIS HEART?!! Answer: HE WOULDN'T!!!

Nay! It is the Holy Ghost Who witnesses inwardly to the heart of one who is genuinely regenerated, and in like manner "the Holy Ghost also is a witness" (Hebrews 10:15) that the mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost has been received!

Why?? then, did things visible and audible accompany the Baptism of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost and on various occasions directly after Pentecost?

My answer is this: -- It was a time of great transition from the Era when such assurances were given, to the Era when they were to be totally done away. Remember, those 120 in the upper room were all Jews, men and women who had lived under the Law and for hundreds of years God's people had been given visible, audible, and tangible witnesses to their physical senses.

Further, the great crowd that heard and saw those upon whom the Spirit had fallen were also Jews who were accustomed to being convinced of divine things by signs audible, visible, and tangible.

The gift of speaking in a language not their own was bestowed upon the upper room crowd, not to persuade the 120 that they had received the promise of the Father, for they were gloriously aware of that already, before they began thus speaking. "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not" (1 Corinthians 14:22). That gift of speaking in tongues not their own was given them to convince the great crowd who had rushed to the scene, of the deity of Christ and of the availability of His heaven-sent salvation. To the Jews who had long been accustomed to receiving signs to their physical senses, God sent them, as to those who would not be convinced by anything else. But this was soon to be done away.

Likewise, on other occasions shortly after Pentecost, the miraculous gift of speaking fluently in a language not before known was also manifested through some of the Gentiles who also received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. But the same reason applied -- the sign not being given to witness to the recipients themselves of their Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but being given to demonstrate to observing Jews that the Holy Ghost was also poured out upon the Gentiles. But once again, this temporary sign was soon done away.

I assert that every instance, including at Pentecost and shortly thereafter, when the gift of speaking fluently in languages before not known accompanied the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, it was to persuade someone other than the recipients of the Baptism that the Holy Ghost had been given to those persons.

But, once the Spirit clearly attested to the fact that the Holy Ghost was now being poured out upon both Jews and Gentiles, after that brief transitional period, all of the Minor Accompaniments of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost ceased, and the Spirit increasingly led God's children to see and experience that the Major Accomplishment of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is the purifying of one's heart, made known to every true recipient thereof by the Holy Ghost Himself, with no need whatsoever of any sign made known to the physical senses.

This statement does not preclude the present-day miraculous speaking in a tongue one has never learned as God's gift to preach the gospel, nor does it preclude the gift of a heavenly language during a time of deep communion with God. It is merely to say that the gift of tongues was never intended to be a witness to the believer that he or she has received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost -- neither at Pentecost, nor any time thereafter throughout the Era of the Spirit. It is also to say that those Minor Accompaniments were temporarily given to convince onlookers that the Spirit was poured out upon believing Jews and Gentiles alike, and then those Minor Accompaniments were done away as no longer necessary in the Era of the Spirit.

The audible sound of the rushing mighty wind, the visible cloven tongues of fire, and the "sound of words" spoken in a language not their own -- these were the temporary MINOR ACCOMPANIMENTS of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, while the MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT was, and still is, the purifying of the believers' hearts from all sin.

"It is the Spirit that beareth witness" to both works of grace in our Era. Jesus warned that "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it" (Matthew 12:39). I for one, feel that it is sinful to seek for an audible sign that one has received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost when God has ordained during our Era to witness to that work by the Holy Ghost alone with an inward voice that is loud and clear, but totally unheard by one's own ear or the ears of others.

Why is it safe to say that Tongues are a Minor Accompaniment while Heart Purity is the Major Accomplishment of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost? Beyond all of the reasons I have heretofore stated in this treatise are these reasons also:

(1) ONE CAN ENTER HEAVEN WITHOUT EVER HAVING SPOKEN IN TONGUES: -- "Do all speak with tongues?" (1 Corinthians 12:30) -- the inferred answer is "No".

(2) SPEAKING IN UNKNOWN TONGUES WILL END WHEN TIME ENDS: -- "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease..." (1 Corinthians 13:8). I venture to say that in heaven all will speak the same known, heavenly tongue, and that forever.

(3) NONE SHALL ENTER HEAVEN WITHOUT HEART PURITY: -- "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

When it comes to the true Baptism of the Holy Ghost, it is of utmost importance that one not Major on the Minor Accompaniments of Pentecost and Minor on the Major Accomplishment of that day -- the purifying of their hearts. For to err here can mean eternal regret, and to hit the mark here can mean eternal rejoicing, where with new and heavenly tongues the pure in heart shall praise the Lamb around the throne throughout eternity.

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07 -- SPIRITUALLY GIFTED -- AND FULL OF CONCEIT

Acts 2:38 "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST."

Deuteronomy 16:19 "THOU SHALT NOT... TAKE A GIFT: for A GIFT DOTH BLIND THE EYES OF THE WISE, and pervert the words of the righteous."

When I was young, I used to hear the following expression: "There's no conceit in his family; he has it all!"

Conceit is one of the most obnoxious traits in fallen man. When it is manifested, everyone confronted with it is disgusted by it but the person putting it on display. Those who are conceited often fancy themselves to be "The Hope" of whatever it is with which they are connected, when, in fact they are "hopelessly" blinded by their own highmindedness: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Proverbs 26:12). You can teach a fool a few things, but a conceited person cannot be taught -- he or she already knows it all! Paul said in 1

Corinthians 8:2 that "if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know," but those hopelessly blinded in their conceit are immeasurably ignorant about virtually everything -- as they ought to know those things.

Gifted people often become conceited -- and would you believe it? some gifted people who become conceited are those who are spiritually gifted -- those who have actually received "the gift of the Holy Ghost"!

"Impossible!" do I hear someone reply? "Those who receive the true Baptism of the Holy Ghost have been cleansed from the carnal nature and therefore cannot become conceited!"

"Wrong!" I say -- "Very Wrong!"

It is true that the command in Deuteronomy 16:19, "Thou shalt not... take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous" did not apply to the receiving of spiritual gifts. It meant, rather, that one must not receive any gift or bribe from another that would cause the receiver to "wink at" the misdeeds of the giver, or that would cause the recipient of the gift to be purposely blind to the just requirements of the law related to the giver. This was the danger involved in taking mundane and monetary gifts addressed by that command.

But there ARE DANGERS RELATED TO RECEIVING THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST -- not the same danger that is addressed in Deuteronomy 16:19, but dangers just the same -- not dangers that preclude or negate the commands to receive the Gift of the Spirit, but dangers just the same -- and, one of those dangers is that of becoming blinded by spiritual conceit.

All conceit is blinding and makes the conceited one unteachable, but perhaps the most blinding and most unteachable form of conceit is spiritual conceit -- a conceit that is often closely connected with the inward confidence and assurance that one has received the Gift of the Holy Ghost, or some other spiritual gift. Please note, however, I said "closely connected with" not "arising out of" the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

There IS an awareness after one has received the mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost, that you are possessed of an inward knowledge and perception that millions do not have. To those who are sanctified wholly there IS a genuine sense in which "the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye NEED NOT THAT ANY MAN TEACH YOU: but... the same anointing teacheth you of all things" (1 John 2:27). Nevertheless, "closely connected with" that genuinely superior knowledge can be a very subtle danger: -- that of "letting it go to your head" -- that of allowing satan to get you to thinking more highly of yourself than you ought -- that of becoming spiritually unteachable by or through any other human being.

Don't tell me it can't happen. It has happened. It does happen -- and sometimes those whose spiritual gifts are the brightest are the weakest at this very point, the most susceptible to the germination of spiritual conceit -- first within their minds, and next within their hearts. Such, it would appear, was, and became, the wisest of all men besides Christ, Solomon. And, obviously, spiritual conceit was germinated in the mind and heart of the most gifted, the most brilliant of all God's creatures, Lucifer, and turned this most-gifted one into the devil.

The Psalmist declared: "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:99-100). But when a spiritually gifted person reflects too much and too long on their Gift, or Gifts, without reflecting on the fact that they are inseparably connected with God, the Great Giver, satan can and does often plant the germ of conceit and pride in the mind and then in the heart.

Proverbs 18:11 tells us that "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." With the Gift of the Spirit comes the unsurpassed wealth and riches of God's grace, but God never intended that those inward riches be used to build up "an high wall" of unteachableness in the mind of their recipient making him wise "in his own conceit." In this verse, we can see that "the rich man's wealth" and strength "went to his head" causing him to think himself impervious to all attack behind his "high wall in his own conceit."

Those who have on "the whole armour of God" do have greater spiritual wealth and greater protection, but they are not spiritually impregnable! -- they are not behind such an high wall that they can relax, free from any possibility of satanic attack and defeat. Probably thousands have been overcome by the god of this world who entertained and became possessed of this false notion.

Proverbs 28:11 declares: "The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out." It is not those who continually feel themselves to be spiritually and independently wealthy who remain strong and who stand against satanic assault, but rather those who though spiritually rich, remain "poor in spirit." They have much, but yet lack much, and they know it. Whereas those who become spiritually conceited may have had much, but thought they had more than they did, then lost all. Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Perhaps others have thought that "the Gift of the Holy Ghost" rendered it unnecessary to make any effort at all to stay saved. Proverbs 26:16 declares: "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason." Let seven, red-hot preachers reason with a man that "faith without works is dead, being alone," and he will still feel that he need do nothing more to be eternally saved.

Spiritual conceit can also germinate from the notion that you are one of God's special elect, preeminent, and more favored than any other people -- God's pets and his infallible mouthpiece. It was in warning against such conceit that Paul wrote to the Gentile believers in Rome: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." And where did the most conceit in Christendom first appear: -- Answer: ROME! -- and it has grown with each succeeding century, their vaunted Pope and Pontiff asserted to be God's infallible mouthpiece, speaking "ex cathedra"!

In spite of their proud notions, spiritually conceited people often make foolish boasts and statements. Prov 26:4 advises: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him." Most of the time it does not pay to argue with a religious "know it all," for in so doing it

is easy to contract his disease. On the other hand, there are times when God prompts a reply to such pontifical, but foolish remarks. Prov 26:5 gives the flip-side of the counsel: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Sometimes "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," (Proverbs 25:11) revealing the absurdity of a voiced notion by one who is wise in his own conceits.

After having sent a certain very religious man two or three of our HDM CDs, I have, since that time, received not one word of thanks, but instead two letters expounding upon the errors of the Holiness Movement. In the second one, received just today, he said that holiness involves more than "naming it and claiming it" -- a true maxim, but that certainly does not negate the fact of a genuine, second work of grace that cleanses the heart instantaneously -- all of his emphasis on the search for holiness as a progressive life to the contrary notwithstanding!

He is a rather strange "duck," living purposely away from people out in the woods where he raised his rather large family as their all-wise "Ayatollah" -- beard and all. He is quite sure that he has received the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and speaks in tongues, but seems to have problems with those who believe that instantaneously-received, heart purity is a part of that Gift. Thus far, I have "answered not" his written harangues. Someday, someone may feel prompted of God to say just the right thing, at just the right time, to lay open his folly. But even if this occurs, I think it very possible that he will not "hear" it, because it shall have been spoken through human lips!

The Charismatics in Corinth needed this deflating admonition from Paul: "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (1 Corinthians 8:1). They had many gifts, but less knowledge than they imagined, and more conceit than Paul could let go without sticking a pin in their balloon. As Will Rogers once said, "It isn't what people don't know that's the problem; it's what they know for sure that just isn't so!" It is likely that spiritually gifted people who allow themselves to become "puffed" with satanically inspired conceit will next begin to "know for sure" things that just are not so -- and they may be so "cock-sure" that their error is truth that no man on earth can convince them otherwise.

Spiritual Conceit threatened Ancient Israel: -- Isaiah warned: "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Proverbs 3:7 echoes a similar counsel: "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil."

Spiritual Conceit has been a threat to the most gifted Angels, the most noteworthy Old Testament saints, the most spiritual New Testament saints, the Brightest figures in the Church down across the centuries, and shall remain a threat until Jesus comes again.

Thus, until the Last Trump sounds ending Man's Probation, Paul's counsel in Romans 12:16 will be "Good Medicine For The Spiritually Gifted" -- even those who know without question that they have received the Gift of the Holy Ghost: "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

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1 Sam 9:20 "And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, SET NOT THY MIND ON THEM; for they are found."

Isa 26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose MIND IS STAYED ON THEE."

* * *

Focusing the attention of one's mind wrongly can make one paranoid, bring one embarrassment, and create from within one's own self numerous other ill effects. How one can become paranoid by such "hocus focus " is illustrated in the following story -- my version of a story that I heard during the 1970's while I was pastoring in Portland, Oregon:

Back in the "Horse and Buggy Days," an old farmer had a mean horse. Some time prior to the turn of the year, while the farmer was near the animal, that horse bit his right ear -- nearly severing it from his head, and leaving it hanging by only a shred of flesh.

Hurriedly the old farmer hitched up a team of horses (not including that mean one), and raced his buggy into town as fast as he could get there. By the time he arrived at the doctor's office, his dangling, severed ear had turned blue. Rushing inside and directly into the doctor's presence he cried out, "Doctor! Doctor! Can you save my ear!!? One of my horses bit it nearly off! Can you save my ear!!?"

Looking at the farmer's ear, now nearly black and hanging by a mere thread of flesh, the doctor shook his head, and said: "I'm sorry, all I can do now is cut it completely off, sterilize the wound, and give you something to help ease the pain." And, so did the Doctor.

The old farmer was devastated. He just "knew" that when people saw him with that right ear missing virtually everyone would ask him about how it happened, etc. So, for weeks after the wound healed, the now one-eared farmer stayed on the farm and avoided being seen by anyone but his wife, for he just "knew" that anyone seeing him would ask him about that missing ear.

Finally, on New Year's Day, the old farmer ventured out near one of his fences bordering the road to do something. Just then a neighbor rode by in his wagon -- slowed a bit -- waved, and shouted: "Happy New Year!" Immediately, the old farmer cupped his right hand over the stump of his right ear and with red-faced embarrassment replied: "A horse bit it off!"

The neighbor had merely wished him "Happy New Year," but in the hocus focus of the farmer's mind, his neighbor had asked the question, "What Happened To Your Ear?" I doubt that there was any fact connected to that humorous "story" but it IS a fact that by the hocus focus of the mind people have often misinterpreted the meaning of some statement by another or the meaning of some expression on the face of another. If one is paranoid about what people are saying and/or thinking about him, it is quite likely that he will misinterpret some of the words, expressions, or actions of others -- and, the consequences of this are not always humorous.

Even Christians can become paranoid by such hocus focus, and the devil no doubt delights in creating such a state of mind in one of God's children. If a parishioner hocus focuses on the pastor's preaching -- wrongly supposing that "he's shooting at ME" -- when this or that remark is made in the message, then it is possible for a huge breach to sever their mutual fellowship, when in fact the preacher never once had that member in mind when making the remark.

As a young preacher, I was shocked one Sunday morning in my first pastorate. After my message, as folks were greeting one another while leaving the sanctuary, one of the women in the congregation confronted me, and with a volume far louder than a whisper angrily asked me: "WAS YOU TRYIN' TA SKIN ME THIS MORNING!" I was rather astounded that she would vent her displeasure in such a way and at such a time and place. But she continued pressing her interrogation, finally ending her tirade against me outside the front door by saying in front of all around us, "I DON'T THINK PREACHERS SHOULD PREACH THAT WAY!"

From day one -- to the day I left that church -- that woman exuded an hostile and cold spirit toward me, and on my part I felt that her outburst that Sunday morning was the outward evidence of a deep-seated inward need spiritually.

But, paranoia, in the mind of Christians does not always indicate that they are carnal. Sometimes things within the minds of even godly saints can cause them to hocus focus mentally, and become paranoid about something said or done by another.

A sad example of this also occurred during my first pastorate in about the year 1963, and the trigger of the hocus focus was racial prejudice. A godly evangelist and his wife from North Carolina had come to conduct a revival in our little church in northern Missouri. I have no doubt that he was a true man of God, but unfortunately both he and his wife were racially prejudice. Our crowds had been small; I was trying to get as many visitors into our services as possible, and one day I mentioned to them that I planned to invite an African-American family that I had met.

Again I was somewhat set back. I revered the evangelist, this being one of the reasons I had called him for the revival meeting. But, when I mentioned my intention of inviting this African-American family, both the evangelist and his wife let me know, in no uncertain terms, that they felt it would be a mistake for me to do so. I had never encountered such bald-faced, racial prejudice in my pastoral labors before! With some incredulity, I answered them that I felt that they were wrong to have this attitude. We heartily disagreed, and parleyed the matter back and forth for a few minutes.

They never relented, nor did I, and if I recall correctly, my last comment on the subject was that regardless of their opinion I intended to go ahead and invite this family. So far as I was concerned, this was a matter of principle -- a matter where we strongly disagreed, but certainly not a matter that evoked from me what that dear man came to suspect.

On toward the end of the meeting, I had managed to get the evangelist's paycheck in advance. As I now recall, I was probably thinking that after our disagreement he and his wife would be pleased to learn that we had managed to raise as much money as we had for them. And,

with such thoughts in mind, I presented the evangelist with the check. But, I was in for yet another disappointment and surprise.

After glancing at the check a moment, he looked up at me and asked something to this effect: "Does this mean you're sending us packing!?"

"Oh, NO!" I assured him -- "NOT AT ALL!"

Since we had disagreed over a matter about which I felt that I should not yield, satan had planted in his mind the hocus focus notion that I was shoving him out the door before the meeting was finished. I was hoping to please him, but unaccustomed to receiving his check before the close of a meeting, that early check, he wrongly supposed, was my tacit statement saying: "The meeting is over. Here's your pay. Get going!"

I had overlooked a rather long-standing custom of giving the evangelist his check AFTER the meeting closed, and he had hocus focused on my statements of strong disagreement with his racial prejudice, and -- if you please -- just "knew" that I might send him packing because we had so strongly disagreed.

The following is a case where hocus focus may have caused nothing more than embarrassment, and, so far as I know, it is a true story:

A man and his wife were entertaining a wealthy man whose drinking had caused him to have a red nose. The focus of the hostess-woman's mind was upon the fact of their coming guest's red nose. She feared that one of her two little daughters might notice their guest's red nose during his visit and make an embarrassing remark about it. So, she coached them in advance not to say anything about his red nose. The wealthy and influential man came and was seated.

The plan of the hostess was to invite the girls in to meet the man for only a few moments, just before she served tea to him, and then she would usher them out -- thus reducing the amount of time the girls would be in the man's presence and lessening the possibility of the their making an embarrassing remark. And, as planned, all went well during the brief time the girl's were in the guest's presence.

Then, after the children had been dismissed from the room, having passed that test, the woman "heaved a sigh of relief, turned to her tea urn," and asked their guest, "Will you have one or two lumps of sugar in your nose!" (from a book by W. Parker & E. St. Johns)

Whether the hilariously amusing image of having a lump of sugar stuffed into each of his nostrils evoked from both the guest and his hostess an outburst of uncontrollable laughter, or not, I don't know, but I imagine that after her hocus-focus remark the face of the hostess may have then turned even more red than her guest's nose!! -- and, her question was akin to the following words found in Luke 9:33: "Peter said... not knowing what he said."

Yes, focusing on the wrong object can result in real embarrassment, and it is also true that often because of hocus focus the minor flaws of others are over-magnified and "therefore wrong

judgment proceedeth." Hab 1:4 I heard of one describing another as so narrow that "if a fly landed on the bridge of his nose it would scratch both of his eyes out." Instead of focusing on the narrowness of his brother, that man had done better to remember that one with "a flat nose" was disqualified for the priesthood under Moses, and one can be too broad as well as too narrow in his views as a Christian.

Also, like Pinnochio, our own nose could get oversize if we falsely focus on what we consider the extreme narrowness of another. One can hocus focus on the mote in his brother's eye through the knothole of a beam in his own eye. It is still possible, with the wrong focus to forcibly strain the gnat out of a brother's spiritual soup while permissively swallowing a two-hump camel from one's own soup. The more we set our mind on the wrong thing, the more likely it is that embarrassment or wrong judgment will result.

When I was a lad, I remember an old saint who would sit up near the front at church. He would verily shine with the glory of God and a genuine spiritual warmth radiated from his person. I considered it a favor to sit beside him and absorb some of his radiant love. And, dear old Bro. S_____ had a "Funny-Bone" too. On at least one occasion he got so tickled that he had to leave the service when he could not restrain his laughter over something that had been said, or done.

Unfortunately, because of the hocus focus of the pastor, a very opposite emotion was once struck in this precious saint's heart.

Old Bro. S_____ had two grown sons -- one serving the Lord and attending the same church with his wife, and the other far from God, playing as a drummer or musician in night clubs. Bro. S_____ knew that his son was lost, and had long interceded for his salvation, probably with many tears and deeply-burdened utterances in prayer.

Finally, one night, in answer to his saintly old father's prayers, Bro. S_____ 's prodigal son came out to a revival service. No doubt there was rejoicing in heaven as well as in the old man's heart when that wayward son entered the service.

But satan inspired an hocus focus in the mind of the pastor that completely thwarted the working of God that night for the salvation of Bro. S_____ 's son. It was a Nazarene Church -- one that disbelieved in the wearing of all outward adornment, including gaudy rings, such as the one worn on one of the fingers of Bro. S_____ 's lost son.

The evangelist preached, the Spirit faithfully dealt, the prodigal son was moved -- so much so that he responded to the invitation. Heaven was tugging. Hell was determined to break that pull. The mind of the pastor became focused on the gaudy ring on the prodigal's finger, and -- (sad moment it was!) -- the pastor intercepted the prodigal on his way to the altar of prayer, and legalistically demanded that the adorned penitent remove his ring before bowing at the altar!

The Arch-fiend accomplished his insidious stratagem! Offended by such a rude, legalistic, and heartless demand, Bro. S_____ 's wayward son turned around, left the church, and so far as I know, NEVER RETURNED -- EITHER TO CHURCH OR TO GOD!

Dear old Bro. S_____ protested his pastor's action that had resulted in such needless and sad consequences. If I recall correctly, I think the pastor may have later admitted that he was wrong to have done and said what he did -- but too late! -- the damage was done -- and "All the King's Horses and All the King's men" couldn't put together again that delicate, but then shattered opportunity to "bring that wondering one to Jesus."

Whether the negative results are to others or to the Christian himself, Satan loves to get God's children hocus focusing on minors instead of majors. At the top of this article, in 1 Samuel 9:20, Samuel told Saul not to set his mind on his father's lost donkeys. God had already taken care of that little matter. They were found, and it was time to focus his attention on far more important matters -- God's immediate plans for both Israel and himself. How easy it is to focus too long on the minor chase and thereby miss the major challenge and channel of one's Divine call. A Christian can become so troubled with trifles so as to never see nor pursue the essentials. God will always help his people with the lesser concerns if they keep them in their proper perspective and focus primarily on the fulfillment of the weightier matters of their duty in His calling and kingdom.

I will conclude this article with the following taken from hdm0333, "The Secret Place of the Most High," by Tony Marshall Anderson. I would label his comments as remarks about "Hocus Focus" in the shape of Imaginary Dragons of Fear:

"The dragon shalt thou trample under feet." This is a promise of victory over imaginary evils. Trials that do not exist outside of the mind. There is no such creature as a dragon. It is a mythical beast, having no reality or existence. It may seem strange that any person should be troubled and distressed with things which are purely mental, and serve to frighten like a ghost story. In this group of persons reside those who worry, and fret; they are anxious and restless; not because of things real but because of what they think things are going to be, or what they believe will surely happen. They live in a nightmare of fear about things that have not happened but which they fear will. They see defeat where God has promised victory. They see failure where God has promised success. They see barrenness where God has promised fruit. If God fails their prediction shall come true; the dragon of mist shall take form; but until He does fail let us not be faithless but believe. The great nation of China has failed to develop her vast resources because to dig into the mountains for coal, or minerals, or drill for oil, they feared they would strike a dragon. Thus the years have been wasted, stolen from them by their mythical dragon.

How true it is that many persons have been deceived by the tempter, and have been robbed of years of useful life in a happy Christian experience because they lived in fear of what has never existed outside of their own distorted imagination. Those who live in this realm are yet children with childish fears of the dark, and of the terrible things that hide there. By the eye of achieving faith we see the victory, the fruit of our toils, the answer to our prayers, the realization of our hopes, and the ultimate success of our undertakings. The dragon of fear dissolves before the rising sun of His coming glory. Darker may grow the day about us, but brighter shines the day before us. Kingdoms may fall about, but one that cannot be moved is ahead of us, the earth shall perish, and the utter dissolution of all things shall come, but we see a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Thank God we can tread upon the dragon of fear because God makes us to conquer.

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09 -- WRONGLY IMPRESSED WITH LARGE NUMBERS AND WRONGLY DEPRESSED WITH SMALL NUMBERS

Some months ago, I read the following headline in the local newspaper: "10 MILLION GATHER TO BATHE IN GANGES RIVER -- Hindu Pilgrims Believe Ritual Will Cleanse Sins, Answer Prayers."

The reporter told of how millions of "Hindu pilgrims" made their way to the Ganges river to fulfill their lifelong ambitions of bathing in its waters, and he wrote that they were "drawn by an auspicious planetary arrangement their priests say occurs only once in 144 years."

On Monday of that week "about 10 million people were at the river banks" and the numbers continued to swell on Tuesday "for the sacred bathing day of the 43-day Kumbh Mela festival, which takes place every 12 years."

Hindus consider "Mother Ganga," the river Ganges, to be their holiest site -- particularly the Sangam (the confluence of the Yarmuna, the Ganga, and the mythical Saraswati). They make long pilgrimages to dip in its waters and to scoop up water to pour over their heads. They believe that this ritual will wash away sins if it is performed during the "Royal Bathing Day," which apparently is at least sometimes extended for more than one day.

According to the reporter, this year "bathers included mendicants with ash-smeared bodies, robed Hindu gurus and hymn-chanting women in yellow, red and purple saris... also millions of poor villagers, astrologers, faith healers, philanthropists, foreign tourists, rich Indian expatriates and hippies."

The very magnitude of this heathenistic and superstitious gathering is impressive and draws curious visitors from afar. The newspaper account quoted the following by one visitor from California: "I had been a hippie for a long time, but nothing could give me peace of mind, until I witnessed the Mahakumbh." (the Hindi words that mean "Great Kumbh," as the gathering is also called). "Now, I am planning to settle in India to feed my hunger for peace and spiritualism."

A pitiful example of the power of this huge heathenistic ritual to delude its Hindu followers is Bishambhar Bhashan, a poor, 80-year-old, blind man who this year "traveled two days in a cramped train from his village of Dhanvani in central Madhya Pradesh state." He "scooped up the cold river with his hands, and offered it to the heavens in a centuries-old gesture" and said, "'I told Mother Ganga, take me across life, mother.' 'My life's ambition is fulfilled.'"

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My Observations From The Newspaper Article

(1) MOST PEOPLE ARE WRONGLY IMPRESSED WITH LARGE NUMBERS -- But, WRONG IS WRONG IF 10 MILLION DO IT! -- Many of you have probably heard the true saying: "Wrong is Wrong if everyone does it, and Right is Right if nobody does it." Some years ago, I recall hearing or reading an ad that went something like this -- (X standing for the exact figure that I forget): "X-Million People Cannot Be Wrong" -- meaning, that since so many people were users of their product, THEY MUST ALL BE RIGHT! But the fact is "MIGHT does not make RIGHT," nor do MILLIONS make RIGHT.

The Hippie mentioned in the above newspaper article was obviously tremendously impressed by the vast millions at the "Mahakumbh," or "Great Kumbh," and apparently the sight of 10 million Hindus at the "Royal Bathing Day" convinced him that THEY MUST BE RIGHT! He had "peace of mind" that since so many millions believed in the power of the Ganges to wash away their sins, that surely GOD MUST BE IN IT. No doubt, he too dipped in its waters, and being persuaded that God must surely honor the faith of such huge numbers, he experienced "peace of mind," but we can be sure that his plunge in the Ganges DID NOT BRING HIM "PEACE WITH GOD." Why? Because theirs, and now his, is a false faith -- the many millions who dip in the Ganges to the contrary, not withstanding!

There is always grave danger in following a multitude. Exodus 23:2 declares: "Thou shalt not follow a MULTITUDE TO DO EVIL..." But the greatest danger in following a multitude is not the danger of following a multitude that is obviously doing evil. Nay! THE GREATEST DANGER IS IN FOLLOWING A MULTITUDE THAT SEEMS TO BE DOING RIGHT, when in fact they are doing wrong! The HUGE NUMBER of people following a religion does not make it right. Tell me: Do you think that the huge and burgeoning membership of the LDS Sect means that their faith in the pipe-dreaming, story-telling Joseph Smith is true faith? Millions are so deceived. Likewise, the mammoth crowds at religious campaigns in sports-domes, arenas, and stately cathedrals deceive many into believing that they MUST BE OF GOD because of the sheer magnitude of their numbers -- but such reasoning when one's soul is at stake is the height of folly.

One could truthfully spread abroad the warning from God: "THOU SHALT NOT FOLLOW A MULTITUDE TO DO WHAT "SEEMS TO BE" RIGHT! -- for, according to Proverbs 16:25, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." I am sure that many Roman Catholics are thus deceived, thinking that the very size of their monolithic, world-wide organization argues for its verity, to say nothing of its long centuries of existence. Nevertheless, millions today who profess to have faith in God, in reality HAVE FAITH ONLY IN NUMBERS!

(2) HOLINESS PEOPLE CAN BE WRONGLY DEPRESSED WITH SMALL NUMBERS -- When Holiness people look at the vast throngs in formal churches, sometimes, if not often, they are strongly tempted toward "Being Depressed With Their Small Numbers!" The devil has probably convinced many that "The Little Holiness Outfit" could not possibly be right, because SO FEW BELIEVE IT! The world-wide percentage of those believing and professing second blessing holiness has probably shrunk dramatically since the heydays of Holiness during the period from 1850 to 1920 -- not to speak of the fact that even many of those who do profess the experience do not actually have it. After glancing at the vast numbers filling the pews and assemblies of formal Christian groups, with a forlorn dismay, even the holiest saints in the Holiness Movement are

sometimes tempted to say twice over: Amos 7:2 "O Lord God... by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." Amos 7:5 "O Lord God... by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small." You can be sure that satan uses every numerical comparison he can to depress the little Holiness Church, and to persuade as many as possible to give it up as a lost cause, which if God were really in would be much larger.

But all such satanically suggested, false reasonings overlooks the abundance of Scriptures that plainly declare that "few," not vast multitudes, are taking the right way -- the way of Holiness:

Matthew 7:14 "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW THERE BE that find it."

Luke 12:32 "Fear not, LITTLE flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Luke 13:23-24 "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there FEW that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Matthew 20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but FEW chosen."

Matthew 22:14 "For many are called, but FEW are chosen."

Romans 9:27 "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a [comparatively small] remnant shall be saved."

Revelation 3:4 "Thou hast a FEW names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."

Holiness saints should not be overly impressed with large numbers and not depressed at all with the paucity of truly "pure in heart" believers. Stirred to greater exertions, yes, but never depressed because vast throngs are not flooding into Holiness assemblies: "For who hath DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?" (Zechariah 4:10). All should remember that God severely punished King David when he ordered a census of all Israel -- no doubt to measure the might of his kingdom by how great was the population of Israel -- forgetting that "there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by FEW" (1 Samuel 14:6).

Satan despises the little Holiness crowd, and he just loves to get them to despising themselves because of their diminutive size in comparison with the great throngs of merely professed Christendom. Like a boasting Goliath, he vaunts and flaunts the size of "his body" in comparison with what appears to be nothing more than the little shepherd-boy "body of Christ" -- the tiny number of truly blood-washed saints. But it was not David's little size that mattered! nor the Gargantuan size of Goliath! -- it was rather, the SIZE OF THE GOD who was with them! With the impressive giant, Goliath, was the god of this world, but with the tiny and thus disdained David WAS THE GREATEST BEING IN EXISTENCE -- GOD ALMIGHTY!

Let the "body of Satan" swell from tens of millions to thousands of millions, while the number in the true "body of Christ" is minuscule in comparison, and even shrinking in number -- it matters not a whit! When it comes to real, spiritual victory, David will whip Goliath EVERY TIME! "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against" Christ's true Church, no matter what the numerical odds may be. And, as in the case of Gideon, God sometimes has to get rid of the majority before he can use a tiny minority to defeat a vast multitude!

Instead of getting their "eyes on their size," saints should look to the skies! This is illustrated by Elisha's words and God's revelation to Elisha's fearful servant: 2 Kings 6:15-17 "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for THEY THAT BE WITH US ARE MORE THAN THEY THAT BE WITH THEM. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

Again, 2 Chronicles 32:7 gave similar counsel: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for THERE BE MORE WITH US THAN WITH HIM."

When assessing might and numbers, God and His Heavenly Hosts must not be left out of the equation. Hear God's promise to the tiny worm, Jacob: Isaiah 41:14-16 "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt GLORY IN THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL."

When even Holiness groups get large, they often go to GLORYING IN THEMSELVES. Look what happened to Methodism when they became the largest denomination in America! Away with the notion that HOLINESS MUST BE HUGE TO BE SUCCESSFUL! -- must have impressive numbers or else be a failure! That notion comes from Hell, not Heaven. God wants followers who have faith in HIM, not faith in HUGE numbers!

Other comparisons and truths could be drawn from the preceding newspaper article, such as the fact that "nothing but the blood of Jesus" can cleanse from sin. Baptism in any river on earth, including the Jordan, will not do the job. Another truth that might be mentioned in connection with this article is the fact that True Worship has no Mecca -- no spot toward which one must pray, no geographical location near which one must be to have God's presence.

In the newspaper article, Jim Clarke said, "Now, I am planning to settle in India to feed my hunger for peace and spiritualism." Pilgrimages to supposedly sacred sites, even to Palestine and the sites frequented by Christ, in order to get close to God, are absolutely vain, unnecessary, and even sinful! In the following passage from the Gospel of John we can see that Jesus' statements to the Samaritan, "Woman at the Well," forever ENDED LOCATIONAL WORSHIP:

John 4:20-21, 23-24 -- "Our fathers worshipped IN THIS MOUNTAIN; and ye say, that IN JERUSALEM is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall NEITHER IN THIS MOUNTAIN, NOR YET AT JERUSALEM, worship the Father... 23 But THE HOUR cometh, and NOW IS, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Having laid the emphasis on the two thoughts in my title, and these two additional observations, here, I forbear. There are other truths that could be drawn and other comparisons that could be made from the article, but I leave my readers to make them for themselves.

* * * * *

10 -- PUNISHED -- AN INTERESTING CHAIN OF EVENTS IN INDIA (But A Little Preview Of Things To Come)

Isa 13:11-13 "And I WILL PUNISH THE WORLD for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I WILL MAKE A MAN [the Man Christ Jesus] MORE PRECIOUS THAN FINE GOLD; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

Isa 2:20-21 "IN THAT DAY A MAN SHALL CAST HIS IDOLS of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and TO THE BATS; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, FOR FEAR OF THE LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, WHEN HE ARISETH TO SHAKE TERRIBLY THE EARTH."

Notice the some of the main items in the above scriptures: (1) Idolatry and evil on earth -- (2) followed by Divine Punishment with a great Shaking of the earth, during which men, in the fear of the Lord, (3) Cast away their most prized idols.

Of course the above scriptures refer to the Day of the Lord when the very heavens shall be shaken and that mightiest of all earthquakes that shall strike the earth. However, the items I have noted from those verses are strikingly similar to an interesting chain of events that just occurred in India during the past several weeks. Please note:

* * *

(1) FIRST CAME FROM INDIA A WIDELY ADVERTISED STORY ABOUT THE IDOLATROUS WORSHIP OF "MOTHER GANGA," THE GANGES RIVER. A few weeks ago, we read or heard of 10 million Hindus in India bathing themselves in their supposedly-sacred Ganges River -- an act of Idolatrous Worship by those millions of Hindus that was advertised apparently all around the world. Probably some who read this will recall how in an article I

wrote at that time about being overly impressed with large numbers I presented the following headline from our Spokane paper:

10 MILLION GATHER TO BATHE IN GANGES RIVER
Hindu Pilgrims Believe Ritual Will Cleanse Sins, Answer Prayers

The reporter, extolling this supposedly GREAT, GREAT EVENT, wrote: "Bathers included mendicants with ash-smeared bodies, robed Hindu gurus and hymn-chanting women in yellow, red and purple saris. Among them were also millions of poor villagers, astrologers, faith healers, philanthropists, foreign tourists, rich Indian expatriates and hippies."

A school teacher from Cleveland, Ohio was quoted as saying: "Every day something new stuns me here. I discover something new all the while... This is an experience I am going to tell my grandchildren about." And, reportedly this teacher from Ohio "was drawn to the city 360 miles east of New Delhi, after reading about the Kumbh Mela on the Internet."

A man from Los Angeles "first heard about the Kumbh six months ago in Malaysia, where he teaches English." He was quoted as saying: "I had been a hippie for a long time, but nothing could give me peace of mind, until I witnessed the Mahakumbh," he said, using the Hindi words that mean 'Great Kumbh,' as the gathering is also called." "Now, I am planning to settle in India to feed my hunger for peace and spiritualism."

The reporter concluded his article thus: "Bishambhar Bhashan, poor and blind, traveled two days in a cramped train from his village of Dhanvani in central Madhya Pradesh state. Bhushan, 80, scooped up the cold river with his hands, and offered it to the heavens in a centuries-old gesture. 'I told Mother Ganga, take me across life, mother,' he said, his eyelids twitching with excitement. 'My life's ambition is fulfilled..'"

As I recall, the thought then crossed my mind about the possibility of God punishing India for such great idolatry.

* * *

(2) NEXT, INDIA WAS STRUCK BY A DEADLY EARTHQUAKE -- KILLING THOUSANDS!. I just copied the following from a report on the Internet:

"2001 January 26, Gujarat, western India, Mw 7.7 03:16 UTC, 70.32°E, 23.33°N, 23 km deep [QED] (Friday, January 26 at 08:46 am India time) This very large shallow earthquake occurred in the western Indian state of Gujarat. There have been more than 14,240 confirmed fatalities including many from the western Gujarat city of Bhuj, but the death roll is expected to rise to over 30,000."

First in India, 10 million idolaters worshipped "Mother Ganga" and then over 30,000 people were suddenly killed, when GOD AROSE "TO SHAKE TERRIBLY THE EARTH." Yes, it does say in Ecclesiastes 9:11 that "time and chance happeneth to them all," but I assert that God is not a God of mere "chance" -- He is in control of all at all times. What appears to us as

occurring by "chance" is actually an occurrence very much controlled by God -- and often for, if not always for, a specific reason.

I will let my readers draw their own conclusion, but I here assert that the GREAT EARTHQUAKE FOLLOWING THE GREAT IDOLATRY IN INDIA was an occurrence altogether under God's control -- and, it MAY HAVE BEEN intended of God to punish that widely advertised idolatry. I think that one report was that the death toll in India might rise to as many as 60,000! Horrible! but if this was indeed a Divine punishment, the people of India could say truthfully: "After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass... God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve" (Ezra 9:13).

* * *

(3) THIRD IN THE CHAIN OF EVENTS IN INDIA WAS: -- A CASTING OUT OF IDOLS IN THE BELIEF THAT "THE ALMIGHTY" HAD PUNISHED INDIA BY THAT EARTHQUAKE! -- Two days ago (on Monday of Tuesday of this week), a very short piece on a radio news broadcast caught my ear: -- an announcement that PEOPLE IN INDIA WERE CASTING THEIR TV SETS OUT THE WINDOWS OF BUILDINGS in the belief that "the Almighty" had punished India with that earthquake because they had been watching filthy pornography on TV!!!

THE WRONG CAUSE FOR THIS EFFECT? -- Were they partly mistaken, the main reason for this disaster perhaps being that God was angered because of the worldwide display of their idolatrous worship of "Mother Ganga"? God alone knows the answer to this question.

One thing is sure -- people in India feel that "the Almighty" punished them with this killer earthquake for a reason. I think it may indeed have been more because of that greatly extolled and widely advertised worship of "Mother Ganga," -- the Ganges River, whose murky waters can no more wash away sin than can the putrid stream in your city sewer line! Only the blood of Christ can wash away sin! -- not the Ganges, nor the river Jordan, nor any other revered river on earth!

However -- the world should take notice: God also hates the Filthy Idol of Pornography -- and there are without doubt many more millions around the globe worshipping the idols of Sex and Sensuality than there are who worship "Mother Ganga". If India was punished for its worship of the Ganges, or for its viewing of pornographic rot on television -- then LOOK OUT AMERICA! -- LOOK OUT PEOPLE ALL AROUND THE GLOBE!! -- it may not be long before, as a certain song puts it: "THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF SHAKIN' GOIN' ON!" from east to west, and from pole to pole! God's Word predicts such to occur, more and more as the Day of the Lord approaches, and no doubt the earthquakes yet to come shall also be more and more powerful and devastating.

Isa 30:25 predicts "the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall." There are many proud cities around this world today, boasting of their towers rising high into the sky -- some of them now dwarfing the long applauded "Empire State Building" in New York City. But, the Tower of Babel fell, and all of the towers of Modern Babylon shall also fall -- if not sooner, then in the great, climactic earthquake that shall strike on the Day of the Lord.

This Day of all Days "when the towers" of every proud city around the globe "fall" shall indeed be a "day of great slaughter"! No doubt countless millions will perish, and the magnitude of that quake will make every preceding earthquake seem like nothing in comparison. Rev 16:18 warns us that this "Mother of All Earthquakes," this "Grand-daddy of them all," will be "a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great"!!

Major John Andre of the British Army -- the dashing, young spy with whom Benedict Arnold plotted the turn over of West Point -- was mightily shaken of the God after he was captured by the Americans and faced an imminent execution, but this great trauma led him into the inner tranquillity of salvation and safety in Christ. His dying testimony, in the form of a poem, entitled: "My Hiding Place" was found in his pocket after he was hung. Two of the verses below from his testimony vividly describe the Hiding Place he had found in Christ, a security in which he knew that he would be undaunted by the gallows, nor even by the most world-wide, earth-shaking occurrences. Such events as those mentioned in John Andre's testimonial poem may soon strike, and when the Lord does thus arise to "shake terribly the earth," Major Andre's Hiding Place will then be the only place of safety, security, and tranquillity.

Upon Christ, the shock and shame, and punishment -- of all the world's sin, during all the world's time, has already fallen. Isaiah's ancient prophecy was fulfilled at Calvary: "And a man [the man Christ Jesus] shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest... as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa 32:2). Thus, John Andre wrote:

On Him almighty vengeance fell,
Which must have sunk a world to hell!
He bore it for a sinful race,
And thus became our Hiding Place.

Should sevenfold storms of thunder roll,
And shake this globe from pole to pole,
No thunderbolt shall daunt my face,
For Jesus is my Hiding Place.

* * * * *

11 -- THEY DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS!

Rom 1:22-23 "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man..."

As an old chorus puts it,

"Everybody oughta know,
Everybody, oughta know,
Everybody, oughta know,

Who Jesus is..."

But, many who think they know who Jesus WAS, know neither Who He was nor Who Jesus IS! This past week, our Spokane newspaper carried an article about "Jesus" -- not the "Jesus of the Bible," but a new perception of Him set forth by supercilious, but super-silly, Biblical scholars who are obviously "blinder than a bat" about Jesus. Falsely "confident that" they are "guides of the blind" and "lights of them which are in darkness," (Rom 2:19), they are, in fact, "blind leaders of the blind," who, along with their deluded followers "shall fall into the ditch" of damnation (Matt. 15:14).

Their, heady, highminded, but very erroneous, concept of Jesus was accompanied by a drawing of Him that depicted Him as a wild-eyed Jewish revolutionist, and their assessment of Him seemed to be that He was nothing more than a good man at best -- a misguided pacifist who even conspired with Judas to get himself arrested, thus making himself a martyr to his cause as a means of propagating his views!

Such supposedly learned discoveries about Jesus are nothing more than Blind Blasphemy, set forth by dupes of the devil!

For centuries, unbelieving Jews have denied the Deity of Jesus and have insisted that He was nothing more than a man. This hostile humanizing of the God-Man began even while Jesus still walked among them -- [caps mine]:

John 10:33 "The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that THOU, BEING A MAN, MAKEST THYSELF GOD."

Jesus' parable in Luke 19:14 pictured this same virulent denial of his Deity: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this MAN to reign over us."

The same attitude was reflected by those who were angry after Jesus healed a blind man on the Sabbath day: John 9:24 "Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, GIVE GOD the praise: we know that THIS MAN is a sinner."

But "God was in Christ," (2 Cor. 5:19) -- He was more than a mere man -- and this satanically inspired humanizing and rejection of the God-Man by unbelieving Jews brought upon them Jehovah's curse and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.! God does not take it lightly when carnal, fallen men, in their blind hatred of the Son of God, "change the glory of the uncorruptible God-Man into an image made like to corruptible man..."

Jesus of Nazareth was, and still is, Very-God and Very-Man" Saul of Tarsus had been one of those early, unbelieving Jews who "thought with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9), but on that dusty road to Damascus, with a splendor that outshone the noon-day sun, he came face to face with the Living Deity of Jesus!

His concept of Jesus was forever revolutionized! Thenceforth Paul declared, without a shred of doubt, that in the Person of Jesus, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16).

Paul's new-found Christology did not come to him from the feet of Gamaliel. It came directly from God in the Person of Him who told him: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5). Saul stopped kicking and as the transformed apostle Paul he began preaching the One, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6-7).

"He [Saul of Tarsus] which persecuted Christians in times past now preached the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:23), and, while boldly preaching his new-found Christology, Paul declared: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12).

That "revelation of Jesus Christ" -- Who He really IS -- came to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, and for all it takes a Divine Revelation by God's Spirit before one can really know Who Jesus is -- whether the learner is a highminded theologian or a humble plowman. Jesus made this clear when he said: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). None really know Jesus, none really know God, without that Divine Revelation.

The brainy theologues of Jesus' day were devoid of this essential, Divine Revelation, and thus Jesus told them plainly: "Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 8:19).

But when Jesus questioned his uneducated disciples, asking, "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Whereupon, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 16:15-17). What theological education can never teach one about the true identity of Jesus, Divine Revelation can, -- and does.

Jesus' unbelieving detractors boasted: "We KNOW THIS MAN whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." (John 7:27) But they didn't know Him, and neither do the supercilious, but super-silly, theologians today know Him, whose studies of Jesus of Nazareth are based solely upon earthly, materialistic, historical, and archaeological forms of evidence. By such wisdom, the world knows not God, nor the Son of God. (1 Cor. 1:21) Still, by these mundane means, high-brow scholars are "re-inventing Jesus," transforming Him, as it were, into their own carnal image and trying to pawn off this pseudo-Jesus as "the real Jesus"! It is a portrait of Christ painted by the spirit of anti-Christ -- and for a reason!

The current trend toward humanizing Jesus is one more step in the world-wide brainwashing that is setting the stage for the Man of Sin, who shall sit "in the temple of God,

showing himself that HE is God" (2 Thess. 2:4). The same wicked, spiritual forces that are now questioning and/or denying the Deity of the true Christ, will soon hail the self-proclaimed deity of the anti-Christ. The message will be: "JESUS WAS A FRAUD; I AM THE TRUE CHRIST!"

Jesus prophesied of this when He said in John 5:43, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

Paul once protested to the Corinthians, "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (Cor. 11:4).

"Another Jesus" is now being taught -- a Jesus who is stripped of all divinity, cloaked in humanity, and vested with carnality in thoughts, words, and deeds -- but "YE HAVE NOT SO LEARNED CHRIST, if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21)!!

The same God whose curse fell upon unbelieving Jewry in 70 A.D. has also pronounced a curse upon those today who are humanizing Christ and His Gospel. St. Paul warned: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal 1:8-9).

When any denomination has built up High-Church Seminaries and filled its pulpits with scholars whose only knowledge of Christ is in their heads, their hearts being devoid of all true, spiritual knowledge of Him, you can be sure that apostasy in that Church is in full swing. It is then "high time" for a "low time" like that which knocked Saul of Tarsus off of his "high horse" and taught him a "new course" in Christology!

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know... Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." (1 Cor 8:2; 3:18-19).

Many a High-Church theologian today needs to humbly "become a fool, that he may be wise" about Who Jesus is. They should confess and emulate the sentiments expressed in the humble, old spiritual below:

"Poor, little Jesus, Child,
Born in a manger,
Poor, little, Holy Child,
We didn't know Who you was!

"Didn't know ya come to save us, Lord,
To take our sins away.
Our eyes was blind, Lord,
They couldn't see;

"WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO YOU WAS!"

* * * * *

12 -- SHUNNING, NOT BEARING, CHRIST'S REPROACH

Hebrews 13:13 "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

As a lad of 16, my mother and I drove a little, new 1954 Plymouth sedan from Payette, Idaho to Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico on a visit to the home of mother's sister, one of my 3 aunts. Dr. _____, my aunt's husband, was employed there and they had lived in Mexico a number of years. Aunt _____ was fluent in Spanish, and she and her husband were people of means. His salary was no doubt quite high and expenses were lower in Mexico than they were in the United States. Thus, they were able to acquire wealth and become prosperous and respected people.

I had done well in my high school Spanish class, and my ability to speak the language impressed my aunt. This was prior to my mother's reclamation in 1955 and mine in 1956. So, being very much a part of the world, and having none of the stigma of being "Christians" everything went "hunky-dory" during our visit to aunt _____'s. She disdained fundamental Christianity as a thing below her "dignity" and as the object of her "indignity". Mother had married my father, a preacher among the despised Nazarenes, but now papa was dead, and mother and I gave indications of having abandoned the "ridiculous nonsense" of their "despicable" beliefs and lifestyle.

Being rather taken with me, I think that aunt _____ may have entertained hope that I would attend some respected University like the University of Idaho where she and uncle _____, now Dr. _____, had earned their degrees. She was no doubt very happy that we had given up such nonsense as not going to movies, not wearing jewelry, not indulging in many of the things of the world forbidden to those hated "Nazarenes" -- and above all, happy that we did not manifest anything of their "strange" spirit, like that of I. V. Maxey, my father.

So, aunt _____ was very pleased that we had come to see them, and aside from mother's case of "Tourist Complaint" during our stay with them in Hermosillo, all went well. We were very much of the world, and the first part of Jesus' statement in John 15:19 came to pass: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own..." The time was yet to come when mother and I were to inherit the last part of the verse from aunt _____: "but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

However, whatever bright prospects aunt _____ may have entertained for me and for the continuance of the our worldly rapport, they were soon to be ended, and the "dignified" camaraderie was replaced with an indignant disdain for our return to those hated "Nazarene" ways, and our reception of that "absolutely insane Holy-Roller Religion!"

After mother got right with the Lord she studied and became very fluent in Spanish, and her trips to Hermosillo included attending the despised little Nazarene Church there and doing

personal work among the Mexicans there -- things that roused the "indignity" of my "dignified" aunt! Later, when my grandmother, aunt _____'s mother, passed away we met to discuss funeral plans. When I made it known that grandma had told me that she wanted me to sing at her funeral, aunt _____ indignantly replied that this was NOT to be. "My mother," said aunt _____, was a dignified lady, and we don't want anything "corny" in her funeral service!" No matter that some considered that I had a good singing voice, no matter that I had sung with a quartet and had been recorded with them on a platter -- no matter anything that might have qualified me to sing at grandma's funeral -- I had returned to the "crazy ways and notions" of I. V. Maxey, my father the crackpot Nazarene preacher, and anything I sang would therefore be amateurish and "corny"!

It hurt, but I let it pass. I really was not anxious to sing at grandma's funeral, but since we were discussing what to include in the service I decided to state what grandma had requested. And, I think that is what grandma herself would have wanted, but NO, aunt _____ rated me among those unworthy of her high "dignity" and very worthy of her "indignity" and disdain. In fact, what I suffered was "His reproach" -- the reproach of Christ, the reproach wherewith highminded, worldly people shove true Christians "without the camp" of their camaraderie and shun the "leprosy" of their presence.

Diseased lepers were shunned outside Israel's camp as dangerous, unclean, and unfit for the company of others. Even as considered to be such a diseased spiritual leper, Christ was marched "without the camp" of Jerusalem, spit upon, mocked, crowned with thorns, jeered, crushed beneath a rugged timber, mercilessly nailed to it, and then derided and taunted before being left by his indignant, "dignified" enemies to suffer the untold agony preceding his death on that hated cross! THIS is "His reproach"! THIS, and the spirit behind it, is what the writer to the Hebrews meant when he wrote of bearing "His reproach". It is something far more than merely being looked down upon; it is a reproach that may bring you death, a reproach that is sure to bring forth vehement hatred from "dignified" worldlings in the form of cutting and hurtful words, accusations, and mockings, and in the form of all sorts of ill-treatment and hostile deeds!

Jesus said of true Christians, "Men shall hate you, and ... they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." (Luke 6:22)

Before the time of his conversion, Saul of Tarsus had suffered no reproach, but after he was struck down on the Damascus road, Jesus told Ananias: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts 9:16) And part of what he was soon to suffer was "reproach" from those who considered the despised Christian sect beneath their dignity! The persecutor became the persecuted, and he wrote: "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God." (1 Timothy 4:10) Everything was "hunky-dory" with Paul's kinsmen until he became part of that despicable group known as "Christians".

It must have seemed strange at first to Paul when he who had been the Champion Persecutor of the hated Christians was now the object of the virulent viciousness of those who had sent him to Damascus. But he soon recognized that ALL who become true followers of Christ will automatically become the objects of the world's scorn, derision, and reproach, that "all that will

live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" under the reproach of indignant men of this world.

Is there a choice about whether one will bear Christ's reproach or not? Yes, and No. Yes, one may reject bearing the reproach of Christ, but it is tantamount to rejecting Christ Himself. No one may reject bearing the reproach of Christ and be a true Christian, for to come to Him for salvation and to retain that salvation one must be WITH Him, and the only place one can be WITH Christ is "without the camp" of the world, shunned as a despicable leper and offscouring of "dignified" worldlings.

Let's draw the picture in even more repulsive terms. In the eyes of the world, true Christians are the scum, the dung, the crud, the slime, the putrefaction, the smelly and dirty filth, that men scour off and get rid of as repulsive rot! It is ironic, but a filthy world thinks of themselves as clean and of true Christians as "filth" that must be purged away!

"Surely not! That is carrying the similitude too far!"

Not at all. Listen to one who suffered just such an opinion of himself after his conversion: "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." (1 Corinthians 4:13) According to Strong's, the Greek word for "filth" in this verse is: perikatharma, and signifies "something cleaned off all around, i.e. refuse (fig.):--filth."

Ever hear a Christian say, after having been of necessity in a worldly environment, "I feel like I need a spiritual bath!" -- a bath to wash away the filth of the world from the mind.

Well, ironically, the opposite is true of proud and haughty worldlings; after they have been in the presence of true Christians conversely they feel like "offscouring" the despicable "filth" of Christians. If you are a true Christian, you want to scour off the filth of the world, and the world wants to scour you off as despicable scum, pull the plug, and wash you down their drain! Why? Simply because the two just do not mix!

Look where we are today: The Bible says that "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs 14:34) America has turned that around backwards, and to fit the prevalent attitude in our land today, that verse would have to read: "Sin exalteth a nation, but righteousness is a reproach to any people."

And, to reflect their true opinion, some Wesleyan-oriented Churches would have to read it the same way.

Once while mother was backslidden, a married Nazarene sister of mine pulled up into our driveway with her husband. I saw them through the French Windows of our front door and warned mother that they were out there. Mom was all plastered with lipstick and dolled up like the worldling she had become, but she was ASHAMED for my godly Nazarene sister and her husband to see her wearing lipstick.

Hurriedly, mother grabbed a tissue and tried to rub off her lipstick before they got through the door. As a godly and good Nazarene, my sister did not "paint" her lips, and mother did not want her to see her with that sinful reproach on her lips! A sinful reproach it surely was, and when mother got back to God she scoured off that reproach from her person and ceased to paint her lips and doll herself up like Hellywood.

Whether mom succeeded in fooling my sister on the lipstick thing I know not, but sorry to say, that same sister is still a Nazarene and has long been painting her lips like perhaps most Nazarene women do today and think nothing of it!

Also when mom got back to God she got rid of her jewelry, her television, stopped attending the movies, started back to church, began to let her hair grow, while the beauty of Jesus' saving, sanctifying grace beamed from her face and radiated from her presence! She scoured off the world and "put on Christ"! And I believe that whoever truly "puts on Christ," (Gal. 3:27) -- whoever "puts on the new man... created in righteousness and true holiness," (Eph. 4:24) -- will do likewise, scouring off every trace of the world before professing to have put on Christ.

When one is really born again in a red-hot holiness church -- one that still bears the reproach of Christ -- if any trace of the world still remains for a short while, he or she will scour it off as the filth of the world in due season -- generally not long after the inward transformation occurs. But if, on the other hand, one is saved in a holiness church whose members have backslidden and taken on the trappings of the world, then that newly-born-again soul may not quickly realize the need of trashing worldly make-ups, put-ons and fashions. Indeed, some such converts may never see that light and soon fall victim to the worldly, backslidden spirit that prevails in the church of their spiritual birth, degenerating into the same worldly condition of the majority of the church members around them.

When our family dropped out of the Nazarene Church in the 1940s, we knew it was wrong to go the show, we knew that make-up, jewelry, worldly attire, and a ton of other things of the world were wicked and sinful! The first out-and-out move we made out into the world was to the picture shows. We knew it was wrong! Therefore, I had no trouble at all identifying the watching of television as worldly and sinful -- even though I seldom ever darkened the door of the local Church of the Nazarene.

When mom came up to me after her conversion and asked me what she should do with the television I had recently talked her into buying, I said, "Mother, I won't stand in your way. If you're gonna serve God, you don't want that thing around; go ahead and get rid of it" -- and get rid of it, she did. Though making not the slightest pretense of being a Christian myself, I knew that my mother had gotten ahold of something real from God -- beautifully, wonderfully real! and even though I had talked her into getting that hell-box so I could enjoy the movies right there in our house, I did not want my mother backsliding over that thing! I knew it would not do for her to keep it; so did she, and out it went.

The reader can understand, then, how I knew that something bad had happened to the Nazarene Church that papa, and all of us, had been a part of, when I saw first a few, and then

many, Nazarenes take on the TV, the lipstick, the bobbed hair, the jewelry, and all of the trappings of the world!

Let me ask my Nazarene readers: WHERE IS NOW THE REPROACH OF CHRIST?
CONNECTED WITH BEING A NAZARENE??

I venture to say that there is scarcely a Nazarene in America that has suffered anything that even comes near to being the reproach of Christ for decades! Why? There is no longer any reproach from the world toward today's Nazarenes, because by in large they are not found by Him "without the camp" when professing salvation and holiness -- as once they were.

Because of their un-worldliness and their other-worldliness, early Methodists were "the offscouring of the world," despised, persecuted, and flushed down the drain of proud worldlings! Then, when their fiery zeal and fervent love for Christ produced large numbers of converts and members, along came some well-intentioned men like Nathan Bangs, Robert Richford Roberts, John Emory, Wilbur Fisk, and many others, who felt that it was a shame that early Methodist Itinerants had been so rough-hewn and uneducated. Surely, they thought, the Methodist gospel could be better advanced if there were highly-educated, polished, well-informed men preaching its doctrines and refuting the scholarly writings of anti-Methodist theologians!

"We need schools!" they said, "schools that will turn out dignified, degreed, Doctors of Divinity, so that we can show the world that we are not a bunch of radical numb-skulls! who base their doctrines upon ignorant notions and upon unScriptural exegesis! We must scour off this needless reproach resting upon us! We are not really the ignoramuses we are perceived to be by the world. Let's get rid of that reproach!"

And, they built the schools, got those degreed men, and scoured off that reproach -- but in so doing they also scoured off the reproach of Christ! The high-browed, highminded, Methodist theologues that put the DDs after their names knew Greek, but they didn't know God! They knew the classics, but they didn't know Jesus. Positioned within stately cathedrals with high spires, instead of preaching in rude log-cabins, riding in fashionable carriages instead of on horseback, they could decline Greek verbs and nouns, but they did not decline worldly appurtenances, worldly applause, and worldly aplomb -- and, they were at peace with the world, because in fact they were a part of the world.

Perceiving this worldly spirit in Methodism, many devout Methodists became alarmed and banded together to preserve the old paths of Methodism and holiness. Shortly after the Civil War the great National Association for the Promotion of Holiness sprang into being, and under such men as Inskip, Cookman, Wood, McDonald, Haney, and a thousand more, great revivals of true salvation and holiness took place.

And, it was the intense desire of men like Inskip and Haney that Methodism should be revived and returned to the old paths of sharing the reproach of Christ so as to share in the boundless blessings of his grace and smile. To those in the Holiness Movement came the all-important question: "Shall we remain in the Methodist Church and seek its revival? or should we "come-out" of her and form new denominations?

Inskip, Haney, and even Beverly Carradine, along with many more, felt that it would be a mistake to "come out" of Methodism, and they spoke against it. They deplored the formalistic, worldly atmosphere that permeated Methodism far and wide, but following the spirit of Wesley who was reluctant to leave the Church of England, they clung to the hope that Methodism would return to the old paths, and they preached against "come-out-ism".

Fiery and zealous though they were, filled with the Holy Ghost as they were, such men as those just mentioned shamed those who spoke of the need of leaving the Methodist church to promote the way of true holiness. Read Carradine, read Haney, and you will see that they decried "come-out-ism". Methodism was dear to them, they loved it, and they could not bring themselves to think of separation from her as a legitimate means of promoting holiness. Carradine and Haney both preached beyond the turn of the past Century, beyond 1900, -- Carradine apparently until about 1931 -- but even though both of them wrote strongly against the pervasive worldliness in Methodism, neither of them ever left the M. E. Church, and so far as I know neither of them ever endorsed coming out of the Methodist Church as a legitimate means of promoting holiness.

But some, like Phineas Franklin Bresee, finally came to see that in order to "go forth unto Christ without the camp" of the world, they would need to leave the Methodist Church where true holiness and true holiness standards were mocked and squelched. To a large extent, Bresee was shoved out the door of Methodism. To the Methodist mucky-mucks he was offscouring, something to be gotten rid of! Sound familiar? The red-hot, old-fashioned, un-worldly, other-worldly gospel of Bresee and his cohorts was "scum" in the eyes of Methodism! They scoured him off and out, and thus was born the Church of the Nazarene.

Those pioneer Nazarenes with Bresee in "The Glory Barn" knew what it meant to suffer the reproach of Christ. Sin, and worldliness were a reproach to them, and they were a reproach to the world. Yes, Bresee wisely avoided the extremes of some wild-eyed fanatics, but let there be no mistake about it: -- Bresee and his band of early Nazarenes were not all painted and bobbed up with the make-up and trappings of the world the way thousands of present day Nazarenes are! They had "come-out" -- not just come out from Methodism, but come out of the world! Early Nazarenes were scorned because they did not dress like the world, act like the world, talk like the world, look like the world, and partake of one iota of the world's spirit. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, painted with the beauty of holiness alone and bedecked with the Pearl of Great Price, but belittled by a world that clearly saw and felt that they were of a different spirit!

Besides from God Himself, where did I get the idea the make-up, movies, worldly adornment, amusements, worldly attire, worldly activities, and mixing and mingling with the world's fling was wrong???? I'll tell you where: from the Church of the Nazarene -- a group which in its early years was hated by the world. Bresee was no legalist, but he believed in separation from the world in all of the ways just mentioned.

How hypocritical it seems to me, that present day Nazarenes would gild his memory while mocking his standards!! I venture to say that the vast majority of the painted-up, jeweled-up, TV-watching, Movie-going, World-loving, University-degreed, Nazarene members would feel as out of place as toad-frog in a frying-pan if they ever got into a red-hot holiness meeting like those

conducted by Bresee in the old Nazarene "Glory Born". Like that frog in the frying-pan they would hop out real quick from an atmosphere too hot for their carnal comfort!

Yet, many such Nazarenes seem to enjoy gilding the memory of Bresee and looking at the quaint old pictures of the Pilot Point crowd. But, they have the luxury of doing that from the comfortable distance of close to a century now. They're far enough away from the "Glory Barn" fire that they won't get burned. It's easy to deify saints that we don't have to live with and around. Its quite another thing to partake of their spirit and suffer their reproach!

Like the Methodists did in the 1800s, Nazarenes have now taken on the aplomb and applause of the world, and there is little about them anymore that calls forth an ounce of scorn from the masses of the world. And, they are not alone. Look at the Wesleyan Church and the Free Methodist Church, both born in the early years of the 19th Century. To a large extent the fire is gone, and so is the reproach of Christ. Seth Rees would feel out of place in many of his former Pilgrim Holiness Churches, now part of the Wesleyan organization, as would Martin Wells Knapp, and both John Wesley Redfield and Benjamin Titus Roberts would be appalled at the condition of Free Methodism! And I cannot believe that P. F. Bresee would feel honored that his name is "sainted" while his standards are "trashed" as part of the quaint old past and not really applicable today!

The attitude of many in the professed holiness movement is like that expressed in Isaiah 4:1 "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." They do not want the reproach of not being called Christians; they do not want the name of those who disbelieve in second-blessing holiness, but don't you dare tell them what it is fit for holiness folks to eat spiritually: "We will eat our own bread" -- whether it be a TV dinner complete with TV or whether it be a double-feature downtown off of Hollywood's table. And don't even think about telling them what it is fit for holiness folks to wear: "We will wear our own apparel"! -- whether it be shorts or tights, whether it be gold or pearls, whether it is proud or modest!

Few Holiness Churches there be today who have anything in their hearts and lives that evokes a spontaneous derision from the world. In most cases, the world has so permeated the membership of professed holiness churches that for them to condemn worldliness they would need to condemn themselves! -- and that, you can be sure, they are most reluctant to do. At the same time, however, they are not the slightest bit hesitant to condemn those who hold up any kind of standard for holiness professors.

Feeling that they have arrived -- grown up, and out-grown the old-fogey notions of their founders and early members, most among the worldly masses filling the pulpits and pews of today's Wesleyan-Professed-Holiness Churches are exceedingly quick to label as legalists those who point out their worldliness. Some who thus defiantly brand as legalists those who call attention to their worldliness are people who once stood for the old-paths, but perhaps most of such today are those who have never once heard the old-fashioned way of Holiness preached. They have been born, brought up, and married, in a Wesleyan-oriented Church that is now quite accepted by the world and from whose pulpits none have stood by the standards of Bresee, Rees,

Roberts, Knapp, and their ilk. Many such have never been genuinely born again, let alone sanctified wholly. Thus, they love the world in their church and hate anyone who condemns it.

After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, she declared, "God hath taken away my reproach." (Genesis 30:23) I wonder, how many leaders in today's established, largely-attended, Wesleyan denominations think the same thing, "God has taken away the reproach we bore in our early days. Once we were a despised little holiness church, but look at us now! Instead of a handful on Sunday Morning, we have hundreds sitting in our pews. Instead of the crude, ignorant folks who used to embarrass us with their lack of intelligence and dignity, we now have people with degrees and prestige. Instead of pastors who knew no Greek and who made fools of themselves preaching so loud that it made the church neighbors mad and so long that we squirmed in our seats, we now have Greek Scholars with DDs who speak in soft melodious tones and who never discourse more than 30 minutes and quit promptly at 12 noon! Instead of meeting in store-fronts and poor-looking little wooden frame buildings, we have beautiful, modernistic sanctuaries of brick and stone, so beautifully landscaped that they look every bit as nice as the Mormons have -- nothing to be ashamed of, everything to be proud of!

"Yes, look at us now, we are rich, and increased with goods! We have need of nothing! GOD HATH TAKEN AWAY OUR REPROACH! People no longer hate us. They love us, and count it a privilege to belong to our church!"

Psalms 49:18 tells us that "men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself." Become mercenary and materialistic, look, act, and talk like the world, do good by yourself in mundane and worldly ways, and the world will praise you, want to join you, and will no longer cast reproach in your direction. Why? They recognize in you a kindred spirit.

One must agree: -- the reproach has indeed been taken away from most large Wesleyan-Holiness denominations today. The question is: WHO TOOK IT AWAY? I venture to say that it was not God. -- Selah.

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13 -- THOU GOD SEEST ME

When Hagar fled from Sarah, "the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur" (Gen. 16:6-7) So impressed was Hagar with God's Omniscient knowledge that enabled Him to spot exactly where she was, though no other human being on earth knew her location, that "she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, THOU GOD SEEST ME: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" (Gen. 16:13). The NIV translates it: "She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: 'YOU ARE THE GOD WHO SEES ME,' for she said, 'I have now seen THE ONE WHO SEES ME.'"

One night during last year, Brad J_____, a young Spokane father, murdered his 10 or 11-year-old daughter Valerie, hoping thereby to ingratiate himself to his girl-friend who did not get along well with Valerie. Shortly afterward, he buried Valerie's body in a certain location. Then, to cover this heinous crime, he spread an alarm in his neighborhood that his daughter was missing,

and had apparently been abducted while waiting for the school bus. Others, concerned about Valerie, frantically helped search for her -- but of course she was not found. And, if I recall correctly, a floodtide of sympathy was poured out for Brad J_____, and quite an amount of money was sent to him from Valerie's friends, school-mates, school-teachers, and others.

All the while, Brad J_____ played the part of a distraught father, beside himself with concern over the whereabouts of his missing daughter. However, he did not "pull the wool over everyone's eyes." Suspicious Police Detectives, unknown to him, planted a GPS (Global Positioning System) device on his vehicle. Days and weeks passed and no sign of Valerie was discovered, but finally Brad J_____ became concerned, lest the Police discover Valerie's body, and decided to dig her up and move her body to a more remote location. What he did not know was that with the GPS hidden on his vehicle, the Police SAW EXACTLY WHERE HE WAS ALL THE TIME. And, they spotted the exact place where he reburied Valerie's body!

Shortly after this, again, Brad J_____ feared that Valerie's body would be found, but when he went to the second burying place, the police were waiting there for him! He was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced for the murder of Valerie -- all because a little man-made Global Positioning System device enabled detectives to spot Brad's exact location at the crucial time and place necessary to irrefutably prove that he had murdered his daughter!

Daniel prophesied that in the last days "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4). Using these GPS devices a man can now be located in his exact location, any place on earth -- no matter where he may "run to and fro."

For those wanting to be rescued, such locating devices have no doubt already been cherished as life-savers -- such as pilots, downed behind enemy lines, or hikers lost in the woods -- while for criminals, GPS devices are probably feared as the means of exposing their furtive movements and deeds.

But God has never needed a GPS device to know where his creatures are. At every moment, He knows the precise location of every man, every creature, every molecule, and every atom, in His entire, measureless Universe! Hebrews 4:13 declares: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

GOD SEES THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE GUILTY: -- When "the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:9), we can be very certain that He did not ask this question in order to obtain the knowledge of where Adam and Eve were. He already knew precisely where they were. The question was no doubt asked to help Adam and Eve locate themselves spiritually.

And, when "the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9), God both knew exactly where Abel was buried, and knew that Cain had killed and buried there, though Cain denied any knowledge of Abel's whereabouts. Thus, in spite of Cain's lying denial, the Lord said to him: "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10).

GOD SEES THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE GOOD: -- John 1:47-49 "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, WHEN THOU WAS UNDER THE FIG TREE, I SAW THEE. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

Psalms 34:15 "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." Wherever the righteous "run to and fro" on this planet we can be assured that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16:9). Conversely, "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong" against those who oppose Him. "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings" (Proverbs 5:21). Yea, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). Peter declared in 1 Peter 3:12 -- "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

The Prairie Overcomer related the story of how "a man who went to steal corn from his neighbor's field. He took his little boy with him to keep a lookout, so as to give warning in case anyone should come along. Before commencing he looked all around, first one way and then the other. Not seeing any person, he was just about to fill his bag, when his son cried out, 'Father, there is one way you haven't looked yet!' The father supposed that someone was coming, and asked his son which way he meant. He answered, 'You forgot to look up!' The father, conscience-stricken, took his boy by the hand, and hurried home without the corn which he had designed to take." Why? Because he realized the same fact that was realized by Hagar: "THOU GOD SEEST ME"!

No matter who we are, what we are, or where we are, we should not be surprised that God needs no GPS to know our precise condition, action, and location: Psalms 94:9 "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, SHALL HE NOT SEE?" YES! He sees everyone, everything, everywhere, every moment! for He is the Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent God!

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14 -- THE SUBTLE TEMPTATION TO WORLDLY REPUTATION

Relatively speaking, God's true people are generally not famous, not well known by the "upper-crust" of the world's elite. It is true that some Christians have "done exploits" so great for God that they have gained attention around the globe, but this is always the exception and not the norm.

Of God's ministers, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:4, 9 "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God... as unknown, and yet well known..." Those who are the most well-known in heaven generally labor in relative obscurity on earth. Thus it was with Christ Himself. In heaven, His recognition was universal, and there was no creature that did not bow to

His name with utmost awe and respect as to the eternal Son of God, but when he condescended to dwell among men, He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). During His earthly pilgrimage, it cannot be said that He was universally famous, for his entire life was lived within the perimeter of fewer than 200 miles. Tell me of a man of God today who is quite unknown beyond a radius of 200 miles, and you will tell me of a man whose labors for God are very obscure. If because of today's means of communication and transportation many of God's ministers are known by a scattered few around the world, it is still likely that in most cases they are not known by the vast majority on earth, nor by any of the "Big Wheels" of earthly power.

Furthermore, what is generally true of God's ministers is true as well of most of the rank and file in God's army. Ask them if they would "be spoken for to the [President], or to the [Speaker] of the [House]? And [they will answer], I dwell among mine own people" (2 Kings 4:13). Not once has the President ever heard their name, and never has the Speaker ever spoken it. They have no favors to ask of worldly men of repute, for among such they are unknown, and their cogs do not mesh with the cogwheels of Capitol Hill. In fact, their cogs are connected to the true "Fly-Wheel" of Universal Power in the Almighty Person of Jesus Christ, but they are totally "out of gear" from those of high repute in this world -- unknown to them, and unconnected to any of the wheels moved by them.

Though "all power in heaven and on earth" was moved by the lowly Nazarene, in his humiliation and obscurity he was the Great Fly-Wheel "which none of the princes of this world knew" (1 Corinthians 2:8), and with whom they had no connection. And, it is still true today. For one to be moved by Him, he must first disconnect and get "out of gear" with worldly Movers and Movements, and then hook up with the hidden and hated, but All-Powerful, Jesus of Nazareth.

The converse is also true: in order to gain worldly recognition, in order to become of high repute in this wicked world, one must first disconnect from Christ and hook up with the "Big Wheels" of earthly power. That is the price you must pay if you expect to be famous in this world. Before you gain the highest worldly applause and aplomb, you will "owe your soul to the company store," and you will have become completely disconnected from Christ.

Those holiness ministers who set out to "make a name for themselves" are out of gear with Christ, and beyond that, they have not just "put it in neutral" spiritually, they have actually "put it in gear" with the prince of this world. To seek earthly reputation is to lose all connection with Christ. And herein many a man and movement have erred. When a holiness man or a holiness movement wants to "be somebody" in this world they are wishing for that which of necessity breaks their connection with the hidden and heavenly power chain. And, since God's people are on an "uphill climb" on earth, once one is "out of gear" with Christ, within a short time all true forward momentum will cease and things will soon begin rolling in the opposite direction, slowly at first, but soon with a frightening rush down the steep slopes of righteousness into the damning depths of apostasy.

Have you ever been fooled on a grade? -- your senses telling you that you were going uphill, when you were actually going down? It happens! Some sort of vertigo factor can make the cut of the road-grade into the hillside look as if you're climbing when you are actually descending!

"We're on a steep down-grade now," a driver might declare to one of his passengers.

"No! -- we're going uphill!" -- an incredulous passenger might reply.

"Yes, we ARE going downhill," the driver may retort, "and I'll prove it to you. I will lift my foot up off of the accelerator. Now, -- see? Look at the speedometer, we are still gaining speed. Why? because even though I am giving the car no gas the gravitational pull of the down-grade is increasing our momentum."

And, the increased momentum of a holiness movement is no sign that they are still connected with Christ. In fact, it may indicate just the opposite! When they were hooked onto God and laboriously pulling up the steeps of righteousness in this world their momentum may have been quite slow, till someone took it out of gear. Then, when things were slowed to a near stop, while the passengers slept, came the satanic turn around. Now things are rolling along in the opposite direction at an amazing clip! When the passengers nod awake and blink at the landscape rushing by, it would appear that the heights were never being gained at such amazing speed and with such little strain on the spiritual engine! But the whole movement is actually headed toward hell, coasting rapidly down the grade of righteousness, and plunging toward the deepest ravine of eternal destruction. All the while, many in such a movement pay no heed at all to the few who remark, "It seems like we're going downhill," the vast majority being convinced otherwise.

When, and how, did it all start? The chances are it began when someone who was in a position to steer things "took it out of gear," let up on the accelerator of hard labor, and began looking for some easier way to speed things up and ascend to the heights of worldly notice. Then, the delusion of spiritual vertigo deceived that leader into making a U-turn into the fast lane headed in the opposite direction. It looked like an upgrade, and once upon it, it seemed like their power was so increased that the slightest touch on the foot-feed sped them uphill with amazing ease. As the velocity of their imagined virtue increases rapidly they gain the reputation of a group that is really "on the move" -- as indeed they are! albeit in the exact opposite direction of that in which they laboriously plodded up the steeps of light. The true condition of such is stated in the NIV version of Revelation 3:1 -- "To the angel of the church in Sardis write... you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead."

Among those of worldly repute today, too often there is "a stinking savor" that is repulsive to the nose of those who enjoy the sweet scent of "the Rose of Sharon". Ecclesiastes 10:1 tells us: "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour."

For long decades, the position of US President was reputed to be one of "wisdom and honor." But today, dead flies have fallen into its ointment, and the putrid aroma wafting out from our debauched "Whitehouse" in Washington, D.C. is of such "stinking savor" that many are nauseated by its smell! While some seem to think that our unworthily honored president came out of his fleshly pig-pen "smelling like a rose," many others, with spiritual noses held, are running for a place to catch a breath of fresh air. If but "a little folly" raises a stink in the reputation of a man who was formerly accredited with "wisdom and honour," just think how odious is the foul aroma

of one who commits "numerous follies" while occupying the exalted place of high reputation and honor!

Jacob complained to his vengeful sons, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites..." (Genesis 34:30). Even thus has our Playboy President made our nation stink in the nostrils of the world! Those following the false prophet, Mohammed, have long looked upon America as "the Great Satan," and our President's rotten behavior has no doubt made our land stink even worse in their eyes! Look out America! Terrorist attacks are likely to increase during the years 2000-2005! The stench of American immorality will probably provoke even greater disdain from Arab extremists and they will think that they do God a service by their terrorist acts! I will not go so far as to say that God will send attacks on our land from the deluded and cunning followers of Islam, but He may see fit to allow them.

G. P. Eckman described the present debauchery in our land when he wrote: "Lord Byron was guilty of a foolish self-pity. He showed a mawkish sentimentality about the sins which he never ceased to love. He was pleased to think of himself as the unfortunate prey of fleshly lusts, while he gloried in his shame. Sometimes moral obliquity sinks so low that the sinner prides himself on his insensibility. A man recently said that he would rather pay ten thousand dollars to retain his delicious thirst for alcoholic beverages, to which he was a slave, than to pay one hundred dollars for its removal. When a soul has dropped into that abyss of spiritual morbidity, he can scarcely hear the voice of God summoning him to liberty and life.

"Fenelon imagined a dialogue between Ulysses and Grillus, the man whom Circe had turned into a hog. Ulysses wanted to bring him back to manhood. But Grillus would not consent. He said, 'No, the life of a hog is so much pleasanter.' 'But, said Ulysses, 'do you make no account of eloquence, poetry and music?' 'No, I would rather grunt than be eloquent like you.' 'But,' asked Ulysses further, 'how can you endure this nastiness and stench?' Grillus replied, 'It all depends on the taste. The odor is sweeter to me than that of amber, and the filth than the nectar of the gods.'"

How can those of high repute in this world endure the nastiness and stench in which they all too often wallow? It all depends on the taste. The odor of their vile ungodliness is to them sweeter than that of amber, and the moral swill in which they wallow is to their taste sweeter than the nectar of purity dispensed by God!

Who, in his right mind, would want to partake of such repast with those who are of high repute in this world? To bask in their fame and to banquet in their pleasures is tantamount to wallowing in their filth. To him who hungers for such, the Almighty, yet lowly, Jesus says: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John 4:32). And what is that meat: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). He ate that meat, and He did that work, in obscurity and within the small perimeters of Palestine.

He turned a deaf ear to the carnal urgings of his unregenerate brothers, who wanted Him to seek fame, telling Him: "There is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world." Christ might well have answered them with the same words he once spoke to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art

an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:23). Their counsel came from Satan, Jesus recognized it as such, and paid them no mind.

Godly men and godly movements have been given similar counsel from the wicked one: "If thou do these things, show thyself to the world!" -- "Make yourself known! Advertise your achievements! After all, Jesus Himself said that it was wrong to put your light under a bushel! Put yourself out there, and up there, where you can really SHINE for God!" With a modicum of truth, thus he baits the man, or the movement, to seek reputation! Jesus perceived the subtlety in the Satanic suggestion put forth to Him by his blinded brethren, but numbers of holiness leaders have been duped by the devil at this point!

Let me ask you something here: -- What is the first excuse used by those who, from among the obscure holiness crowd, begin to seek earthly reputation? Is it not, "I am doing this (or we are doing this) to put the Light of Christ on a higher candlestick. We want to elevate the Light of the world! I am (or we are) now so obscure that the world cannot see Christ's light shining from us. So, I must (or we must) be elevated in order to be a "city that is set upon a hill" from whose heights the world can see Christ's Light. Sounds plausible, but it is not an aspiration and ambition originating from Heaven.

The temptation to Jesus was: Show off your miraculous power. Let the Jews and the whole world know that you are the Great Messiah!" And right there is the crux of the whole matter. It was not, "Shine for Jehovah," but rather "Show off Thyself" -- and such a cheap, selfish show Jesus would not make. His "meat" was to do His Father's will, even in humble obscurity, even if it meant inheriting the hatred of his kinsmen and the animosity of all of the Jews, even if it brought him thorns, and spital, curses and crucifixion, from the men he might have dazzled with his power!

In contrast, the "meat" of high worldly reputation that He might have eaten was filled with the "Mad-Cow Disease" of Satanic pride. Those who selfishly seek and partake of it lose all sense of right and wrong, up and down, and are unable to detect between the sweet-smell of holiness and the stinking savor of worldly wickedness. Jesus refused to dine on that deceitful, degenerating, and damning delicacy. He came off crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross among the men of high repute in this world, but clear as a bell in His perception of truth, High as Heaven in true elevation, and eternally Blessed by the Father!

Thus it was, that the apostle Paul could write to the humble preachers and Christian workers of his day, some of whom might also have been tempted to seek reputation: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:5-9).

And, thus it is that to all those obscure workers who are hidden away today in God's will who are tempted to seek reputation, Jesus warns: "When thou art bidden of any man... sit not down in the highest room... But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room... For

whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:8-11).

The history of too many good holiness men, and too many good holiness movements has been like that of Uzziah:

"His name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God... And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord" (2 Chronicles 26:15-16, 21).

The humble and obscure holiness man or holiness movement is "marvelously helped of God," and thus becomes "strong". Then, along comes the devil saying, "You could put God's Light on a higher, more prominent, candlestick if you were more highly educated. Get rid of the darkening "bushel" of your humble obscurity! Get educated, shed your crudity, become erudite, get an honorable reputation among men! And then, from that lofty pinnacle you can really Shine for God!"

Now, you tell me why -- Once a man or movement takes that bait, and seeks elevation for that seemingly legitimate purpose, somewhere between the time that climb is begun and the time that pinnacle is reached, the motive is, with imperceptible subtlety, changed from the purpose to "Shine for God" to the deceitful ambition of "Showing off Self"!

I believe that most often the simple explanation is: It was a staircase which God never called that one, that group, to climb -- an elevation by which Satan cunningly, and nearly always successfully, perverts the motive of the climber from the purpose of promoting God's Glory to the carnal ambition of promoting Self-Glory. Don't tell me it hasn't happened! It has happened! repeatedly, and with similar results, time and time again! Yet, godly and humble men and movements never seem to learn from the history of those who have succumbed to his uplifting downfall.

The degrees of so-called higher-education and the prestige of worldly repute are held up to the lowly as trees "to be desired to make one wise" so as to better let their lights shine for God, but after the bait is taken and the subtle staircase is climbed, the desire to shine for God is imperceptibly replaced by a paramount desire to shine for self! Then, it is not enough to have the knowledge, the learned achiever must put the degreed letters after his or her name! In the movement that has bitten into this apple of pride, it becomes a compulsion to call their pastor, "Doctor So-and-so," and if the man does not have the degree they will get rid of him and get one who does wear the honor!

Don't tell me this doesn't happen! You know it has happened, and will continue to happen during the decades of the 21st Century, if Jesus tarries. "Rev. So-and-so" does not elevate the prestige of the church high enough. Woe be to the pastor who has no letters beside his name! So, off the frightened and unlettered preachers scamper -- everywhere, anywhere, to get that honor -- even if they have to buy it from some money-mill that bestows the high title by mail for a fee after one completes a few correspondence courses that could be passed by a sixth-grader! No matter

that they will make anyone a "Doctor" for a few bucks, it is now "out of vogue" to be unlettered, and so long as I can call myself "Dr. Pastor," preserve my position and furnish myself with a nice income, I care not where or how I get that coveted and necessary DD. And the terms "Brother" and "Sister" among the laity -- how unsophisticated!! "Mr. and Mrs." sounds more dignified, and "Dr. and Mrs." is positively elevating!

Is your part of God's great harvest field obscure? Care not for it. The Psalmist declared: "In the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Psalms 51:6) He is wisest and best used of God who remains in "the hidden part" where God has placed him. "When the wicked rise" into places of prominence and high repute, "a man is hidden" (Proverbs 28:12) from much worldly notice who stays in the obscure place of God's will, but it is there, in that lowly place, that humble spot, as a man of "no reputation" that he can shine the highest and brightest for Christ!

Concerning the right and best way to spread the gospel, there are paradoxes that seem to be self-contradictory, but which are true nevertheless. It does not seem possible that the best way for a man or movement to exalt the Light of Christ is to remain obscure and of no reputation in the eyes of the world. Must not men and movements "Show Themselves" wise, honored and reputable in order to exalt Christ? Not at all! Often, the more humble and obscure they are in the eyes of a proud world, the higher they exalt Jesus, and the brighter they show forth the glory of God.

Few there be who can sit in the high places of worldly learning, honor, and reputation and still retain the inward humility necessary to truly exalt Christ. Most who seek and sit in those heights lose the purity of their motive somewhere up the climb, and the desire to exalt Self supplants their earlier desire to exalt Christ through their erudition and prominence. Paul taught the Corinthians: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (Corinthians 1:26-29).

If Christ began the building of His Church with those who "were unlearned and ignorant men" whose only notoriety was that they had "been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13), why should we vainly imagine that now Christ must bring His Church to perfection with DDS and men of repute who have been to some seminary, and who hob-knob in high places? Apparently this is precisely what some think today in their mad rush to turn "Reverends" into "Doctors" and plain little old "Colleges" into prestigious "Universities". Their movements were born out of the Heaven-sent, Holy Fire burning in the sanctified hearts of their unlearned founders. Now, they have "sainted" their memory and have started calling their long-departed founders "Doctors" who barely graduated from grade-school!

Why? They are ashamed of their humble past, and now feel that their cause is best served by men of degree and prestige. So now, old Bro. McGillacuddy who founded their work, and who didn't get past the seventh grade, must be dubbed "Dr. McGillacuddy"! He was all ablaze for God, burned a wide swath through the brambles of sin wherever he preached, and he and his ilk raised up the old-fashioned holiness denomination. Were he to return from the dead to his church today,

he might be shocked to learn that he was "Dr. McGillacuddy" now, but he would soon feel ashamed to be called such after "Dr. Erudite" took the pulpit a few times as he listened, and trashed the Old Testament while soft-pedaling a contemporary Christ who is as worldly-minded as the painted-up, jewel-bedecked crowd sitting in their plush pews!

Can you not hear the fiery old Founder exclaim, "WHAT!? This cannot be the old-fashioned holiness crowd that I founded!" -- No indeed, it isn't. It just carries the same name. And if old Bro. McGillacuddy took the pulpit and preached as of old, he would burn a wide swath through the brambles of that congregation and denomination, but he would soon be cast out as some kind of crackpot impostor, for surely their enshrined and beloved "Dr. McGillacuddy" had more dignity and prestige than was manifested by this pulpit-pounding "weirdo"! No, this will never happen, for God does not send back His Lazaruses to warn those who scoff at the supposed scum of those who are of little earthly repute.

It must be conceded that God does not always will that His ministers have no degree. Christ can, and does, use learning and knowledge, but when such erudition is coupled with the deceitful subtlety of self-exaltation and the desire for worldly renown and repute it has no place in His Temple whatsoever. Whether it is realized or not, one smitten with the leprosy of such pride is quickly ushered out of God's true Church, even though he may remain in high ecclesiastical position, or even as the head of a large denomination.

When the spiritual, heavenly Temple is unveiled, it may astound many to discover that the living stones used to finish the highest pinnacle of that Majestic Cathedral are those who were taken from the most humble and obscure places on earth, and who were literally of "no reputation" even among their denominational brethren! -- while some who were thought to be huge building blocks in Christ's Church will be missing altogether.

I conclude with this story from D. L. Moody:

"A man dreamed that when he died he was taken by the angels to a beautiful temple. After admiring it for a time, he discovered that one stone was missing. All was finished but just one little stone that was left out. He said to the angel, 'What is this stone left out for?' The angel replied, 'That was left out for you, but you were waiting to do great things and so this was never finished.' He was startled and woke, and resolved that he would become a faithful worker for God in little things."

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15 -- SEVEN FACTS ABOUT WHAT "TRUTH IS" TODAY

Seven places in the KJV Bible, we find these words: "truth is" -- and, I will present them below in the order they appear and draw from each context a different fact about what "Truth Is" Today.

(1) "TRUTH IS" FALLEN IN THE STREET. -- Isaiah 59:14 "And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for TRUTH IS fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter."

When an American Governmental Agency advises people to defend themselves against liars by telling them lies, surely "Truth is fallen in the streets" of our land! What am I saying? Here is an example:

Recently, I have heard a radio ad sponsored by a governmental agency warning the elderly to get off of the phone quickly when some con-artist calls whose desire is to get enough information from them to bilk them out of their life-savings. The tenor of the ad and advice given is the following, if not in the exact words, then quite close: "IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, just get off of the phone -- hang up quickly!" -- and then the radio ad has an "elderly" answering the phone, and in response to the lying con-artist, she says, "Someone is at the door; I'll have to hang up," and in another sample the elderly woman says, "I think I hear my mother calling me, good-bye," and she hangs up.

So -- in effect, our government is telling these elderly people: WHEN A LIAR CALLS YOU, TELL HIM A LIE -- TELL HIM "ANYTHING" -- just get off of the phone quickly!

In God's sight, IT DOES MATTER WHAT YOU SAY -- EVEN WHEN PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM A LIAR! It is always a sin to lie, even when fending off a liar! That government ad is more than a tacit approval of so-called "white lies," -- it is out and out advice to tell such lies! -- and totally unnecessary. Yes, elderly folks need to be advised to "get off the phone quickly" when receiving calls from con-artists, but a simple, truthful, statement such as, "I'm not interested, good-bye!" before hanging up is all that is necessary. Or, one could simply hang up with no response, but IN NO CASE IS LYING TO A LIAR NECESSARY OR JUSTIFIED!

Sadly, this government ad illustrates the degree to which "Truth is fallen" in our land.

(2) "TRUTH IS" PERISHED... IS CUT OFF FROM THEIR MOUTH -- Jeremiah 7:28 "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: TRUTH IS perished, and is cut off from their mouth."

Here, Truth is pictured as more than "fallen" and is pictured as "dead" -- so dead that liars are unable any longer to tell the truth. People can become such habitual liars that they lie continually, even when telling the truth would bring no negative consequences. Jesus said of the devil in John 8:44 that "there is NO TRUTH IN HIM." He lies to God, lies to the Holy Angels, lies to saints, lies to sinners, and lies even to the imps who fell with him. To satan, "Truth is perished... is cut off from his mouth," so much so that nothing he says is totally true, and is often totally false.

Further, in that same verse, Jesus told those Jews who hated Him, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Thus we see that just as satan first mortally wounded truth within himself so that it was "fallen" in his estimation, and later slew all truth within himself, cutting it off entirely from his mouth, even so can men first cast the Truth down, and

finally so slay Truth within themselves as to become such habitual liars that they lie virtually all the time, in part or in whole, in this way and that. Often, such ones relish and regale in their fabrications, fairy-tales, and falsehoods as much as the saints of God rejoice in the Truth with hearty "Amen!"

Some months ago, I heard a woman on the radio rejoicing over how Bill Clinton was too "slick" for the Republicans to catch him in lies and illegal doings. Fairly gloating, she joyfully boasted, "He's too good for you!" -- meaning: he's too sly to be caught in his falsehoods and deceitful deeds -- all of which goes to show how much "Truth is perished... is cut off from the mouths" of millions today who revel in its defeat and death.

(3) "TRUTH IS" USED TREACHEROUSLY? -- Mark 12:14 "And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in TRUTH: IS it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"

No, this is not a straight-forward combination of the word "Truth" and the word "is" as in the other verses, but this verse does show how Truth is often used treacherously -- spoken as a flattering compliment when the motive is to destroy the one being complimented. "Thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth" -- what a truthful compliment to Jesus! but in fact they were trying to "trip Him up," and use His truthful reply to get Him arrested by Caesar, or by their own legalistic Lawyers.

Who can deny that millions today are looking for a legal loophole -- either a loophole that they can tighten like a noose around the neck of their enemies, or a loophole through which they themselves can escape the due consequences of their falsehoods. Yes, many today only tell the whole truth, or a part truth, when it can be used to cleverly gain them some legal or illegal advantage wherewith to "lynch" their foes or "clinch" their victory.

(4) "TRUTH IS COME" John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of TRUTH, IS come, he will guide you into all truth..." Paul said in Romans 7:7 "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

(a) TRUTH IS COME THROUGH CREATION -- Truth first entered the world through God's Creation: Romans 1:20 "For the invisible things of Him [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made..." Man need only examine the intricate mechanisms and designs in all about him in the world to "clearly see" the Truth that a Creator made them, and that they could not possibly have evolved into existence from nothing and into their present design without the handiwork of a Master Designer.

(b) TRUTH IS COME THROUGH JESUS: John 12:46 "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

(c) TRUTH IS COME THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT -- Again, "when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth..."

Yes, Truth is come into the world, but it is come into a world dominated by satan and into a world where it is largely not welcome: John 3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

(5) TRUTH IS IN JESUS -- Ephesians 4:21 "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the TRUTH IS in Jesus."

Have you ever seen a time when the world more widely and loudly denied that "truth is in Jesus"!?

Truth is not in Science, yet highminded Einsteins around the world are groping and hoping to discover life in space and the origin of the universe. Well, THERE IS LIFE IN SPACE, and the secret of THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE IS OUT THERE TOO -- all in the Eternal Person of Whom it is written: "All things were MADE BY HIM; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3) Often before buying a thing people will search for the statement telling where it was "made" -- Made in the U.S.A., Made in Japan, Made in Mexico, Made in Hong Kong, etc., etc. -- and, if the stated country has a reputation for making cheap and shoddy goods they won't buy it. Well, friends, don't "buy" the idea that this world was "Made in Evolution"! The Truth is, you can examine every last thing in this universe and it clearly shows that everything "made that was made" WAS "MADE BY CHRIST"!

Truth is not in a Christless Judaism. Today, Hanukkah is moving in while increasingly there is "no room in the inn" of public property or public opinion for a manger scene depicting "the Holy Child" of Christmas. Truth is in Jesus, not in a Christless Hanukkah, but so hostile is the world to that fact these days that I may place myself at risk by publishing this.

Truth is not in Eastern Religions, wizardry, or the so-called signs of the Zodiac, but today we have "Gurus Galore" and many Zodiac-believers are horrified if their horoscope is "inauspicious". Speaking of the word "inauspicious," did you ever study its origin? and the origin of the word "inaugurate"?

If you knew the origin of the word "auspices," you might not be so anxious to place on some billboard an ad stating: "A Revival is Being Conducted under the Auspices of the (You-Name-it) Church." The etymology of that word, according to the Oxford Dictionary stems from: ["observation of bird-flight in divination": F auspice or L auspicium f. auspex observer of birds f. avis bird] In its beginning, then, if something was "inauspicious" it meant that according to divination the bird flew wrong, indicating evil consequences would result if a certain action was taken.

As to the origin of "inaugurate," an "augur" according to the Oxford Dictionary was "a Roman religious official who observed natural signs, especially the behaviour of birds, interpreting these as an indication of divine approval or disapproval of a proposed action." Thus, apparently to "inaugurate" originally meant to first study the supposed "omens" of good or ill, and then to commence an action if the "bird flew right" or to induct into office that one whose omens the wizard divined to be good.

As good as President Reagan was for our nation in various ways, I was disappointed when I heard that his wife, Nancy, frequently consulted a "seer" to learn whether this or that action would be "auspicious" or "inasuspicious".

Also, sad, isn't it? when the utterly superstitious rites of Native American worship are now being placed on a more hallowed footing than are the shrines of Christendom? and when their crude artifacts are protected in place by Court Orders while the same Courts order the removal of Christian symbols from government property where they have stood for a century or more?! Truth is in Jesus, but today He is being cast out as a mere man, a fraud, whose ethic is insane, and -- while every trace of Christ and Christianity is being banished, the falsehoods of Christ-rejecting religions and the satanic and superstitious lies of Voodoo are being embraced with great reverence!

(6) "TRUTH IS" NOT IN SELF-RIGHTEOUS CHRIST-HATERS -- 1 John 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the TRUTH IS not in us."

In a certain radio ad a young woman says, with an obviously evil and seductive overtone, "It's OK to fantasize." It is only one of countless invitations to filthy fancies that are being alleged to be acceptable and legitimate in our era. Millions today are shamelessly declaring that "It's OK to live together without being married" -- "It's OK to do this, to do that, to do numerous other things" that are plainly condemned by the Word of the Living God. If anyone dares to say, "What you are doing is a SIN," they will declare: "I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG WITH IT!" THIS -- is what John was addressing in 1 John 1:8 -- a self-righteousness that adamantly proclaims, "I AM GUILTY OF NO WRONG," while breaking any, many, or all, of the commandments of God in the Bible!

John was not addressing his remarks to repentant, born-again Christians, of whom he spoke later in the same book: 1 John 3:9 "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." He was talking to those who justified themselves in evil, declaring their wicked deeds to be sinless, though their doings were as filthy and vile as the swill of hell's hopen!

All across our deceived nation, we now have radio talk-show hosts (I should say talk-show preachers) describing the truth in Jesus as evil and proclaiming their own filthy practices and sensual advice as good and best. A more vile, yet more self-righteous, cadre of satan's ministers transformed into angels of light was never heard nor seen before! Furthermore, to back them up the world is being constantly serenaded by a vast choir of Acid-Rock Screechers, Staccato Rap Mutterers, Country & Western Votaries, and Seductive Delilahs who are sounding forth their sensual sirens of fleshly lust and enticing the uninitiated to partake of their "Oh, so pleasant" indulgences.

Unvarnished, Four and Five-Letter words are now being uttered over the air-waves for the whole world to hear -- even in the News -- that no decent person would whisper in private. Vast numbers of deceived listeners and viewers of the modern media are now cutting loose from the moorings of all decency and are being sucked into the vile vortex of the seductive, self-righteous

sins that are being constantly advocated. By following the preachings and praisings of evil in word, in song, and in sight, husbands and wives are being enticed into reckless and wanton infidelity. Sexual PERVERSION is touted as good and normal, while Christian CONVERSION is denounced as a thing to be avoided at all costs! -- as being an evil advanced by born-again, right-wing, religious wackos whose influence on our nation is harmful and despicable!

Meantime, the converts of these self-righteous Christ-haters have become mass murderers, at school and everywhere else, -- have become perverts who rape, kill, and even eat, young boys, -- have become victims and spreaders of AIDS, -- have become jealous husbands who shoot their wives, the paramours of their wives, and then themselves -- have become jealous wives who do the same to their husbands and to their mistresses, -- and have become hundreds of other things that threaten to drown our nation in moral debauchery, violence, anarchy, and eternal damnation! -- all while millions are proclaiming how right they are, and how wrong Christ and Christians are!

Here is a Holy God's pronouncement upon all such who, in effect, are saying "we have no sin": Isaiah 5:20-24 "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel."

(7) "TRUTH IS" NOT IN ALL WHO CLAIM TO KNOW JESUS -- 1 John 2:4 "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the TRUTH IS not in him."

This verse cuts a wide swath in professed Christendom. I confidently assert that the so-called "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" is a group that takes the name of Christ in vain, and to whom millions of its deceived devotees Christ will proclaim at the Judgment: "I NEVER KNEW YOU"! The same dreadful denunciation will no doubt fall upon the ears of many members of the so-called "Church of Christ, Scientist," concocted by the devil through the deceived mind of Mary Baker Eddy.

"Keeping Christ's commandments" is certainly not done by twisting them into the perversions of the prevaricating Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen G. White, Judge Russell, Father Divine, Sun Myung Moon, Jim Jones, David Koresh, and many more of their odious ilk. "The TRUTH IS NOT in any such person or group that claims to know Christ, and who use His Holy Name in the title of their false sect. In scores, yea millions, of instances Christ's Name in the title of a religious group is, in fact, a taking of His name in vain! Twice in His Word, God has warned that: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" -- Deut. 5:11; Exo. 20:7 -- and surely that includes those who tack his Name on their sign-board while twisting his truth into devilish and damning distortions of verity.

"Nevertheless," in spite of all that is false today, St. Paul says: "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19).

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16 -- THE UGLINESS OF WORLDLY BEAUTY

Never, in the history of the world, has there been more outward beauty on display than is seen today, while at the same time never, in the history of the world, has there been so much inward ugliness! In the past few decades, modern technology has brought forth such a splendor of colors as the eyes of men never beheld until after WW II. These colors are seen in the numerous and beautiful hues of everything from automobile paints, household paints, decors, brick and masonry, upholstering materials, colors and designs, photography, graphics (including computer graphics), clothing materials -- virtually everywhere -- including, of course items for beautifying the outward appearance of both men and women.

Techni-color, Hollywood movies and Color TV no doubt helped bring on the current love-affair that the world has today with outward beauty and adornment. There was a time when dazzling colors were seen more during a 4th of July fireworks display than at any other time. Not so, today. The world is ablaze with the craze for splendor -- outward beauty!

Who is there today in the world, or in the professed church, who really believes Proverbs 31:30? -- "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain." They are few and far between. The fact is, however, there is a direct connection between worldly beauty and worldly vanity, or pride. And, the more beautiful men and women have made themselves and their environment, the more ugly has become the inner heart and spirit of mankind. Why? Carnal pride loves outward beauty that can make itself "look good" in the eyes of others, and hates those spiritual things which alone can make one beautiful inwardly. Thus, the vast display of outward beauty today stands in awful contrast with the vile array of inward ugliness that also shows its face the world around.

God hates the pride that brings this horrible disparity between how beautiful men and women look compared with how ugly they actually are on the inside. Read of His disdain for such in Isaiah 3:18-24:

"In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty."

Prophetic of Last Day Babylon the Great, read Isa 13:19: -- "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and

Gomorrah." Beautiful, BEAUTIFUL Babylon the Great shall be drowned in fire and brimstone rained down upon it (them) from heaven!

The songwriter penned:

"I am going to a City, where the roses never fade.
Here, they bloom but for a season,
Soon their beauty is decayed;
I am going to a City, where the roses never fade.

Read again of the Divine Judgment that shall fall upon those enamored and enameled with outward beauty who put themselves on display for all to see during the fleeting days of earthly life:

Isa 28:1-5 "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: and the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up. In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people."

When Eternity dawns on the Day of the Lord, Christ's inward, pure, and eternal beauty shall become apparent to all -- vast millions shall thus behold Him to their everlasting shame, while with him His glorified saints shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever!

But in this world, the opposite is so. Before Christ's First Coming, the Jews expected their long-awaited Messiah to come in August Majesty, riding upon a White Horse and perhaps with an outward beauty like that of Absalom, of whom it was written: "in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him."

Instead, Jesus came riding upon a donkey, and His appearance was so totally devoid of outward glamour that the prophet accurately drew his picture when he wrote: Isaiah 53:2 "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

Instead of this suave and striking "Prince Charming" that they expected to behold at the coming of their Messiah, He was so plain, so outwardly unattractive, so lacking in dazzle and luster that He simply did not "fit the picture" that they vainly imagined, and so they despised Him, rejected Him, and finally crucified Him.

Yes, in the parable of the Prodigal Son Jesus did relate that the returned prodigal's father commanded to "put a ring on his hand," (Luke 15:22), but who is he that dares to assume from this remark that Jesus thereby put his stamp of approval on the wearing of outward adornment? It has

often been explained that this "ring" was, in fact, a signet, giving the penitent, returned Prodigal the stamping mechanism of authority as a restored son, and an honest exegesis of this scripture cannot take it to be an endorsement by Jesus of the wearing of jewelry.

Did Jesus Himself wear rings and jewels? I think not! He mentioned many things in parables by way of illustrating truth without in any way endorsing all that he mentioned in those parables. Thus, he is standing on very "thin ice" who takes this parable as proof that the same Jesus Whose Spirit inspired Peter to forbid the wearing of gold and outward adornment by Christians, endorsed the wearing of jewelry by Christians in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Beyond the fact that there was no outward beauty or adornment upon Christ to make Him a dazzling and attractive Messiah, He made special efforts to avoid the spectacular. His own brothers urged Him to "show Himself to the world" -- to go to the big feast at Jerusalem and there dazzle and awe the Jews with His miracles. He rejected such, and I think that He no doubt also avoided anything and everything else that might make Him glitter and "shine" in the eyes of sinful men -- including the wearing of jewelry and ornamentation.

Furthermore, like God the Father in Old Testament times, Jesus voiced His utter contempt for the display of vain, outward beauty when He scourged the "scribes and Pharisees... which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27).

Christ possessed then, and bestows now in this world, inward, not outward, beauty such as that which is painted on, put on, and vainly displayed by proud, self-loving and God-hating humanity today. The glory of Christ's True Church is pictured thus in Psalm 45:13 -- "The king's daughter is all glorious within." It is a hidden beauty, totally unseen by millions who are bedazzled and taken up with the trinkets and tinsel of this world.

Aping the put-on, the paint, and the sparkle of Hollywood, thousands even in the Wesleyan-Holiness camp of today's professed Church love to adorn themselves outwardly, and HATE WITH A VENGEANCE those who call their manner of dress and adornment into question. When thus incensed, the more scholarly among them dig into the depths of their knowledge of Hebrew and Greek in the vain effort to "prove" that God and Christ do not forbid the putting on of the gold, the jewelry, and the ornaments that they wear.

But I would remind one and all of such that it was the "scholars" the "scribes" of Jesus' time that He so roundly condemned for "appearing beautiful outwardly" while being inwardly dead and ugly. They were skilled exegetes, and fancied that they, and they alone, had the correct interpretation of the Scriptures -- just like a lot of Doctors of Divinity today think they can prove by their superior exegesis that it's fine with God and dandy with Jesus that they wear their gold and diamond-studded jewelry -- in spite of the direct and plain commands against such in the New Testament.

Those who wrested Holy Writ to suit their own desires during Jesus' earthly pilgrimage He vehemently denounced: "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Many, so-called "scholarly" interpretations of Scripture are nothing more than the effort

of proud professors of Christianity and Holiness to justify what is plainly forbidden by God's Word -- an effort to nullify what God plainly commands, and what any third-grader could easily understand when unclouded by their high-minded, but utterly erroneous and self-serving interpretations.

When in Lamentations 1:6 the Lord said, "from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed," He was not lamenting over her lost cosmetics or stolen jewelry! Instead, He sorrowed that Zion had lost her God-given, inward, spiritual and moral beauty, stolen from her by the Thief of Hell. And today, as Jesus looks down upon Laodicean Zion he again laments, even while she is outwardly adorned as never before: "ALL HER BEAUTY IS DEPARTED!" -- made up, painted up, decked out, and prouder than a peacock, she has made herself an ugly duckling in the eyes of Him Who looketh upon the heart. The world now looks upon her with admiration and acceptance, for she has taken upon herself its own likeness. Christ beholds her with sorrow, for He sees that she has lost and forfeited the true "beauty of holiness."

Even in his day, the apostle Paul spoke of those in the professed Church who "desired to make a fair show in the flesh" outwardly, (Gal. 6:12) and their number has become as the sand by the seashore, innumerable, in professed Zion today. But the true Church, though despised by the world, does not bejewel Herself outwardly. In the eyes of the world, She is a "plain Jane" -- just as lacking in outward beauty as was Her Bridegroom while He walked in time as a man of no reputation from the wrong side of the tracks: Nazareth of Galilee. And, just as carefully as Jesus avoided "making a show" outwardly, the true Church does likewise, and this is pleasing in God's sight: Proverbs 31:30 "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

Indeed, the humbling strait gate leading into the true Church involves a process that utterly consumes the outward manifestations of carnal pride: Psa 39:11 "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.." Thus, those who desire to make a fair show in the flesh by wearing outward adornment only prove that they are not a part of the Bride of Christ, whose outward beauty in utter repentance has been "consumed away like a moth," and whose true beauty is all glorious within.

It does not even take the second work of grace to see that proud, outward adornment has to go, if one becomes a true Christian. Often, Holy Ghost sent Conviction involved in a real and radical repentance will bring that perception. No, not everyone sees it while they are repenting, or the moment they are saved, but no doubt there have been thousands who have been required of the Holy Ghost to take off their paint and jewelry even when seeking to be saved. Holy Ghost rebukes at the time of repentance often cause all of a seeker's proud, outward adornment to be "consumed away like a moth" -- immediately, quickly, and totally. Outward ornamentation is put off, and the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," which in God's sight is "of great price" is put on the inner man.

When the Holy Ghost often "rebukes" and "corrects" genuine seekers of salvation and new-born babes in Christ, causing them to put off the "iniquity" of wearing proud, outward adornment, how then, can thousands who professed to be "filled with the Spirit" wear it? The Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself. This incongruity stems from the fact that thousands, if not

millions, who profess to be "filled with the Spirit" are instead filled with carnal pride, and one of its manifestations is in their wearing of cosmetics and jewelry -- a "superfluity of naughtiness" and proud self-display never sanctioned nor condoned by the true, Spirit of Christ.

In conclusion, there is something about Bethel (the House of God) and jewelry that do not mix. The closer one gets to God, the more one feels that everything that smacks of pride and ornamentation must be put off, never to be worn again. Thus, when old Jacob began moving back closer to God, he instructed his household: "Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem" (Gen 35:3).

Why put off proud and questionable, outward ornamentation, never to wear such again? Here is the answer: Psalms 149:4 "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: He will beautify the meek with salvation."

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17 -- WE FLY AWAY -- THE INCREASING MOMENTUM OF TIME

"We fly away" -- Ps. 90:10

The time was long; for it was twenty years" (1 Samuel 7:2).

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short" (1 Corinthians 7:29)

"And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever... that there should be time no longer:"

When as a babe I slept -- Time crept;
When as a lad I talked -- Time walked;
When I became a man -- Time ran;
And as I older grew -- Time flew
Soon I'll be passing on -- Time gone!

The speed at which time passes is a relative thing -- relative to each person's perception at any given situation, condition, and point in life.

One's situation can affect his or her perception of time's speed: at a red light on a hot day in heavy traffic when one is late, even a few seconds can seem interminable. Likewise, one's physical condition can dramatically affect one's perception of the speed of time: when desperately needing to rest and having but a half hour to nap, 30 minutes can seem like the twinkling of an eye. Again, one's age can effect his or her perception of the velocity of time.

As a babe -- TIME CREPT. "All day long" is an expression that brings before the mind of a child one huge chunk of time!

"Mother, how long must I do chores?"

"All day long, son, we have much to do."

"ALL DAY LONG?! Don't I get to play with Johnny this afternoon? He said he was coming over and wanted me to play catch. Do I hafta work ALL DAY LONG!?"

Oh, how interminable "all day long" can seem to a child! And "ALL SUMMER WITH NO SCHOOL!" Oh, that held the prospect of limitless days of fun!

As Youths -- TIME WALKED. Here we were in our teens, with a huge amount of life behind us, so it seemed, and stretching before us after our high school graduation were what seemed like the prospect of long, long, decades before we would be middle-aged and older. If we lived a normal span of time, there before our mind's eye stretched those long years, and years, and years! -- Oh, so much time lay ahead, -- so we thought.

As Men and Women -- TIME RAN! Much sooner than we imagined we were nearing 30 years of age -- and when our high school graduation class held its 10 reunion, we marveled at how this could be, when only yesterday age 30 seemed so far away!

As we Older Grew -- TIME FLEW!! What?? do you mean I've been out of high school 30 years!!!! WHERE DID ALL THE TIME GO?!! Why, here I am nearly 50 years old, and I remember sitting in my grade school and high school classes dreaming of how many long, long, years lay ahead before I reached the mid-century mark. And, I shudder to think of it, the cars that were shiny new models the year I graduated are now being tagged as ANTIQUES! And today's teens speak of the year I graduated from high school as if it were in the ancient past!!! Worse still, they consider those my age as ANTIQUES TOO! When they say, "HE'S FORTY-EIGHT" they say it with an emphasis that sounds like a mingling of both awe and disgust -- awe at how such a fossil still exists and disgust that it has! Don't they KNOW that in just a few skips and hop they too will be "FORTY-EIGHT!"?

When your high school graduating class held its fifth reunion, you chose to forget it as quickly as possible. "Time Marches On"? No -- its pace is much faster than that:

"Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

Now, we've more time behind us by far than whatever few may yet fly to and then past us at rocket speed. You've watched the sand in an hour-glass or egg-timer -- at first steady, but slow, but soon the sand-level in the upper part of the glass lowers faster and faster, till finally with a "whoosh" the last level above the funnel disappears, and the last grain of sand drops into the chamber below!

And, HEAR ME YOUTH, so it is with a life-time. Did you ever get in a car with some fool who had more horse-power than horse-sense? and have him tromp down on the gas pedal, refusing to let up. Faster, and faster, and faster, and yet faster -- until you cried out, "HEY! LET UP, LET UP!! YOU'RE GOING WAY TO FAST!!! -- only to see the idiot with a silly smile on his face keep floor-boarding it!? Your face turned purple as the needle on the speedometer bumped against the peg on the far right! Then finally, the stooge behind the wheel let up, asking "What's the matter? Did I scare you?" Whereupon, as the blood drained out of your face, you kindly requested for him to never do that again, trembling as you spoke. And, when he let you out of the car, you vowed to yourself never to ride with that madman again!

I remember Jimmy P_____ in my first pastorate. He was a tad bit retarded, but in some ways gifted -- a big, tall fellow with reddish hair and freckles as I recall -- kind of a strange duck, and the object sometimes of teasing from his young peers. One night at church when Jimmy was there, after one of the women did a little shouting, Jimmy struck for the door and wasted no time getting out of there! Apparently it scared him.

Years later, I revisited the town and made it point to visit his father.

"Where is Jimmy now?"

"He's dead."

"DEAD?! What happened to him?"

His father explained how that one day (or night) some of the young fellows persuaded Jimmy to get into a car with them. After getting him into the car, they sped up to break-neck speed trying to scare Jimmy, and they did. He begged for them to stop, but they were bent on scaring the daylights out of him, so they sped on -- until their vehicle plunged off of the road into a ditch. Jimmy was killed. A momentum over which he had no control, and in spite of his urgent pleas, rushed him headlong into eternity!

God is no fool. He is no madman behind the wheel of time. He does not "floor-board it" to scare us. And yes, the rapidly increasing momentum at the end of life is a matter of perception. But one fact remains in the comparison: -- we have no control over how fast our time flees by. We might scream at the top of our voices, LET UP! LET UP!! -- but time speeds on, faster and faster it seems. Heedless of our pleas he rockets us down the roadway of life, ushering us with lightning speed to our ultimate destination and destiny.

The following stories illustrate how that no matter how fast at the last Time's momentum seems to be, we have no way to stop it or to slow it down:

"Stop that clock!" cried a dying man, whose eye rested intently on a clock which hung opposite his bed. He knew he was dying, and he was unready. He had the impression that he was to die at midnight. He heard the ticking of the clock and it was agony in his ear. He saw the hands, minute by minute, approaching the dreaded hour, and he had no hope. In his blind terror, he cried out: "Stop that clock!"

Alas! What would the stopping of the clock do for him? Time would move on all the same. Eternity would approach all the same. The stopping of the clock would not prepare him to meet his God. -- Dictionary of Illustrations

"Gordon, once a celebrated stage driver on the Pacific Coast, was a fearfully profane man, and his end was dreadful. In the delirium of death, he thrust out his feet and clutched at the bedclothes. When asked the cause of his anguish, he exclaimed: 'Oh, I am going down a fearful grade, and can't find the brake.'"

Psalms 90:10 declares: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

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18 -- THE RACE IS NOT TO THE SWIFT

Ecclesiastes 9:11 -- "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift..."

This is not an advertisement for worldly sporting events; it IS a story that illustrates the title of this article:

Nine "retarded" children lined up at the starting place in a race being held for such as they -- all of them impeded in one way or another, but each of them anxious, not only to take part in the race, but also to win.

The starting gun sounded, and eight of the nine retarded and physically impeded children began slowly, as fast as they could, to traverse the track. One of these little participants stumbled and fell at the starting place and began to cry -- sadly disappointed at not even being able to start the race.

The other eight contestants heard that cry and glanced back over their shoulders -- and all eight of them stopped and returned to the starting line. With one on each side, they picked up the disappointed stumbler, and then all 9 of them lined up abreast across the track, and as the watchers cheered, they walked together in unison to the finish line! -- ALL OF THEM WINNERS TOGETHER! -- not because one was faster than all others, but because eight of them cared more about how the fallen one felt than they cared about how it would feel to be first!

This is a moving example of the truth that the Christian race is "not to the swift," -- not to those who selfishly desire to be first, no matter how painful their precedence is to others, but rather, it is to those who, with brotherly love and compassion, run with patience the race that is set before them. Many who seem to be "First" in this world are actually "Last" in God's eyes. Perhaps to most who behold their worldly success, they look like Big Winners, but when the Heavenly Prizes are awarded, they will be seen as Eternal Losers. Matthew 19:30 -- "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Selah.

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19 -- JERUSALEM -- THE BURDENSOME STONE AND THE IMMOVABLE ROCK

Jerusalem The Burdensome Stone

KJV -- Zechariah 12:3 "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."

Bill Clinton, Yassar Arafat, and former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barach, have all burdened themselves with Jerusalem -- and, all of their Bible-ignoring, humanistic efforts to bring peace to Jerusalem were "cut in pieces" -- their vain and futile attempts chopped into chaff that the winds of chaos in the Middle East have blown away!

More and more as we "see the Day [of the Lord] approaching," every vaunted, human "peace process" that involves Jerusalem shall become instead a "trouble processor" which like a "paper shredder" will chop into confetti and into confusion all who involve themselves in it.

On the Day of the Lord itself and in the Armageddon prophesied in Zechariah 12:3, the "cutting in pieces" shall have its literal fulfillment upon "all the people of the earth" who "gather together against Jerusalem," led by the anti-Christ. Like so much confetti run through a paper shredder, Christ shall then cut into shreds the vast army of the man of sin, and when He crushes that army in His Almighty winepress, Revelation 14:20 tells us that the blood shall come "out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

More and more frequently now, we are seeing the literal fulfillment of Daniel's ancient prophecy that "knowledge shall be increased" at "the time of the end," (Daniel 12:4). Like little busybodies, sticking their noses into God's business, puny, but arrogant scientists are running to and fro probing into the secrets of life and into the mysteries of God's universe. Even this morning in our Spokesman-Review newspaper, the headline on the front page announces the complete mapping of the human genome and within the last several weeks a proud scientist announced his intention of cloning a human being. His statement should be taken as more than an empty boast, for already various animals have been cloned! -- and I saw a picture of a human ear growing out of the back of a laboratory mouse!

Such discoveries and developments are absolutely astounding! As never before, fallen Mankind is now tampering with the very building blocks of human life. Mystery after mystery about every life-form and about the tiniest parts of matter in God's creation are rapidly coming to light -- all of which should strike our consciousness like the town fire siren hits our eardrums, telling us that we are extremely close to "the time of the end."

I will only throw this out for your consideration and let you draw your own conclusions: Rev. 13:3; 17:8; and 17:11 all seem to indicate that the anti-Christ will be a human being that "was dead" but has been "brought back to life," and the latter verse connects him with "perdition". In

John 17:12, Jesus called Judas "the son of perdition," and in 2 Thess. 2:3 Paul brands the "man of sin" to be "the son of perdition." There is a Biblical connection between Judas, the Son of Perdition and the Man of sin, the Son of Perdition. All of that to say this: Wouldn't it be something if the scientists, who can even now clone human life, discovered a little bit of Judas Iscariot's DNA and cloned the body of this "Son of Perdition" back into existence -- Satan occupying it? Jesus said that one of the 12 that he had chosen (Judas) was a devil. Without getting into a debate as to whether or not Judas was ever saved, it is clear that at the time Jesus thus spoke of him Judas had become filled with the devil. If wicked scientists were to clone Judas' body back into existence we could then have "The Son of Perdition" which "was not" brought back into life and filled with all of the cunning craftiness of Satan incarnate! [Only some thoughts -- I do not set them forth as more than that.] Selah.

Whatever the case about the preceding paragraph, we do know that Satan told Eve "ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5), and it is quite apparent that fallen men are now attempting to be like God, sticking their noses into God's secrets and tampering with those things that they ought not, and meddling with those things that should be left entirely in God's hands. Yes, highminded men are now burdening themselves with many things they should leave alone, and I predict that a number of their "probes" will become "problems" that open like a Pandora's Box upon the world, multiplying rather than reducing the ills of everyone on earth.

But perhaps the most dangerous thing with which evil men are now tampering is the control of the City of JERUSALEM! Like a ticking time-bomb, set to go off at God's set time, the control of Jerusalem is still being handled by those foolish enough to fiddle with it! Proverbs 20:3 tells us: "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling." Those fools who meddle with trying to bring about a "cease from strife" in Jerusalem -- those who try to defuse this ticking time-bomb while totally ignoring God's only cure for strife -- a pure heart -- shall only, and always, see things blow up in their faces. Nevertheless, "every fool [involved with Jerusalem's control] will be meddling" with some scheme to end her strife, but that strife shall continue until Jesus comes again, demonstrating to all "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). Wicked men who seek to control Jerusalem shall be "cut in pieces" and Jesus will do the cutting!

* * *

Jerusalem The Immovable Rock

NIV -- Zechariah 12:3 "On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves."

Did you ever see what appeared to be a small rock upon the surface of the ground, which, after you attempted to kick loose or lift up, you discovered was actually the visible and protruding tip of a huge, immovable boulder buried beneath the surface? Sometimes such protruding tips of huge, buried boulders can be seen on the surface of a rocky, mountain road. Woe to the little boy who comes along wearing soft-toed shoes and attempts to boot that "little rock" down the road! When his toes strike that protrusion, you will next hear his cries of pain and shock! The little rock

didn't move one fraction of an inch, for it was but the outward appearance of an immovable boulder hidden beneath the surface, but the little boy moved! After a few agonizing wails and groans, you see him dancing on one leg and soon sitting down while moaning and nursing those painfully stubbed and swelling toes. After limping back home, if a toe is broken you will see him hobbling on crutches for a few weeks. Why? because he totally misjudged the magnitude of that with which he had meddled! It appeared to be a little something that he could kick around, when like Jerusalem, it was that with which "All who try to move it will injure themselves."

This is a homely illustration, but makes the point. Earthly Jerusalem, like all other things God has placed in His Sovereign control, shall only be moved as, and when, He ordains. "Every fool will be meddling" with things ordained by God to be immovable by man. Proud men now fancy themselves able to "boot on down the road" a lot of things now appearing on the surface of life's roadway. The fact is, however, they have only "scratched the surface" with their graders, and the things that they have uncovered today are but the tiny tips of the huge secrets of God that yet remain hidden from human perception. To follow the figure further, I predict that in the near future men are going to "stub their toes" on a lot of "little rocks" on life's roadway that turn out to be the protruding tips of huge, immovable boulders, and, there will, so to speak, be a lot of black and blue, broken and swollen, toes as a result.

Meddling and tampering with things now uncovered may seem like a "hoot" when men give them the "boot" -- but God is not about to let either men or devils move those foundations that are reserved to His Sovereign control! Thus, "All who try to move [them] will injure themselves" and many others in the world. Much more pain lies ahead for hostile humanity in its effort to kick out of the way everything and everyone that hinders its pursuit of happiness, but the greatest of all earthly pain shall strike at the time of the end "when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, [and God makes] Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations."

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20 -- HOLINESS AND "HORSE-SENSE" GO TOGETHER

Dear Reader: -- This article contains comments having to do, in part, with politics [It was written prior to the Election of the year 2000], but it deals with a subject of which the right or wrong perception has to do with every aspect of a Christian's, and sanctified person's, life. If you have time for any of this, please read it all, before deciding whether you agree with me or not -- not ceasing to read the article when a political application is made.

"Horse-sense" is quite synonymous with prudence, and my Oxford Dictionary defines "prudent" as that sagacity or wisdom that enables one to carefully "avoid undesired consequences," to be "circumspect" or "discreet."

True Holiness and "Horse-sense" (prudence) are amiable companions; they are not at odds with one another, but often "work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." It is true that a man may be Holy without having or always using "Horse-sense," but it is tragic if, or when, it be so.

It was said of David, the "son of Jesse the Bethlehemite," not only that he was "cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war," but also in the next breath that verse describes David as "prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him" (1 Samuel 16:18). David had and used prudence, or "Horse-sense" and he was at the same time Holy, for "the Lord was with him."

But, it cannot be said that all Holy people have Horse-sense. Isaiah 35:8 tells us that "wayfaring men, though fools shall not err" morally or spiritually in "The Way of Holiness," but who is prepared to say that Holy people never lack, or never fail to use, Horse-sense -- discretion, good judgment? On the Way of Holiness, it is entirely possible for one to "not err therein" morally, or spiritually, and at the same time, to "err therein" mentally -- to blunder, to make foolish choices, to do foolish things, and to make such errors so obviously in the sight of wiser heads that his folly is "laid open".

Proverbs 13:16 declares: "Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly." When a Holy person fails to use Horse-sense, and multitudes see it, sometimes it causes wiser (though worldly) people to chuckle, but perhaps more often it causes them to chide, branding all Holiness people as fools, incapable of making sensible choices. Jesus did observe that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). And, they love to discredit Holiness, Christianity, and Christ Himself, when they see sanctified individuals "lay open" their folly, or lack of sound judgment in a thing.

An assertion was made to me (very recently) that the matter of choosing between "the lesser of two evils" should never be named among holiness folks, or Christians -- inferring that it is sinful and wrong to vote for "the lesser of two evil" political candidates.

However, as I see it, to assert and infer such is not only erroneous, but actually lays open a lack of Horse-sense, prudence, and sound judgment. It is to proclaim what seems to be both Holy and Wise -- never vote FOR any man who is "the lesser of two evils" but instead always vote for one who is wholly righteous, or don't vote at all. As I have heard that W. M. Tidwell used to say, "Makes good preaching; just isn't so!"

There are times when the holiest of individuals are forced to choose between "the lesser of two evils"!

One night in California, Bud Robinson left a religious service and began walking back to his dwelling place. He was praying and evidently so mentally distracted that he blundered out onto a busy street into the path of a fast approaching street-car. In a moment, he saw that he was hemmed in and must choose between "the lesser of two evils": (a) stay where he was and be struck by the street-car; or (b) make a leap to see if he could land beyond a "big automobile" that was also fast approaching. Bud said, "I made the leap!" The big car hit him, breaking bones, sending him flying through the air and landing him on the cobblestone street, no doubt breaking more bones or worsening his many injuries.

When Buddy was first converted he stammered so much and knew so little that some thought it unwise to give him a preacher's license. But by the time of that accident he had proven

to the Church that he was no fool. God had baptized him with the Holy Ghost and Fire and had endued him with such spiritual sagacity that his wit and wisdom were legendary.

And, on that street, when hemmed in and forced to choose between being hit by the street-car or the big car, he wisely chose "the lesser of two evils" -- being hit by the car if need be, rather than by the trolley. He was Holy and exercised Horse-sense in that crisis! -- and it was good that he did, for though his injuries nearly killed him from being hit by the car, it is likely that he would have been killed for sure had he chosen to let the trolley hit him. All of the remaining years of Bud Robinson's long ministry were, in part, the result of choosing "the lesser of two evils"!

Now, let us apply this to political choice. These are times when Christians are literally forced to choose between "the lesser of two evils" at the ballot box -- to cast their vote (not in reality) FOR an unholy man, but to cast their vote for that man because his opponent is even more vile, filthy, and unfit to hold office. In such case, the Christian's vote is more correctly understood as a vote AGAINST one who is worse.

If Bud Robinson, hemmed in on the street that day had seen a 3rd option that would have injured him even less, or entirely spared him from injury, doubtless he would not have opted for being hit by either the trolley or the big car -- but, he saw no other choice.

Politically in our nation, there is often no realistic, viable, 3rd option -- one of two unholy, unregenerate, candidates is going to win the election and govern. As I perceive it, the right and wise thing to do, regardless of party, is to discern the best you can and then vote for "the lesser of the two evil" candidates AS THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID BEING STRUCK BY THE STREET CAR! -- if you get my meaning. One is bad, the other is worse -- use your vote to help, if possible, keep the WORST man out of office. THAT IS HORSE-SENSE -- AND THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH HOLINESS!

But, some may say, "Win or Lose -- Chance or No Chance, I will not choose between the lesser of two evil candidates; it is sinful to do so; I will vote for a good man and encourage others to do so, even if the worst of the two evil men is elected!"

That, I say, is not the exhibition of either Horse-sense or Holiness! -- rather, it lays open the folly of unsound reasoning. Let me ask all who think in this way: Where in this U. S. of A. is there a sanctified man running for President? -- running for Congress? -- running for Governor? Indeed, where are there any such candidates whom you know to be true Christians? Morally impeccable? Ethically untainted? WHERE ARE THEY?

"Well," you say, "the one for whom I shall vote is at least BETTER than those other two!"

What you are thereby admitting, then, is that you are choosing between "the lesser of three evils"!

And, this being the case, is it wise to throw away your vote for one who has no realistic chance to win and govern instead of using it to resist the greater evil? I trow not.

Do I hear one say, "Well, I just won't vote at all." That is your prerogative, but if Bud Robinson had just stood where he was, hemmed it between the bigger trolley and the big car, he might have been hit by both, spun around and ground into hamburger on that street. Often, doing nothing is not an option.

Believe it or not, this is not simply a political commentary; it is a treatise on Holiness and Horse-sense. Increasingly, whether they like it or not, Christians are going to be faced with the necessity of discerning and choosing between "the lesser of two evils" -- and failure to do so will bring the worst upon the individual, the church, and our nation in the most rapid way.

In the last days, one of the primary functions of Christians filled with the Holy Ghost will be that of holding back evil: 2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hinders, holds back] will let, [hinder, hold back] until he be taken out of the way." To make choices and decisions that will have no actual impact on the outcome, or to do nothing at all, will result in the resistance of the Holy Spirit to evil in our land being "taken out of the way" more and more. It is going to happen, but Holy people should not hasten it by their failure to have and use Horse-sense -- good, sound judgment. Selah.

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21 -- TOO MANY "LORDS" -- TOO FEW "LADIES"

Having OCR'd so many books from the early Wesleyan era I have been disgusted with usages in those books of the honored term "Lord So-and-so," "My Lord, So-and-so," and "His Lordship," etc., etc. I confess that these fawning designations have really "turned me off" -- so much so, that in some instances I have totally deleted that term from the text, and in other places I have sometimes de-capitalized the term from "Lord" to "lord".

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:5-6).

To me, calling any man "Lord" it is verging too close to sacrilege, if not actually being so. In Matthew 23:9-10, Jesus warned: "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." In John 13:13, He said: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am."

As I see it, the Word of God shows that Jesus alone -- and no other -- is "Lord" and Matthew 23:9-10 above reveals that He is jealous of those terms which rightfully and ONLY belong to Him. Yes, 5 times in the Scriptures He is called "Lord of lords": Deut. 10:17, Psa. 136:3, 1 Tim. 6:15, Rev. 17:14, and Rev. 19:16. But, do we not see from 1 Cor. 8:5-6 that Christ is the one and ONLY LORD of those who are merely "called lords," by men? Certainly that is the message of that passage.

If it could be easily and quickly done, I would be happy to see every instance expunged from the HDM Library where the term "Lord" or "lord" is applied to a mere man! The English seem to be fond of such terms and even addicted to them, for they use them yet today -- giving titles and honors to their beloved dignitaries -- mere men women -- that belong only to CHRIST!

None should be fawning "boot-lickers" who Kow-tow to pompous earthly dignitaries -- either in fear, or in the "apple-polishing" hope of gaining something from the hand of the so-called "Lord" or "Lady" So-and so. Job 32:21-22 declares: "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away."

Yes, all should give "honor to whom honor is due," but as I see it, to honor any human being with terms that belong clearly and solely to Christ smacks of idolatry and is never proper, if not definitely sinful. Still, in December, 2000 -- long beyond the days of Wesley -- the English refer to "Lord and Lady So-and-so." I would that it was not so. Whether or not you agree with my persuasion about the matter, perhaps all will agree that -- thus labeled or unlabeled -- we have too many "lords" today and too few real "ladies". -- DVM

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22 -- WHANG-DOODLES AND OFT-MADE VERBAL ERRORS

Probably most of us who have lived a few decades have "butchered the King's English" more than once in some way. I remember how humbled I felt when one informed me that the word "facade" was not pronounced, "fa-kade" but rather, "fuh-sod," and I assure you that was neither the first nor the last word that I have mispronounced. There are probably some that I am still mispronouncing and some that I may, in ignorance, continue to mispronounce throughout the remainder of my life. However, before mentioning other such verbal errors, let me first call the reader's attention to "WHANG-DOODLES":

I think it may have been Henry Albert (H. A.) Erdmann whom I first heard use the term "Whang-Doodles" in describing the superfluous and oft-repeated utterances of preachers during the oral delivery of their messages. The following story will elucidate what "Whang-Doodles" are and show how distracting and annoying they can be to a preacher's listeners. It involves the very blunt and plain-spoken, early M. E. preacher, Jacob Gruber, and a young preacher whose Whang-Doodle was "Ah":

* * *

Gruber and the Young Preacher

Of the mannerisms of excited speakers, one which we have sometimes witnessed is the melodious termination of each sentence with an emphatic 'ah.' Sometimes, when the speaker waxes mighty, this exclamatory gasp gives an impetus to each word, like a puffing locomotive behind, instead of before, the car. Among the many humorous anecdotes told of the late Rev. Jacob Gruber, of Baltimore, is one which relates to this point. An ardent young orator of the pulpit, who was

unconsciously using this exclamatory style, wrote to the veteran German for some counsels respecting his homiletic labors. The old preacher, believing that the correction of this one egregious fault would be a sufficient achievement for the time being, wrote him the following laconic letter:

"Dear Ah! Brother Ah! -- When-ah you-ah go-ah to-ah preach-ah, take-ah care-ah you-ah don't-ah say-ah Ah-ah! Yours-ah, Jacob-Ah Gruber-Ah."

The letter was a capital one, as it not only stated but exemplified the defect in all its folly. It was effectually curative also, if we have been rightly informed. Perhaps its insertion here may extend its remedial virtue. -- National Magazine.

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This-ah is-ah what-ah I-ah mean-ah by-ah Whang-ah-Doodles-ah! They can be very distracting to those listening to a preacher -- so much so that at times people can miss an important point of the preacher's message when their minds become fixated upon his oft-repeated "Whang-Doodles".

Preachers are not the only ones who use Whang-Doodles. Probably most of us exercise poor elocution in our everyday conversations, and some folks habitually use Whang-Doodles between nearly every utterance when they converse -- one of the most common Whang-Doodles being "you know," or "ya know". The following is an example:

"I was (you know) driving down the street (you know) minding my own business (you know), when all of a sudden (you know), here came this cop-car, and (you know) turned on his siren (you know), and I was real nervous (you know) as I pulled over to curb."

Another Whang-Doodle I have heard in everyday conversation is "like":

"I was (like) driving down the street (like) minding my own business (like), when all of a sudden (like), here came this cop-car, and (like) turned on his siren (like), and I was real nervous as I (like) pulled over to the curb."

After the manner of Jacob Gruber, one might correct such with the following admonition:

"(You know) (like) when you (like) talk to people, (you know), try not to (like) (you know) use Whang-Doodles!"

Perhaps the most commonly used Whang-Doodle by Americans today is "Uh," often hitched onto the word "And":

"I heard this loud BANG! (and-uh) nearly swallowed my gum, (and uh) jumped out of my seat! (And uh) I ran to the door (and uh) looked down the (uh) street to see if I could (uh) see where the (uh) sound was coming from!"

Why do we use these Whang-Doodles? I think that we use them, in part, as mental crutches -- as uttered pauses during which we cogitate about what we shall say next, and partly we use them out of habit. The need to pause while speaking is created by one's mouth getting ahead of one's brain, and "our tongue gets tangled-up around our eye-tooth and we can't see what we are saying," until we (uh) pause a bit. Then, the use of our Whang-Doodle becomes habitual, and we use it even when our mouth and brain are both in stride with one another.

What is the cure for using Whang-Doodles? Well, (uh) here is (uh) what I think:

(1) The (uh) cure for using (uh) Whang-Doodles is (uh) begun with the (uh) realization that you are (uh) using them.

(2) Second, one must have a desire to eradicate the rascals from his or her speech, so as to develop elocution that is less annoying to one's listeners.

(3) Third, one must studiously endeavor to avoid using Whang-Doodles, for they are like dandelions in your lawn -- they will not leave on their own accord; they must be removed either by digging them out one at a time, or by carefully applying an effective weed-killer that destroys them while not killing the grass. One should not pay so much attention to purging Whang-Doodles that he or she becomes orally crippled -- unable to speak in connected sentences. However, if a moderate, but studied effort is made, I think that we could probably eliminate many, if not most, of the Whang-Doodles in our speech.

(4) Finally, perhaps one of the most effective ways to eliminate Whang-Doodles from our speech is to think BEFORE we utter a sentence, rather than rushing into our utterances, (and uh) then having to pause while our brain catches up with our mouth. The saying:-- "Don't set your mouth in motion before your brain is in gear" -- is good advice.

While I have never taken courses in elocution and articulation (excepting my high school speech, and radio classes), I suspect that those who become the best radio announcers and public speakers have either taken such courses or have at least studiously avoided the use of Whang-Doodles until they habitually use good elocution. I also suspect that their correct enunciation and pronunciation probably carries over into their everyday conversations as well.

Probably the only way for a preacher, or anyone, to have and maintain elocution free from those ear-annoying Whang-Doodles is to studiously avoid their use in ALL speech, both public and private, until it becomes one's ingrained habit NOT to use them.

Can everyone achieve this? Well, (uh) that may depend somewhat on your (uh) mental keenness and (uh) acuity. If you are (like) too much like me, then (uh) it may be impossible (and uh) too much to ask of your (uh) tired old brain! I have enough trouble these days with my typos without trying to (uh) tackle my Whang-Doodles! Some of you young preachers might want to (uh) see if you can get rid of the rascals.

How should I begin? Well, (uh) let me see -- (uh) maybe it would be good to ask your wife to pay close attention to you when next you preach (and uh) keep track of every time you (uh)

use a Whang-Doodle. Then have her tell you which ones you use the most, what they are, and approximately how many times you used each Whang-Doodle during your message.

Did you know that even some very sacred words and expressions can become Whang-Doodles? -- such as "Amen" -- "Hallelujah" -- "Praise God" -- "Glory to God" -- etc., etc., etc. It is possible for preachers to so habitually intersperse these utterances into their public addresses that they can sound almost sacrilegious:

"John the Baptist (Amen) was a fearless preacher (Amen). It cost him his head (Amen) but he never (Amen) compromised the truth! (Amen) he could say with old Paul (Amen) 'I have not (Amen) shunned to declare unto you (Amen) all the counsel of God!' (Amen)!"

I forbear to give further examples of religious words and phrases that have all too often become nothing more than mental crutches -- Whang-Doodles uttered by the preacher perhaps a hundred times or more during his message, used either while he pauses for his brain to catch up with his mouth, or used out of mere habit.

Whang-Doodles such as "Uh" -- "And Uh" -- "You Know" -- and their ilk are perhaps more annoying than they are harmful. However, even too many of these in a preacher's message can sometimes distract an otherwise attentive hearer to the point of missing some important point in his message. Therefore, it is probably wise for preachers that they strive to purge even these more innocuous Whang-Doodles from their public speaking.

When it comes to the use of sacred terms and phrases as Whang-Doodles, it behooves ALL preachers to do their best to eliminate ALL such habitual repetitions from their public speaking. An occasional and hearty "Amen" -- "Hallelujah" -- "Praise God" -- or -- "Glory to God" are often in order when a man of God is preaching. Further, there are times when the ecstasy of the Spirit will prompt a man to utter them repeatedly. However, when the repeated use of such terms during a preacher's message amounts to nothing more than rote -- nothing more than the utterance of Whang-Doodles out of habit or in momentarily pausing -- then it is time to take stock and studiously endeavor to purge such utterances from one's preaching!

Jesus thus admonished: "Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do" (Matt. 6:7). What holiness preacher would not roundly condemn the saying of the superstitious Rosary by Roman Catholics:

Moving Bead #1 -- "Hail Mary, Mother of God, the Lord is with thee... pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death, Amen!"

Moving Bead #2 -- "Hail Mary, Mother of God, the Lord is with thee... pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death, Amen!"

Moving Bead #3 -- "Hail Mary, Mother of God, the Lord is with thee... pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death, Amen!"

Ad Infinitum -- My apology if I got any of the wording wrong -- not having ever been a Roman Catholic, nor ever having said the Rosary, I may have some or all of the words wrong that I have quoted above as part of the Rosary -- However, I am sure that the reader gets my point: Christ condemns the use of "vain repetitions," and the repeated use of religious words and phrases by rote and as mere Whang-Doodles during the oral delivery of a preacher's message can be classified as "vain repetitions" -- utterances that not only annoy his human auditors, but utterances which may even pain the ears of his Heavenly Listener!

However, probably most Whang-Doodles used by preachers are far from what could accurately be called sacrilege, and some may be more amusing than they are distracting. Nevertheless, if a preacher wants to be taken seriously, he should seek to discover and purge as many Whang-Doodles from his public speaking as is possible.

There are, of course, many other pulpit mannerisms unrelated to a preacher's voiced utterances that are just as distracting to his hearers, and some even more so, but it is not the intent of this little article to enter into that realm. Instead, I refer my readers to Beverly Carradine's "Pastoral Sketches," hdm0044, Chapter 1, entitled "Reminiscences of Certain Preachers," which, if read, will not only give some vivid examples of such mannerisms, but which may as well excite the readers' risible-nerves into some foot-stomping, body-doubling, uncontrollable laughter!

I will conclude this article with some other "Verbal Errors" that are quite common. Maybe you will find one among the following of which you are guilty of using. Some of these are oral errors of pronunciation, some are not.

Ask yourself: -- Do you say,

"Cani-date" instead of "Can-didate" -- omitting the first letter "d"?

"Cli-matic" instead of "Cli-mactic" -- omitting the second letter "c"? -- If so, it could be that you speak of the weather, although I find no such word in either of my computer dictionaries. If there is such a word as "climatic" it would have to do with the climate, and would not have anything to do with the end, or climax of a matter as does the word "climactic".

Data "is" instead of data "are"? -- which sort of mistake I often make. The word "data" is the plural form of the word "datum". Therefore it is correct to say: "the datum is" and "the data are" -- wish I always remembered this!

Do you say, for example,

"To my wife and I" instead of "To my wife and me"? -- the sort of one of my most habitual mistakes, called to my attention more than once by one of our best HDM users.

Do you say,

"Feb-uary" instead of "Feb-ruary" -- omitting the first "r"? I have recently heard a radio announcer or two thus mispronounce "February," the second month of the year -- "unforgivable" for a radio announcer! especially one who is announcing the weather.

"Nu-cu-lar" instead of "Nu-cle-ar" -- placing a second "u" after the "c" and eliminating the "e"? -- I will admit that such mispronunciation of the word "nuclear" always sounds ignorant to me, but I had best be careful about labeling other folks ignorant. It reminds me of a woman whom I may have heard years ago labeling others as "plum ig-or-ant," while in so saying she was demonstrating her own ignorance. However, it is rather amazing how many people say "nu-cu-lar" instead of "nu-cle-ar"! Quite often I hear one speaking on the radio who makes this mistake, and sometimes it is even a governmental official who says "nu-cu-lar" instead of "nu-cle-ar"!

There may be a few who bobble this word because they are unable to say it correctly. Former President Carter pronounced it: "Nu-key-er," something that I always attributed to his inability to pronounce it correctly -- much like the Ephraimites mentioned in Judges 12 "could not frame to pronounce" the word "Shibboleth" correctly, pronouncing it "Sibboleth". It was, or is, certainly no reflection on former President Carter's intelligence if he cannot "frame to pronounce" the word "nuclear" correctly. However, I suspect that in the case of many, just as I ignorantly pronounced "facade" as "fa-kade" instead of "fuh-sod," even so they say "nu-cu-lar" instead of "nu-cle-ar" when pronouncing the word "nuclear".

To continue -- Do you say,

"Proselyte" instead of "Proselytize"? -- substituting the noun for the verb. There are no such things as "proselyters" and there is no such thing as "proselyting". One can become a "proselyte" by following the teachings of sheep-stealing "proselytizers" who are "proselytizing" but one cannot go out and "proselyte" or be a "proselyter".

Do you say,

"Real-a-tor" instead of "Real-tor"? -- placing a second "a" in the word "Realtor" where there is none and pronouncing it as a separate syllable. A preacher-friend of mine once thus mispronounced the word "Realtor" in my presence. I corrected him, informing him of this error. Later (I am sure with a sanctified spirit) he returned the favor, informing me that when designating the quotation of a scripture enclosed with quotes and followed by a Scripture reference:--

This is incorrect: "For 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

and

This is correct: "For 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).

"Live and Learn" -- I now wish I had not already done it the wrong way so many times in the texts of the HDM Digital Library. Various things in my mode of formatting text are purposely

"not according to Hoyle," but that is one that I did out of ignorance. I am glad I learned the correct way of doing this, and I hope my friend is also happy that he now pronounces "Realtor" as "Real-tor" instead of as "Real-a-tor".

During our last, prolonged national election, there was much talk about the "Electoral College". Do you say,

"Elec-tor-i-al" instead of "Elec-tor-al"? -- placing an "i" in the word where there is none and pronouncing it with an extra syllable. Even thus did many people who spoke over the air-waves mispronounce the word "Electoral" during the past election when speaking of the "Electoral College".

Do you say,

"Per-rog-a-tive" instead of "Pre-rog-a-tive"? -- reversing the "re" following the letter "P" in the word. For years, I made this mistake until I looked it up. If you doubt the accuracy of any of my statements in this article, you may look them up for yourself, for that is your "prerogative" but it is not your "perogative"! If you say to yourself, I don't care about any of these things, well, that too is your "prerogative".

Do you say,

"Valet" rhyming with "mallet" instead of "Val-aye" when using the word "Valet"? Do you say, "I don't know a "valet" from a "mallet"! Then I think it more likely that you HAVE used the latter, but have NEVER EMPLOYED the former. Probably few, if any, preachers have ever employed a valet while many are quite content to let their wives handle that menial chore. However, if you ever have reason to use the term, remember that the "let" in "valet" is pronounced like "lay". I think it was perhaps my wife's Canadian, preacher-cousin who joked to me about why Canadians use the term "aye" so frequently, calling my attention to the spelling of the country's name: C-"aye" -- N-"aye" -- D-"aye"! (Ca-na-da) -- a pretty catchy explanation of why Canadians use that term so much, aye? Well now, just remember that "a gentleman's personal attendant who looks after his clothes etc." is NOT a "valet" rhyming with "mallet" but a "valet" rhyming with "ballet". That should not be too hard, aye? You may have no desire to get within a country-mile of either a valet or a ballet, but at least you should pronounce the words correctly when telling of the evils associated with both.

I will let the reader decide for himself, or herself, whether it is proper to put an "s" on the word "myriad". I find no such word as "myriads" in my Oxford Computer Dictionary, and I think that more correctly an "s" should not be placed on it, for according to that dictionary the word "myriad" means: 1. an indefinitely great number, or 2. ten thousand. Therefore it is proper to say concerning the vast number in a crowd that "myriad people were in that crowd," meaning a vast number of people were in that crowd, but -- given the second definition, it seems to me that one could also say, "myriads of people were in that crowd," meaning that the crowd was composed of tens of thousands of people.

Finally, I will only touch briefly upon the tendency of many Christian writers to become so steeped in the use KJV Scriptural spellings and words that even when they are not quoting the Bible they use these archaic words and spellings. Does this matter? I trow not. However, there are no doubt many people in this world who would have to consult a dictionary that defined archaic words before they would know what I mean when I say, "I trow not". Therefore, there are at least times when it would be best for me to say, "I think not," or "I do not believe so."

It is not the usage of the archaic English words, perhaps, so much as the spelling of words in the archaic KJV English that carries over into the writings of many Christian writers -- particularly those Christian writers who rarely, if ever, consult any other translation.

For example, even when not quoting a Bible verse, many writers who are steeped in the KJV scriptures will spell the word "fullness" with but one "l" -- "fulness" -- as it is spelled in the KJV. This is but one example of many words that are misspelled according to modern English spellings by those who are steeped in the words and spellings of the KJV. When spell-checking a document, I frequently correct a writer's misspelling of the word "fullness" as "fulness" where he or she is not using the word "fullness" within a quotation of Scripture. I make corrections of other words as well which, according to modern English, are misspelled by using the KJV spelling outside of a Scriptural quotation.

Does it matter? Again, I trow not, nor does it matter whether one keeps abreast of all of the formerly unused words that are continually being trotted out today, such as these two that are currently in vogue:-- "mantra" and "genre". Don't know what they mean, nor how to pronounce them? No problem. With the marvel of computer dictionaries we can click the mouse several times and in seconds come up with the meanings of words that we could never have defined before in two years of guessing! So, if your curiosity gets the best of you after you hear "mantra" and "genre" bandied about and you want to know their meanings, just look them up on your computer dictionary. Don't have one? Well, some of them now are either free, or quite cheap. An even cheaper option might be to consult a printed-on-paper (hard-copy) dictionary, and, if learning the meaning of some new words in this manner increased your vocabulary and thus also increased both your understanding and ability to make yourself understood, would it not be worth the effort? Not all "ignorance is virtue," and in many cases it is a vice.

With the compelling reasons there are for purging their public speech of Whang-Doodles, should not all public speakers today seek to eradicate these rascals from their speech? -- and, with the modern means now at hand, should not all of today's readers and writers employ these means to improve their understanding and their use of their native language? Selah.

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23 -- SALVATION IS FREE -- BUT NOT TO ALL TAKERS ON THEIR OWN TERMS

Rev. 22:17 "whosoever will, let him TAKE the water of life FREELY."

It is true that God's salvation is free -- but not to all would-be takers, and certainly not on their own terms. "IF IT'S FREE, I'LL TAKE IT!" is often the snap decision of some who are all

too ready to TAKE whatever is offered FREELY, and who may just as quickly be offended when they discover that the giver has attached certain conditions that must be met before his free gift can be received. God is not lying when He says that salvation is free, but none should be offended because he has placed conditions on receiving that free gift -- none should fault Him because he does not dole out salvation in a willy-nilly fashion to suit the whims of all would-be takers.

"I'LL TAKE IT BECAUSE IT'S FREE AND I WANT IT," says one. "Not so quick," replies the Great Giver, "I am happy that you WANT it, but that is only one of several conditions."

"I'LL TAKE IT BECAUSE I HAVE ASKED," says another, but once again, asking is only one of various conditions required of God. True, He does say, "Ask, and ye shall receive," but, contrary to the belief of many, God's salvation is not freely given simply because people ask for it, as if that were the only condition to be met.

"I'LL TAKE IT THROUGH JOSEPH SMITH," says the Mormon. "No you won't," says the Great Giver, "you'll take it solely through my Son, Jesus Christ, or you'll not take it at all! You'll trash the false writings of the so-called Book of Mormon and receive salvation the Bible Way, or you simply cannot have it!

In like manner, the Great Giver of Salvation also replies to those who say, "I'll take it through Mary Baker Eddy," or "I'll take it through Ellen G. White," or "I'll take it through Buddha," or "I'll take it through Mother Ganga" (the Ganges River), or "I'll take it through Mohammed," or "I'll take it through some other way."

HOW CAN YOU STEAL WHAT IS FREE? ANSWER: -- BY TRYING TO TAKE IT ON TERMS DIFFERENT THAN THOSE LAID DOWN BY THE GIVER.

Yes, salvation is free -- but many try to take it on their own terms, and God considers those who attempt such to be thieves.

"I'LL TAKE IT BECAUSE I CAME," says another to the Great Giver, and you said in your own Word, "let him that is athirst COME. AND whosoever will, let him TAKE the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). "Yes," replies the Great Giver, "but I also said that you must COME THROUGH CHRIST, THE ONE AND ONLY DOOR" and in John 10:1 I have declared: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

"I'LL TAKE IT BECAUSE I WAS BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST," says another, who fancies this to be the only condition.

"No you won't," says God's Word, "this too is only one of the conditions. Yes, you have been baptized, but you failed to repent of sin, and it is declared in Acts 2:38 'REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' The latter ought ye to have done, and not to have left the former undone."

"TLL TAKE IT BECAUSE I HAVE BELIEVED ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST," says yet another, who supposes that faith in Christ is the only condition.

No, you won't take by faith alone. Romans 4:12 makes it clear that salvation can only be taken by those "who also walk in the steps of that faith" exemplified by Abraham, whose faith-steps were steps of obedience to God. Faith in Christ, without taking those steps is bogus faith! Men may not see that you have not taken them, but God always sees what steps those who profess faith in Christ have, or have not, taken before claiming to have "taken Christ" as their Savior.

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" wrote James. Will you know this? Many will not know it, because they don't want to know it. They want salvation by faith in Christ to be completely divorced from the works of repentance. They fancy that salvation is "God's free gift" to any an all who do nothing more than "believe on the Lord Jesus

It sounds so Scriptural! but at best, it is a half-truth, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" and he is only fooling himself who fancies that one need not repent of sin before receiving God's free gift of salvation. (James 2:20, 26).

"TLL TAKE IT BECAUSE I HAVE DONE ALL AND DESERVE IT," says another who proudly supposes that his works of obedience make him worthy to receive salvation.

"No you won't," replies the Great Giver, "until your awful pride is humbled to the point where you realize that none of your acts of obedience make you worthy or deserving of my free gift of salvation you will NEVER RECEIVE IT!"

It is one's DUTY to obey God, but doing that DUTY never makes the doer worthy of God's grace and salvation. In Luke 17:10 Jesus said: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

Like proud pea-cocks, legalists parade themselves and pride themselves in keeping the letter of the law and of thus being worthy of high honor with God and before men. They imagine that they have crossed every "T" and dotted every "i" and thus deserve God's grace when, in fact, they have totally ignored one of His most important commands:

Jeremiah 13:18 "Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory."

James 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord."

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."

And, they have overlooked the twice-recorded truth that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

Reader, have you gotten the point? God simply will not dole out his free salvation in a willy-nilly fashion, with reckless abandon, to all would-be, or professed, takers, -- and -- those who think they can have it on their own terms in their own way are greatly in error! Furthermore, when such would-be takers grovel, complain, and charge God with being unfair because He has attached specific conditions which must first be met by the "takers of salvation," they add insult to their error!

And, one cannot get so "Pal-zee-Wal-zee" with God that He will make special exceptions because one is His "Pal" and therefore cannot be refused. Corrupt men might "do anything for a Pal," but God never shows such respect of persons. Jesus made it clear in Luke 11:8 that God "will not rise and give" to an asker simply "because he is his friend."

One cannot "get on the inside track" with God by "apple-polishing," by "buttering Him up with flattering words, or by treating Him so nicely that He will let you cut corners and take what you want, when you want it, and as you want it. Unlike corrupt politicians, accommodating friends, and parents who can't say no, God does not bend the rules and will not wink at those who ignore the conditions upon which He dispenses His free gift of salvation.

It is only on the terms clearly laid down in God's Word, that His "Spirit and the Bride say, Come... take the water of life freely," for while salvation IS FREE, it cannot be received freely without first meeting God's inalterable and invariable conditions.

Concerning this eternal verity, "let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written" (Romans 3:4).

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24 -- LET GO -- AND LET GOD

The hardest thing for Love to do -- is to "Let Go." The heart yearns; the heart fears lest great and eternal harm come to the one that is loved; the heart aches with the very thought of losing one that is loved more than life itself. Yet there do come times and circumstances to God's people when THE ONLY SOLUTION is to "Let Go, and Let God."

LET GO AND LET GOD!

As children bring their broken toys
With tears for us to mend.
I brought my broken dreams to God
Because he was my Friend.

But then instead of leaving Him
In peace to work alone.
I hung around and tried to help
With ways that were my own.

At last I snatched them back and cried,
How can You be so slow?
My child, He said, what could I do,
You never did let go.

Author Unknown

Remember, even though spiritual tornadoes wreak havoc and destruction even worse and greater than their earthly counterparts, "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm." (Nahum 1:3) I remember when as an 18-year-old youth I told mother I was leaving. "Where?" she want to know. "I don't know where," I replied. She had to give me up. I left on a bus for parts unknown to her, but God landed me right in the spot where within about 6 months I was gloriously saved! If there is nothing more you can do -- then "Let Go, and Let God."

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THE END