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## **MAXEY MISCELLANEA**

**By Duane V. Maxey**

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### **01 -- GIDEON'S BACK-DOOR REVIVAL -- MISAPPLIED**

"There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6). This fact is illustrated repeatedly in God's Word, and it is true that sometimes God needs to reduce the size of the crowd before real spiritual conquest and victory can be achieved.

On one occasion, after Jesus had offended many of His hearers by preaching some "hard sayings" (John 6:60), we read that "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). However, this "back-door" revival was right in Divine Order and doubtless worked to advance, rather than to impede the Kingdom of God.

Frequently, Jesus seemed to conduct "back-door" revivals, if you will -- by saying things that caused part of the crowd to divide from Him. On another such occasion He said others whose motive for seeking Him was wrong: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (John 6:26).

It cannot be doubted that God does want verity and virtue among His followers more than He wants vast numbers, and so He often "threshes the throngs" to separate the chaff from the wheat, to ferret out the sinful from among the sincere, and to divide the self-preserving and self-promoting from among the self-sacrificial and sanctified saints of God. Yes, often it is true that "back-door" revivals are right in divine order.

Perhaps the greatest "back-door" revival recorded in the Bible is that which occurred under the leadership of Gideon when he led Israel against the Midianites. The part of that story to which I shall refer is found in Judges 7:1-8.

First, God told Gideon that there were "too many" in his army, which to begin with consisted of a total of 32,000 soldiers. God saw that had He given Israel victory with that huge crowd they would proudly imagine that it was the size and strength of their army that had given them the victory. And, it must be admitted that it is dangerous when the church begins to attribute its spiritual victories to its size-- pride displaces the deep inward realization that without God's help they could do nothing -- regardless of how vast their membership might be. As said Christ to his disciples, so God has always made it clear to His people: "without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5) -- and that applies just as much to a crowd of ten million as it does to a crowd of ten. His message to the tiny Church is: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32) -- while to the great throngs in a backslidden, Laodicean Church who say, "I am rich and increased..." His message is: "I am not among you" -- outside of your midst, "I stand at the door and knock" -- "Let me in, for "without me, ye can do nothing" that truly promotes My Kingdom."

To insure that 22,000 of Gideon's army went out the "back-door" God put them to the "fear" test-- "Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand" (Judges 7:3). That reduced the Israelite army down to the point where Gideon may have thought: "Surely we are small enough now, so that when we win the battle there will be no room for any to boast that we did it all ourselves without God's help." But -- God told him: "The people are yet too many" (Judge 7:4) -- and the army of 10,000 was put to the "cautious" versus "careless" water-drinking test. Nine thousand and seven hundred (9,700) of them were not circumspect in how they drank, bowing down so as to take their eyes off of their surroundings when they drank; while three hundred (300) of them circumspectly brought water up to their mouths with their hands, so as to be able to keep an eye on their surroundings at the same time.

Talk about a "back-door" revival! That was it!! In Divine order, 31,700 members of Gideon's army were sent away so that God could bring Israel the victory with a the 300 who were

unafraid to fight against larger numbers, who were circumspect in their warfare, and who would humbly give GOD THE GLORY for what was accomplished.

Wonderful! -- Who can deny it?! -- but -- there is a syndrome today which is decimating, dividing, and declining the ranks in the Holiness Movement that I would term "Pseudo Gideonitis" -- a mind-set among Holiness Leaders that misapplies the examples seen in Gideon's victory.

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In various ways, PSEUDO-GIDEONITIS wrongly applies the principles seen in Judges 7:1-8 -- this hurtful syndrome being a false, a pseudo, application of truths seen in Gideon's "back-door" revival.

One misapplication of Pseudo-Gideonitis is the mistaken notion that GOD ALWAYS WANTS A BACK-DOOR REVIVAL -- ALWAYS WANTS TO SEE SOME FOLKS WALK OUT THE DOOR before He will bring real revival and victory to the Church. Whereas, probably most of the time God wants the Church to say, "Here Kitty, Kitty," rather than "SCAT"! to those who need help among the crowds attending Church services. The "Get in, Get out, or Get Run Over!" attitude must not always be in the forefront. When "Like it or Lump it" and brusque remarks continually make folks feel like neither God nor the Church cares much whether they hang around or leave, you will soon be viewing a lot of empty pews and barren altars.

All who contemplate conducting a "back-door" revival should bear in mind that Gideon's directions really did come from God, and they had better be very, very sure that their own plans to send some folks skee-daddling is what GOD WANTS, and not just their harsh and human (or even carnal) notion!

Another erroneous notion of Pseudo-Gideonitis is that a large crowd always equals a proud crowd, where there has been a let-down of the standards and a shallow letting-into the membership of the Church people who "haven't got the goods" -- a sign, if you please, that a percentage of the crowd as large as 31,700 out of 32,000 need to GO before God will COME on the scene. The fact is, a large attendance may indicate that the pastor and people are on fire for God, going all-out for souls, and the presence of many others in the congregation who don't measure up to some standards could be those whom that soul-seeking crowd is trying to prayerfully, lovingly, and gradually guide into all truth.

But, turn loose an evangelist upon them who is filled with the mistaken notions of Pseudo-Gideonitis and he will size the crowd up as being "too many" for the preacher to have been really preaching it straight. And, with a harsh zeal, Rev. Pseudo Gideonitis will lace into that large crowd with a "no punches pulled" harangue that will cause the zealous, soul-winning pastor and saints to slump their shoulders in grief and that will cause the "skinned" visitors to slink out the door, sometimes never to return!

Yet another mistaken idea of Pseudo-Gideonitis is:-- Large numbers always indicate a "man-fearing" spirit -- a crowd of people who are afraid to "fight the good fight of faith" with "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth"! Thus, with this prejudiced notion in his head, the

Pseudo-Gideonite preacher will accuse the pastor and people of kow-towing to the world, of compromising the gospel, and of lowering the standards of holiness! -- when, in fact, their large and growing congregation may well be the results of much fasting, prayer, personal work, and preaching the truth in love.

Again, one possessed and obsessed with Pseudo-Gideonitis will assume that large numbers always indicates a lack of circumspection -- a carelessness that he (or she) assumes must always be present when a Church has numerous members. Surely, thinks the Pseudo-Gideonite, out of every 10,000 professors of salvation there are always at least 9,700 who are careless and unwatchful! -- at least 9700 hundred who carelessly take their eyes off of the battlefield to every 300 who are careful and watchful. Whereupon, he will so repeatedly emphasize to a flourishing flock the need of constant and minute scrutiny of their hearts and lives that, before his "back-door" revival is over, many shall have been warped from a healthy circumspection into a spiritually harmful introspection -- and those who do not cast away their confidence and leave the church may become chronic altar-runners -- never again ever certain that they are saved or sanctified, always feeling their spiritual pulse and hitting the altar at nearly every meeting for years!

If a "back-door" revival like that of Gideon is truly in Divine Order, then real victory and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom will be the result. However, if a "back-door" revival is being conducted by one who is deceived by the erroneous notions of Pseudo-Gideonitis, then no real victory will result and the consequence will only be a sad dwindling away of the numbers in a church and a diminishing of its impact for God and for good in a perishing world.

Most Pseudo Gideonites are determined to have a Church that is always and absolutely clean -- even if nobody is there but "me, my wife, my daughter Sue and my son Joe -- us four, and no more"! But, wise old Solomon once wrote in Proverbs 14:4 -- "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox." In a Church filled with the "oxen" of spiritual laborers, things will not always be as tee-totally tidy as all would like. There will always be some cleaning up to do as the work goes on. Want a totally clean crib? -- here's how: -- get rid of all the oxen. Want a tee-totally clean Church, with never any spiritual clean up necessary by anyone or for anyone? Here's how: -- Have a "back-door" revival that gets rid of all who attend! But then, even that wouldn't really do the job. After the last Pseudo-Gideonite walked out and locked the Church door, dust would begin to collect, bugs would begin to invade, and spiders would hang their webs. Unless put to some other use, in time it would become a humanly empty, but dirty old building.

Reminds me of the story of an old, run-down, and perhaps abandoned Church building. In the days when there had been some real spiritual life there, someone had placed a sign on the outside of the building which quoted part of Proverbs 29:18 -- "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Now, with that spiritual "Crib Clean" of all members and abandoned to the elements, the "W" had fallen off of the first letter on the sign, leaving the sad testimony: "here there is no vision, the people perish." Selah.

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02 -- ABOUT BEING FAMILIAR

Words in the English language often have two or more meanings, and sometimes when one meaning of the word is misconstrued for another, the result is comical. I have been amused by a story that went something like the following exchange between a man wanting to hire someone to work with his mules and the prospective employee:

Mule Owner to Prospective Employee -- "Are you 'familiar' with mules?"

Prospective Employee: -- "No sir, boss, I knows too much about mules to be 'familiar' wid 'em!"

Indeed, sometimes it is helpful when one "knows too much" about persons or things to "be familiar with them!"

According to my American Heritage Computer Dictionary, our word "familiar" is: "Middle English, from Old French *familier*, from Latin *familiaris*, domestic, from *familia*, family." One knows his own household family more intimately than any others. Things "familial" are things "familiar" -- known from a close-up relationship and perspective.

But "being familiar" with a person or thing can be either positive or negative.

Had the prospective employee in the little story above taken the word "familiar" in the positive sense in which it was intended, he might have replied:

"Yes, I am very 'familiar' with mules -- I have an intimate knowledge of them, having worked with them often and much. Therefore, knowing their characteristics well, I am well acquainted with how to work with them."

Instead, he took the meaning in the negative sense: "I know too much about those cantankerous animals to get too close to them!"

It has often been said that "familiarity breeds contempt"! And, it is true: when you know too much about another, that intimate knowledge can overshadow the best and noble qualities of the one with whom you are familiar, causing you to see only the "warts" and "flaws" in their character. Whereas, before you knew the person so intimately, you held him, or her, in high respect, now your close-up "familiarity" has blinded you to all but the worst in the person and "bred contempt" for one whom you might otherwise have continued to hold in high respect.

Yes, sometimes "being familiar" does reveal things about another which make it clear that you should NOT hold them in high respect, but at other times "being overly-familiar" has the effect just described: -- that of breeding contempt for one whom you really should continue to respect and revere.

Jesus spoke of this negative effect of "being familiar" in the following verses:

Matthew 13:57 -- "But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."

Mark 6:4 -- "But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

Therefore, it is wise that a preacher "not get too close" to those to whom God has called him to minister. There is a certain distance that must be maintained by a pastor from his parishioners in order to keep their due respect.

Do I hear someone say, "I don't believe that! I think if a preacher is really sanctified wholly, the closer he gets to folks the more they will see the purity of his heart and character, and the more they will respect him!"

I won't argue with you about it. But, if you believe this way you are contradicting the very thing Jesus brought out in Matthew 13:57 and Mark 6:4.

Preacher, if you get real "pal-sie-wal-sie" with your members, if you make intimates out of your congregation, don't be surprised after you have all become close-up and "familial" when this "over-familiarity" causes some of your crowd to lose the degree of respect for you that they should have. Your "words" are less weighty to those who see your "warts"!

Read the whole verse and context of Matthew 13:57, and you will see that even Jesus was the victim of negative judgment from those closest to him as a human being:

Mat 13:55-58 -- "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Yes, those "most familiar" with Jesus thought they saw his "warts" -- even when he had none! -- and, it hindered his being able to help them.

Therefore, preacher, don't think that you -- when you really do have some "warts" -- will gain the highest respect of your members by making them your most "familiar" friends -- like "family". Do so, and with some your "flaws" in the human will overshadow the noblest and best of your character in their eyes, and create a certain "unbelief" in their minds about "God's Truth" when you address them from the pulpit. A word to the wise should be sufficient in this matter.

Taking a different tack concerning the subject, a take-off I have read on the saying, "familiarity breeds contempt" is: "familiarity breeds attempt"!

Get too close to a person or thing, and you may "attempt" to take too many liberties with that individual, or that one may be tempted to do so with you. It is bad enough when a preacher has gotten so close to all of his members that he has lost their respect, but if that intimacy continues then sometimes it breeds "attempts" through indiscretion into indecency and immorality.

No doubt, every moral failure in the ministry is the result -- sooner or later -- of indiscretion brought on by "over-familiarity".

Fourteen times, the Bible mentions "familiar spirits". No need here to display the references. Suffice it to say that such spirits are uniformly seen as of the devil and condemned by the Holy God. Those devilish demons who have, across the centuries, caused many to lose their virtue, might accurately be called "familiar spirits" -- or "imps of impropriety". Through an unwise "being familiar" they have caused individuals to become "over-familiar" -- which in turn has tempted them to cross the boundaries of decency and plunge into shameful and immoral conduct.

In this light, and with this meaning in mind, I will quote but one verse: Leviticus 19:31 -- "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God."

I have found virtually nothing in the Bible where the word "familiar" is used that was positive. Fourteen times the word is related to evil spirits, and the two more times it appears in the Bible it is also negative: Job lamented, "My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me" (Job 19:14); and the Psalmist's lament in Psalm 41:9 was prophetic of that which befell Christ at the hands of Judas: -- "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

He who reads God Word should easily comprehend the dangers of "being too familiar" so as to cause the "imps of impropriety" to lead into sin. But probably many preachers who have never crossed the lines of decency, have crossed the lines of wisdom, and become too familiar with their flock in congenial ways which have caused their hearers to lose the respect for them that a wise distance might have maintained.

But, I would not end this little article with comments on the negative aspect of "being familiar" for, there ARE ways in which an intimate knowledge is a very positive and helpful thing. In 1 Chronicles 12:33, we read: -- "Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: they were not of double heart."

Here were those very "familiar" with "all instruments of war" -- those familiar with the need of staying in line, keeping in rank -- those familiar with the absolute necessity of singularity in their devotion and dedication to the battle -- "they were not of double heart." They had that familiarity that is akin to the spirit of Paul the apostle when he wrote in Philippians 3:13-14 -- "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Like the prospective employee, sometimes God's people should "know too much about" certain things "to be familiar with them." On the other hand, there are positive ways in which all of the saints of God should "abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Philippians 1:9); so as to become increasingly familiar with God and with those instruments of His grace that will advance His Cause, bring glory to Christ, and bring eternal victory to themselves in the "Holy War".

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### 03 -- IT IS TIME FOR OUR NATION TO STOP SHOWING FAVORITISM

"Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord" (Isaiah 26:10).

Favoritism is wrong -- viz., special allowances, privileges, and advantages given to some which are not given to others who are equally (or perhaps even more) worthy of such favors. Yes, if some person, or group of persons, has been denied equality, then there IS an area where special privileges can be rightly granted to rectify a past wrong.

However, when such favoritism is shown, often it does not rectify the evil behavior in the lives of its recipients! If a person has a wicked heart, you can bestow all sorts of favors upon that one, and he (or she) will not necessarily respond with righteous behavior. If a person, or group of people, have been wronged in the past, no amount of favoritism now shown will necessarily cause that one or that group to do right after the favoritism has been shown. Indeed, those who perpetually assert that they (or their forbears) have been wronged, often behave very unrighteously for decades after great favoritism has been shown toward them. They use an injustice of the past to justify present wicked behavior on their own part, but "two wrongs do not make a right"!

In this writer's opinion, the most "affirmative action" that some folks could take is that action which accepts every favor shown as an inducement to behave rightly, appreciatively, and thankfully. Those who are constantly whining about how mistreated they are, while at the same time receiving favors right and left from our government for long decades, are not behaving righteously! Many such, need to get off of Welfare, get a job, stop complaining, and start contributing to society, instead of living off the government while continually "biting the hand that feeds them" and complaining that they are not receiving enough!

St. Paul said in 2 Thess. 3:10 "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." This, my friends, was Paul's brand of "Affirmative Action"!

Millions of those whose forbears were, in the past, wronged, indeed have taken the favors shown by our generous government as an inducement and stepping-stone toward freer and greater productivity, prosperity, and usefulness. Millions more of their ilk should do the same.

But let me apply this on an International basis also:

Many of those countries who enjoy "Favored Nation Status" from America are biting the hand that has long fed them!

Let favor be showed to ingrates, and they will not reciprocate with righteous, appreciative, and thankful behavior! -- and this goes for both individuals and nations.



Let favor be showed to North Korea's Kim Dae Jung (or whatever his name), and he and his dictatorship will not learn righteousness.

Hand-outs to those who bite the hand that feeds them are sickening! -- especially when hard-working American tax-payers are forced to foot the bill for the sniveling, snarling, malicious, and totally ungrateful recipients of American generosity!

Millions in our land could rightly be labeled: "My name is Jimmy; I'll take what you'll gimme!" -- but don't expect such people to be thankful, grateful, and to change their wicked behavior! -- and, numbers of nations around this world who apparently love to criticize nearly everything America does have been "on the take" from US generosity for decades!

Twice, American lives were lost to liberate France; yet in her aloof pride, that nation has frequently been the first to criticize the USA. And, a long litany could also be written of such ingratitude by other nations who are slapping our national face after feeding from our fields.

Recently, George W. Bush has come under fire for his court action to prevent the University of Michigan from giving special enrollment privileges based upon race. But friends, reverse-racial-discrimination is just as wrong as the straight forward brand of racial discrimination! Frankly, I agree with our President:-- it is high time some brands of favoritism were ended -- especially when such little gratitude for it is shown by so many of its recipients, and so little righteous behavior results therefrom. And, in this writer's opinion, all favoritism should also cease toward nations that dig into our national pocket-book and then turn around and slap us in the face.

Millions of hard-working American taxpayers feel wronged when favoritism is shown at their expense, and little is seen in return but ingratitude, hostility, and the accusation that not enough has been given! Conservative-Christian, US taxpayers feel especially sinned against when part of their hard-earned wages is used to fund the activities of drones who (far from learning righteousness from their many received favors) use US Government hand-outs to practice and promote things which are clearly wicked, evil, and hostile to Christ!

I am sure that you also have an opinion on this subject. What is it?

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#### 04 -- FHHP LABORERS FOR CHRIST A Bare-Bones Outline

Have you joined Christ's Trade Union -- the FHHP? -- if so you are FIRED UP, HIRED OUT, HARNESSSED IN, AND PLOWING AHEAD for Jesus.

Preacher, take it from here -- you fill in the outline:

I. FIRED UP -- Luke 12:49 -- "I am come to send fire on the earth.." Acts 2:3 -- "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

II. HIRED OUT -- Matthew 20:7 -- They say unto him... no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." [Christ hired them on the spot! -- immediately after they met Him! To truly meet Christ is to be immediately hired to work in His fields.]

III. HARNESSSED IN -- Matthew 11:29 -- "Take my yoke upon you..." Philippians 4:3 -- "I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help... my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."

IV. PLOWING AHEAD -- Luke 9:62 -- "Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." 1 Kings 20:11 -- "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." There is "no discharge" from Christ's employ -- no legitimate letting go of the plow-handles, no permitted putting off of His harness -- except at death or at the Rapture.

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#### 05 -- GOD'S WORD -- IT "IS" NECESSARILY SO!

The late and renowned song-writer George Gershwin was born September 26, 1908 in Brooklyn, New York to Russian-Jewish, immigrant parents. At his birth, he was named Jacob Gershovitz, but it seems that both first and last names in the Gershovitz family were Americanized -- their last name becoming Gershvin and later Gershwin -- Jacob Gershovitz becoming George Gershwin, his brother Israel Gershovitz becoming Ira Gershwin, and his parents becoming known as Rose and Morris Gershvin or Gershwin.

According to one writer, George Gershwin "became one of America's first premier composers and his compositions are still used today as tools of teachers everywhere as examples of the American entrance to the musical world of Stravinsky, Chopin, Beethoven and Mozart." And, "although George is the most well known of the family, his brother Ira was also a successful lyricist."

Rose and Morris Gershwin noticed how George took an immediate interest when a piano was brought into their home and how he began to play it successfully by ear -- and, he "began to study seriously at the young age of 12 years."

I shall not attempt any recitation of the steps to George Gershwin's renown as an American songwriter, for that is not the purpose of this little treatise. I will next only relate that He died at the very young age of 28 -- almost 29. According to one source, "George's life met a short and tragic end. What started as simple headaches became more serious and chronic. When George started to forget portions of his compositions while performing them, his friends and family encouraged him to see a physician. Doctors informed him that he had a brain tumor and suggested emergency surgery. Doctors who specialized in this form of cancer surgery were to be flown in to California to perform the potentially life saving operation. Unfortunately, George did not survive the surgery and died on July 11, 1937 in Hollywood."

More tragic by far than Gershwin's early death seems to be his published skepticism about the Word of God -- both Old and New Testaments. The following words are taken from his "Porgy and Bess" and a particular song titled: "Sportin' Life's Sermon". I quote the words in the exact vernacular presented by Gershwin in the song. I have omitted a portion of the song relative to Methuselah that is sacrilege such as I shall not publish. Suffice to say of it that its thought is just as totally filled with skepticism and unbelief as the remainder of the song:

"It ain't necessarily so,  
It ain't necessarily so--  
De t'ings dat yo' li'ble  
To read in de Bible--  
It ain't necessarily so.

"Li'l David was small, but -- oh my!  
Li'l David was small, but -- oh my!  
He fought big Goliath  
Who lay down an' dieth--  
Li'l David was small, but -- oh my!...

"Oh Jonah, he lived in de whale,  
Oh Jonah, he lived in de whale--  
Fo' he made his home in  
Dat fish's abdomen--  
Oh Jonah, he lived in de whale...

"In ain't necessarily so,  
It ain't necessarily so.  
Dey tell all you chillun  
De debble's a villun  
But 'tain't necessarily so.

"To get into hebben,  
Don't snap fo' a seben--  
Live clean! Don't have fault!  
Oh, I takes dat gospel  
Whenever it's pos'ple--  
But wid a grain of salt!...

"I'm preachin' dis sermon to show  
It ain't nessa, ain't nessa,  
Ain't nessa, ain't nessa,  
Ain't necessarily so!"

Coming from one born of the same Jewish stock as Christ Jesus, the skepticism about the veracity of the Bible set forth in this song is especially sad.

Contrary to the oft-repeated, "It ain't necessarily so" assertions of Gershwin's unbelief relative to the Bible, Jesus said: "IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU!" (John 14:2).

Jesus had no problem believing

"De t'ings dat yo' li'ble  
To read in de Bible--"

Jesus had no skepticism about the truth of the stories of David and Goliath along with that of Jonah in the belly of the great fish. He accepted them as bona fide facts. Jesus knew that when

"Dey tell all you chillun  
De debble's a villun"

it is the Gospel truth! We have some folks who even now seem to doubt that Saddam Hussein is a villain. I think that he who takes him as anything but a villain is quite deceived, and he is utterly blind who does not accept the fact that, as Jesus said in John 8:44 -- "the devil... was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Yes, indeed, the devil IS A VILLAIN, and he who thinks that "It ain't necessarily so" -- and who persists till death in that delusion -- will, at the Judgment, discover the eternal consequences of his damning villainy!

Gershwin's skepticism in the next stanza of the song derides holy living and the integrity of the New Testament Gospel:

"To get into hebben,  
Don't snap fo' a seben--  
Live clean! Don't have fault!  
Oh, I takes dat gospel  
Whenever it's pos'ple--  
But wid a grain of salt!...

"To get into heaven, don't snap for a seven" pooh-poohs the idea of not gambling, as necessary for a saint, while the words "Live clean! Don't have fault" mock holy living and Christian Perfection.

The last three lines of this portion of the song advocate "taking the Gospel with a grain of salt" -- taking it as something that is really not "pos'ble" to put into practice.

In the final lines of this attack on the Truth, Gershwin made it plain that he was "preaching" a skeptical "sermon" about the Bible and the Gospel:

"I'm preachin' dis sermon to show  
It ain't nessa, ain't nessa,  
Ain't nessa, ain't nessa,  
Ain't necessarily so!"

I don't know why God saw fit to remove this young man from the earth at age 28, but I think it just might have been to prevent him from treasuring up for himself more "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5).

Psalms 55:22-23 says: "the Lord.. shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. But.. bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." Gershwin died at less than half of the allotted 70 years for mankind. He was a preacher of skepticism and doubt about God's Word, WHICH "IS" NECESSARILY SO!

At the Judgment Bar of Almighty God, Who cannot lie, George Gershwin and every accountable creature will learn that "according to all that He [God] promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised" (1 Kings 8:56). The fulfillment of Jesus' declaration in Matthew 5:18 will shock every skeptic into dumb silence and shove every loud-mouth unbeliever into that awful realm from whence the sound of their voices shall never again fall upon the ears of God!: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Numbers 23:19 -- "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" YES -- HE SHALL MAKE IT GOOD -- FOR HIS WORD "IS" NECESSARILY SO!

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## 06 -- GOD'S NATION -- THEIR IDENTITY AND THEIR DESTINY

Psalms 106:5 -- "That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of THY NATION, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

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## INTRODUCTION

In his famous Gettysburg address of November 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln said: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation: conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal..."

God's Nation was conceived much earlier than this; yea, its people were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world" and the eternally dedicated proposition for God's Nation was (and still is) that it must be "holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4).

Furthermore, Jesus Christ, "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" to be the Great Head of God's Nation, "but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:20) and for all who choose to become a part of His Greatest Of All Nations.

The Scriptures are replete with statements that reveal both the Identity and Destiny of God's Nation. Let us examine a few of them.

\* \* \*

(1) GOD'S NATION IS SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, NOT FLESH AND BLOOD ISRAEL. -- "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. (Rom. 9:6-8). Clearly here, St. Paul says that it is "the children of promise" -- i. e., those who are spiritually born again -- who constitute God's Israel, God's Nation.

From before the foundation of the earth, God ordained that His Israel, His Nation, would be composed of those who were made "new creatures" in Christ Jesus: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:15-16).

\* \* \*

(2) GOD'S NATION IS COMPOSED ONLY OF THOSE WHO BRING FORTH THE FRUIT OF HIS SPIRIT. -- Flesh and blood Israel only typified God's Spiritual Nation, and never in its existence did it, is it, nor shall it, as an earthly nation, bring forth the fruit God's Spirit. In Matthew 21:43, Jesus declared to flesh and blood Israel: -- "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." That nation, God's Nation -- The Church -- bringing forth the fruit of His Spirit was conceived before the foundation of the world, but was born with the First Advent of Christ and especially with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. At Pentecost, filled with, and bringing forth in abundance the Fruits of God's Spirit, this "New Nation, conceived in (spiritual) liberty and dedicated to the proposition that" all its citizens are, and must be "holy and without blame before Him in love" was "brought forth" upon the earth. Its pre-destiny and its eternal destiny shall be fulfilled -- world without end! Through this nation, God's Nation, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 40:5).

But what of earthly Israel? Shall it cease to exist as a nation? I answer, YES, it shall, just as all other earthly nations shall cease to exist at Christ's Return. Some might quote Jeremiah 31:36 as proof that this is not so: "If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." To such, I would reply that the Scriptures reveal that "Israel" is one of the names of God's Son! And, "the seed of Israel" as eternally ordained by God are the spiritual seed of Christ. "The children of the promise are counted for the seed," (Rom. 9:8) for whom the declaration in Jeremiah 31:36 shall be fulfilled.

For all who wish to study in more detail the Scriptural proofs regarding Christ, God's Son, as "Israel," I refer the reader to my Articles Of Faith publication, hdm0123, Article 21, titled: "The Hidden Significance Of The Name Israel."

A remnant from among earthly Israel shall be "born at once" (Isaiah 66:8) -- i. e., be suddenly born again -- on the Day of the Lord, and as such shall be made part of the Spiritual Israel of God, but it is important to realize that most of the remaining prophecies relative to the nation Israel shall have their fulfillment spiritually and eternally to the Church, God's Nation.

Because "they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers.. knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets... they have fulfilled them in condemning" Christ Jesus. Because they misinterpreted "the voices of the prophets," because they looked for, and expected earthly fulfillments -- an earthly King and an earthly Kingdom -- they rejected and crucified Christ.

Yet today, some of God's best saints misinterpret "the voices of the prophets" and insist that much of the future fulfillment of prophecy relative to God's Nation shall come to earthly Israel! -- when, in fact, those fulfillments shall come to the Church -- the one and only Nation "bringing forth the fruits" of His Spirit and His Kingdom.

It is ironic that what the Jews feared would happen if they did NOT reject Jesus occurred because they DID reject Him in failing to see the spiritual nature of his Kingdom. Witness: John 11:48 -- "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." -- vs. -- Matthew 21:43 where Jesus declared to flesh and blood Israel: -- "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

The born again "Israel of God," bringing forth the fruit of His Spirit, constitutes God's one and only Nation. From all others all recognition as His Nation, or participation in His Nation, is forever taken away.

\* \* \*

(3) GOD'S NATION IS A NATION REDEEMED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD. -- Revelation 5:9 -- "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Citizens of God's Nation were not always His People: 1 Pet 2:10 -- "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." "Once they were bound by sin's galling fetters, chained like a slave, they struggled in vain, but they received a glorious freedom, when Jesus broke their fetters in twain!"

It took sacrificial blood to free the people of Iraq from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, just as it has taken sacrificial blood to free those brutalized by every other ruthless tyrant throughout history. And, it took the shedding of Christ's precious blood at Calvary to free His people from the tyranny of Satan and Sin. The sacrificial lambs and the deliverance of earthly Israel from Pharaoh and Egypt were but foreshadows of the much greater deliverance of Christ -- and, the "new nation"

created after the Exodus from Egypt was but an earthly type of the much greater "New Nation" -- God's Nation -- created in the Exodus from Satan and Sin through the blood of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Do I hear a loud HALLELUJAH!?

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(4) GOD'S NATION IS AN HOLY NATION. -- In 1 Pet 2:9 we read: -- "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." In this verse, the apostle Peter applies to the Church the promises to earthly Israel in Exodus 19:5-6 -- "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." True holiness is only possible through being cleansed by the blood of Christ, and thus it is only those in the Church who constitute God's "Holy Nation". It is, therefore, the Church which shall inherit the promise of Isa. 60:21 -- "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified."

\* \* \*

(5) GOD'S NATION IS AN HATED NATION. -- Matthew 24:9 -- "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." While it is true that the Jewish people have been hated and gravely mistreated throughout the earth, as I see the fulfillment of prophecy, it is the Church which, as God's Nation, that shall experience the most hatred and the greatest holocaust this earth has ever known -- just before Christ's return. Disagree with me if you will, as I see it, the Church shall pass through, not be raptured away from, the coming Great Tribulation. They shall escape the outpouring of "The Indignation" at the close of the Great Tribulation, but they shall pass through its bloody years up to that moment. I invite the reader to examine the whole of my views on this subject in hdm0124, "His Appearing And His Kingdom."

\* \* \*

(6) GOD'S NATION IS FOOLISH IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD. -- It was the supposedly stupid, the unlearned followers of Christ and the Spirit-Baptized Crowd at Pentecost who, as "a foolish nation" provoked unregenerate Israel: Romans 10:19 -- "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. Here Paul was quoting Deuteronomy 32:21 -- "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."

In the eyes of a pompous, proud, and erudite world, God's Nation, the Church, has always looked foolish: -- 1 Cor 1:26 For 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" (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

God's Nation is actually comprised of the wisest of all souls -- those not necessarily wise in worldly ways, but those who are wise concerning that which matters most: -- things spiritual and things eternal.

I refer the reader also to Isaiah 55:5 and 65:1 regarding the "foolish nation" -- God's Nation -- made spiritually wise by Christ even though many therein prior to their dramatic conviction and conversion had little knowledge or interest in things theological: -- Isaiah 55:5 "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." Isa. 65:1 "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

Until they are caught up together with Him to meet the Lord in the air, God's Nation will continue to look like a "foolish nation" to the wise-acres of this world. Then, when they are shining in the brightness of Christ's resplendent glory, I can hear Him saying to the highminded, but downcast, worldlings below: "Where is now thy mouth..? Is not this the people that thou hast despised?" (Judges 9:38).

\* \* \*

(7) GOD'S NATION IS THE NATION THAT SHALL MARCH INTO THE NEW JERUSALEM! -- At the close of the Great White Throne Judgment, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalms 9:17). But, in great contrast to that awful fate, the command goes out -- perhaps from Christ to the angel Gabriel -- and perhaps with words so loud that they shall resound throughout the uttermost parts of the New Heavens and New Earth -- HEAR THEM: -- "OPEN YE THE GATES, THAT THE RIGHTEOUS NATION WHICH KEEPETH THE TRUTH MAY ENTER IN."!!! (Isa. 26:2).

AS WITH CHRIST THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN, hear the words of Psalms 33:12 being gleefully sung: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance!" -- and hear as well the joyful words of Revelation 22:14 resound as the bloodwashed enter New Jerusalem: -- "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

What Nation is that? pinnacled in singular splendor upon the hills of glory? -- Num. 23:9 "For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." It is that Great Nation, the Spiritual Israel of God, dwelling forever

"Alone with God, the world forbidden,  
Alone with God, Oh blessed retreat,  
Alone with God, and in Him hidden,

To hold with him communion sweet."

What Nation is it that shall inherit the promise of Micah 4:8? -- "And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

It is none other than the Church, God's Holy Nation, dwelling in the exalted Tower of Eternal Glory with Christ, and having with Him "the first dominion": -- first in dominance, first in prominence, and forever in endless bliss -- world without end!

No wonder then, the Psalmist's deepest desire was: "That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the GLADNESS OF THY NATION, that I may glory with thine inheritance" (Psalms 106:5).

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## 07 -- ARE YOU A HOLINESS-BOOK HOARDER?

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

Few in the Holiness Movement would not condemn a man who laid up monetary treasure "for himself" -- for his own pleasure, for his own pride and vanity -- and who did nothing for the Kingdom of God.

But let me call your attention to another type of hoarding:-- viz., that of treasuring up for one's self Holiness Books -- books which often stay shelved on the Holiness-Book Hoarder's library shelves, doing nobody any good, often including the hoarder himself, or herself.

Hoarders of earthly riches often amass great treasure that goes unspent until the day they die. They feel secure in having it; they feel superior in having it; they spend none of it to help others and to make the world a better place. This, virtually all Holiness folks condemn as selfish, vain, and damning.

Hoarders of Holiness Books often amass great literary treasure, which, perhaps more often than not, goes unread by many, if not all others. These hoarders of Holiness works may not be acquisitive to gain pelf for self, but they are often greedy to get and have a huge collection of Holiness works -- for themselves -- and, I dare say that their acquisitiveness in this way is often wrongly motivated. Many of the books they get may go unread by themselves and unshared with others! Mistakenly so, some Holiness-Book Hoarders may feel bettered (or better) simply by having a vast Holiness Library -- and, in a somewhat perverse way they may enjoy boasting to others of which Holiness books, and how many such books they have in their Library.

But in fact, WHAT GOOD ARE VAST NUMBERS OF HOLINESS BOOKS DOING, which today, and perhaps for long years, have been sitting unread on Holiness Preachers' shelves? when those preachers have done nothing more with those books but handle them, flip through their pages occasionally, and boast to others that they have them?

For some 10 years now, HDM has been buying and borrowing old (even very old) Holiness Classics, so as to resurrect them from the dusty, musty shelves of archives and isolation on Holiness Book-Shelves, give them a new digital life, and spread them far and wide around the world!

You cannot stick a printed book in a slot and make a million copies from it -- you CAN do that with an HDM digital book, and those million copies can be easily set before the eyes of a million people in a million different places around the globe.

You cannot highlight text in a printed book and drop it into your own composition without having to type one letter -- you CAN do that with HDM data.

Years ago, when first beginning HDM, I saw the immense potential for good in creating and publishing good, old-fashioned, digital Holiness works. We pioneered in such publication, and thankfully some like Sulu Kelley, W. L. King, and Dr. George Lyons had a similar vision.

#### ARE YOU A HOLINESS-BOOK HOARDER?

Do you have numbers of hard-copy Holiness Books just sitting on your bookshelves -- doing nobody, including yourself, any real good? If so, why not consider either digitizing some of those books and sharing the digital text with HDM, or why not consider loaning HDM one or more of those books so that we can digitize it or them and make it or them available to millions around the globe?

Do you even have numbers of HDM CDs that you have not yet shared with others? Why not share out freely with others all of your earlier editions of the HDM CD, keeping for your own use only the latest one in your possession?

Some years ago, there was a popular song, part of which said: "All the gold in California, is in a bank in the middle of Beverly Hills, in somebody else's name"! In other words: "Don't bother thinking that you can strike it rich in California; all of its wealth has already been hoarded and banked where you can't get to it."

I recall some years ago having some dealings with someone whom I suspect was a HOLINESS-BOOK HOARDER. It seemed to me that he was mighty anxious to get possession of the digital publications that we had available -- BUT, HE WAS UNWILLING TO LOAN HDM ANY BOOKS FOR DIGITIZING.

Hoarding Holiness Books and literature for selfish and egotistical reasons could even be a sin. KJV Romans 1:18 reads: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who HOLD THE TRUTH in unrighteousness."

The NIV seems to unfold the meaning of this verse better: NIV Romans 1:18 reads: "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who SUPPRESS THE TRUTH by their wickedness."

Doubtless, Saddam Hussein is "suppressing the truth"! He knows what he is unwilling to reveal to others. I would not put Holiness Book Hoarders in the same classification with this murderous dictator, but -- God DOES demand that His truth be PUBLISHED, NOT THAT IT BE SUPPRESSED -- not that it be gathered in huge collections of Holiness Books that are suppressed from all human eyes, save those of a Holiness-Book Hoarder, who may only glance occasionally at their covers, and that to feel inwardly smug about having such a vast Holiness Library! SELAH.

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## 08 -- IDLERS WAITING FOR THE QUITTING-TIME-WHISTLE

Matthew 20:6 "And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

How many in the Conservative Holiness Movement have already gone into their spiritual cocoon? In today's Monday Morning Holiness Report, W. L. King writes: "I talked to a preacher this week. He did not think it needful to publish the gospel worldwide or even to pass out gospel tracts. He said it was not necessary because people just would not be effected by publishing the gospel. It was his thought and duty to keep the few in His church ready for the Rapture."

I remember years ago, when I was working in several of the big manufacturing plants in Illinois, how some of the workers would shut down their end of the production perhaps 20 to 30 minutes or more before the quitting whistle, so they could get all washed up and ready to run out the door when the whistle blew. For example, I worked swing shift, and if quitting time was 11 p.m. some of the men might lay down their tools, or shut down their machines, at 10:30 p.m. or earlier -- and, after washing up, you might see them just standing around gabbing, or throwing a snuff-can lid back and forth to one another down the aisle like a Frisbee -- idling... idling... just waiting for the quitting horn or whistle. If you approached one of them when it was 10:30 p.m. about doing something, he might well respond: "IT'S TOO LATE... IT'S ALMOST QUITTING TIME... I NEED TIME TO GET WASHED UP BEFORE THE WHISTLE BLOWS."

Translated into the spiritual realm, this reply of the idling plant-worker sounds very, very similar to the philosophy put forth to Bro. King: "IT'S TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING... ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS MAKE SURE WE AND OUR FEW FOLKS ARE WASHED UP AND READY FOR THE LAST TRUMP TO BLOW!"

I wonder how many Conservative Holiness people have bought-into this philosophy? Regardless of how few or many have adopted it, it is a false notion that flies in the face of a number of scriptures, but I shall mention only several:

(1) Mark 13:33-36 -- "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for YE KNOW NOT WHEN THE TIME IS. 34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for YE KNOW NOT WHEN THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE COMETH, at even,

or at midnight, or at the cockcrow, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" [or just idling, marking time, waiting for the Last Trump].

The first fundamental error of this "IT'S TOO LATE TO EVANGELIZE PHILOSOPHY" is an assumption by those who adopt it that: "THEY KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS" relative to the Second Coming. Such a notion is mistaken, and sometimes it is accompanied by a degree of spiritual conceit:-- viz., "If folks around me were as spiritual and 'cued-in' as I, they would know that Christ is coming within a few days, weeks, or years!" Unlike workers who punch a clock, Christ's laborers DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE LAST TRUMP, QUITTING TIME WHISTLE, WILL SOUND! Jesus said in Matt. 24:36 -- "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Who is he that presumes to have "insider information" on the time of Christ's Second Coming, and I will show you a man who is "wise in his own conceits" and/or sadly deluded!

(2) Luke 19:13 -- "And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, OCCUPY TILL I COME." PLEASE NOTE HERE: -- He did not say, "Occupy until you think my coming is very close, then Preoccupy yourselves with being all washed up and ready for the Last Trump, leaving the rest of the world for the rest of the time unevangelized and unprepared!"

Granted, Conservative Holiness folks who are now idle, thinking it too late to evangelize, are not cut out of the same bolt of cloth as those that I saw standing around in those Illinois factories idling away the last half-hour before quitting time by throwing a snuff-can lid back and forth. Some of the former were somewhat clean physically, while many of the latter may be quite clean both physically and spiritually -- but -- are not both types of laborers guilty of robbing him who hired them of the full measure of labor due him?

I close with the following two questions:-- (a) Is it not also possible that the "IT'S TOO LATE TO EVANGELIZE PHILOSOPHY" is, to some extent, an easy excuse for doing nothing and for getting nothing done for Christ? (b) Will such an excuse stand the test of Christ's Judgment, Who said, "Occupy till I come"? Selah.

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## 09 -- TWO LITTLE ODIOUS ODES

While working the Illustrations tonight, I came across the following rhyme, and below it I have written my own modernized, take-off on it:

The typographical error is a slippery thing and sly,  
You can hunt till you are dizzy, but somehow it will get by.  
Till the forms are off the presses, it is strange how still it keeps;  
It shrinks down in a corner, and never stirs or peeps--  
The typographical error too small for human eyes,  
Till the ink is on the paper, when it grows to mountain size.  
The boss just stares with horror, then he grabs his hair and groans,

The copy reader drops his head upon his hands and moans.  
The remainder of the issue may be clean as clean can be,  
But that typographical error is the only thing you see.

\* \* \*

Duane's "Take-Off" On The Above Rhyme

Now there's another type of error that is equally as sly,  
And you can hunt IT till you're dizzy, yet somehow IT will get by.  
It isn't made with presses nor with pens while your mind sleeps;  
But by your O-C-R program into the text it creeps--  
Then hides from your discovery in microscopic size  
Till after text is published, then it jumps before your eyes!  
But there's no use in pining or in feeling greatly vexed,  
For after you have published -- you can really proof your text!  
A hundred crafty errors that were hidden on the screen  
Will then appear like magic and be effortlessly seen!

\* \* \* \* \*

10 -- THE EVILS OF "RABAH RABAH" RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Be not righteous over much [rabah rabah]; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" (Ecclesiastes 7:16).

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

\* \* \*

Introduction

According to Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:20, there is a way in which one must be "exceedingly righteous" in order to make it into heaven. But, according to Ecclesiastes 7:16, there is also a way in which one can be "over much righteous" so as to bring upon himself, or herself, destruction.

The "exceeding righteousness" mentioned by Jesus is a genuine, inwrought righteousness obtained entirely through the blood of Christ and the grace of God. It abounds in good works, not to be saved, but as the results of salvation, even though in the eyes of a wicked world it always appears to be excessive to a fault -- too religious, too righteous. Conversely, the "over much righteousness" mentioned in Ecclesiastes 7:16 is a false righteousness, even though many religious zealots think that it is very legitimate and extremely imperative for themselves and for all others who hope to enter heaven.

Often the discernment between the legitimate, "exceeding righteousness" mentioned by Jesus and the illegitimate, "over much righteousness" mentioned by Solomon can be made only by "them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). Sometimes appearing to be quite identical, in fact, these two radical forms of "righteousness" are poles apart.

In this article, I shall not attempt to define the characteristics of the "true and exceeding righteousness" mentioned by Jesus. Every seasoned saint of God knows what they are. I shall limit my remarks to an examination of some of the evil characteristics of the false, "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness" mentioned by Solomon.

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## 01 -- Rabah Rabah Righteousness Goes Beyond God's Word

According to Strongs' Concordance, the Hebrew word both for "over" and for "much" in my text is "rabah," pronounced "raw-baw" -- "Be not righteous over much [rabah rabah]." In Exodus 30:15 the word "rabah" is translated "more": "The rich shall not give more [rabah], and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord..." Here I would note that "rabah rabah righteousness" is a false righteousness that requires "more, more" than is required by God! Yes, it is possible to preach a false gospel that requires "less" than God requires. But, the "over much righteousness to which I refer is an excessive "laying down of the law" that actually places its requirements "above that which is written," and that causes its adherents to be "puffed up for one against another" (1 Corinthians 4:6), as those who pontificate and pride themselves in being more righteous than their fellows. No matter that their "rabah, rabah (over much) righteousness" goes above and beyond everything required by God's Word, they profess that this is how THEY live, and how all others must live, though in their proud estimation most others fall short of their own virtuous excellence!

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## 02 -- Rabah Rabah Righteousness Is Self-Destroying, Not Self Sacrificial

"Rabah, rabah" is used again in Exodus 36:5 -- "And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more [rabah rabah] than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make." Over much (rabah rabah) righteousness is that which does "more than enough for the service of the Lord" -- a tendency that can indeed be virtuous and praiseworthy if that "rabah rabah" service is motivated by a Divine Love and self-sacrifice that causes one to "burn out" for Christ. However this is not the case when it is "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness." Over much righteousness involves a "burning" of the candle at both ends that causes one to "destroy himself" (or herself) physically and mentally when God would have His servants be moderate and wise so as to prolong their service on this earth. Furthermore, one who practices "over much righteousness" generally forces off upon others "much more than is required for the service of the Lord," and their false righteousness therefore frequently destroys both themselves and others with them -- sometimes physically, sometimes mentally, and even sometimes spiritually.

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### 03 -- Rabah Rabah Righteousness Applies Its Requirements Unfairly

In Number 26:54 we read: -- "To many thou shalt give the more [rabah] inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance..." Often those who pontificate themselves in their false, "rabah rabah righteousness" are unfair in the distribution of things. To the privileged few, like themselves, they give the "(rabah) more" of various things -- one of them being more liberty to be exempt from rigid requirements, while to the many whom they consider beneath themselves they give much less such liberty.

Such unfairly applied "over much righteousness" is that which Jesus denounced when He said in Luke 11:46 -- "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." When room for the frailties of the human is under consideration, it is the few men at the top of a religious group who should have the least freedom to vary from their stated scruples, and the many supposedly beneath them to whom the most "slack" should be given. But, most always, the pontificates of "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness" act as "Lords over God's flock"! They themselves do not live up to all of their nit-picky rules and regulations, but WOE BE UNTO anyone under them in their congregation or group who does not "toe the line" exactly!

\* \* \*

### 04 -- Rabah Rabah Righteousness Demands Instantaneous Lining Up To All Of Its Rules

In Deuteronomy 7:22 we read: "And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase [rabah] upon thee."

Preachers of "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness" insist that folks who get an instantaneous work of grace must also instantaneously line up to all of their standards! They will tolerate no such thing as newcomers to grace putting away this or that "little by little" as they gradually gain new light, "little by little." No sir! When folks are instantly saved or instantly sanctified they had better instantly line up to their rigid standards, or they will be instantaneously tongue-lashed from the pulpit and/or pew and often quickly ostracized from their presence!

The fact is, however, unless a spiritual leader is wise enough to allow new converts and newly sanctified individuals to put off some things and to take on some other things "little by little", the spiritual "beasts of the field will increase (rabah rabah -- become "over much") upon these newcomers in grace. Disallow spiritual newcomers to grow in knowledge and practice "little by little" -- immediately force them to adopt all that you assert they must, and you will unleash upon them an "overmuch increase" of satanic spiritual beasts in their minds and lives that will devour them spiritually.



There is today, a ditty that goes, "WHO TURNED THE DOGS LOOSE?!!" And, it might well be asked, after newly saved or sanctified souls have suddenly succumbed, "WHO TURNED THE SPIRITUAL BEASTS LOOSE UPON THEM?" -- often it may be a preacher of "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness" who turned those devilish devourers loose upon them, by insisting that they line up instantly, instead of "little by little" as they gained new light.

\* \* \*

#### 05 -- Rabah Rabah Righteousness Equates Silence With Sin And Vociferation With Virtue

We find "rabah" again in 1 Samuel 1:12-13 -- "And it came to pass, as she [Samuel's mother to be, Hannah] continued [rabah] praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken."

The advocates of "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness" often equate silence with sinfulness and loud vociferations with a high degree of grace. Eli, very mistakenly, attributed Hannah's silent prayer with the sin of drunkenness, while at the same time he overlooked the rotten, immoral behavior of his sons, perhaps in part because of their loud-mouthed professions of love for Jehovah!

Even today, it is not uncommon for those professing to speak loudly "with the tongues of men and of angels" to practice and tolerate gross immorality while condemning those whose prayers are silent of such vociferations, but whose virtue is impeccable!

As I once heard an evangelist put it: "You can't tell how much gas is in the tank when someone honks their horn!" And, as Solomon put it in Ecclesiastes 5:2 -- "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." And again in Prov 10:19 -- "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."

Over much righteousness often consists of too much noise and too many words, when it is "not how loud you shout, nor how high you jump, but how you walk when you come down" that matters most. Eli and his sons may have been loud, holy talkers; Hannah was a quiet, holy walker, and it was she whom God honored, and they whom God destroyed.

\* \* \*

#### 06 -- Rabah Rabah Righteousness Seeks Salvation By Many Good Works

Prov 6:34-35 is another interesting passage where the Hebrew word "rabah" is used: -- "For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many [rabah] gifts. Regarding "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness" relative to this verse, here is my thought: The jealous God, outraged by Man's unfaithfulness to him, will not be, cannot be, satisfied with anything sinful men offer Him. No matter how many good works and gifts of service religious zealots offer him,

the ONLY RANSOM wherewith God RESTS CONTENT is the ransom paid by the death of His Beloved Son at Calvary!

Over much righteousness is often the false righteousness of one who (either consciously or unconsciously) seeks to be justified in God's sight by his or her good works which are often exceedingly zealous and numerous. Such an one might profess to believe in salvation only through the blood of Christ, but still be, in fact, depending upon their own "rabah rabah -- over much" labors to stave off God's wrath and to keep the offended Jehovah "content". Basically, then, one who practices "over much righteousness" fears an angry God and feels that many works gain merit toward God's favor, but the practicer of "rabah rabah righteousness" knows little or nothing about the Love of God and the deep inward peace that can be known only by trusting entirely in the merit and power of Christ's blood.

\* \* \*

#### 07 -- Rabah Rabah Righteousness Suavely Seeks Self-Glorification

Prov 25:27 also uses "rabah": -- "It is not good to eat much [rabah] honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory." The religiosity of one practicing "over much righteousness" is quite often a subtle effort to promote one's self. It is not the service of one whose sole purpose is to promote the Kingdom of God and to bring glory only to Christ. Ostensibly, the many labors and melodious professions of a "rabah rabah" religionist may seem to be very self-sacrificial, and may seem to drip with "much honey" of spiritual sweetness, but like the suave efforts of a throne-stealing Absalom, often they are, in reality, an effort to gain the preeminence, grab the control, and glorify self.

\* \* \*

#### 08 -- In Conclusion

It was Solomon, not Absalom, who succeeded David to the throne. Likewise, it was Solomon who wrote: "Be not righteous over much [rabah rabah]; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" (Ecclesiastes 7:16). Did Solomon have his, then slain, brother Absalom in mind when he wrote this verse? Perhaps not. However, "rabah rabah -- over much -- righteousness" in the end is always destructive, and has within it none of the grace and salvation of God. It is of the "letter" that "killeth" -- and totally foreign to the "exceeding righteousness" mentioned by Christ which is of the "Spirit" that "giveth Life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 11 -- SOME "OTISMS" SEEN IN CHURCH

Yes, "OTISM" is a term of my own invention, you won't find it in the dictionary, except sometimes at the end of a word, but -- please bear with me and read on:

\* \* \*

DESPOTISM -- This is "Popery" that usurps leadership power in the Church that belongs only to Christ.

Unfortunately, "Popery" has often been exercised by highminded ecclesiastics in many other denominations besides the Roman Catholic Church! -- and sometimes it has been seen even in the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement!

\* \* \*

NEPOTISM -- This is "Promotion of Kin" to high position in the Church.

This evil is OFTEN exercised, even in some of the most conservative holiness Churches -- viz., the promotion into high position of one's sons, daughters, sons-in-law, and other family members -- seeing to it that those who "take over" when "I" retire will continue to push "my" agenda!

\* \* \*

DEPOT-ISM -- This is "Railroading" out of Membership all who disagree.

No, this one isn't in the dictionary, but it IS often exercised, (or should I say, "exorcised") by the "ruling elite" in a denomination: -- i. e., -- If you don't agree with "Our Position" then it is:

"Down by the station, early in the morning,  
See the little Puffer-Billies all in a row;  
See the little driver, pull the little handle,  
Puff, puff, toot, toot -- off YOU go!"

"Depot-ism," then could also be described as "out-ism" -- because it is a disposition to "take you to the depot, place you on the fast express train," and "railroad you out" of the Church membership and/or attendance if you dissent with their opinion which they believe is nearly omniscient.

\* \* \*

CRACKED-POT-ISM -- This is leadership by an "earthen vessel" who is a bit "tetched".

Once again, 'taint in Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary, but it is seen in the Church leadership of one who lacks a "Comprehensive Balance" in his (or her) views. It is the direction, or attempted direction in the Church of one who has "gone to seed" on some issue -- a self-perceived, spiritual Paul Revere who is constantly "riding a hobby-horse" rocker, forever rocking back and forth on the same theme, but getting nowhere! And, unfortunately, some such out-do even Paul Revere's "midnight ride" and continue their long and loud warnings long after many of their weary listeners are too bored to pay any further attention.

\* \* \*

POLYGLOTISM -- This, I would define as the erudite, but proud display of one's knowledge of the original languages of the Bible. Defined as an adjective, Polyglot is, (according to my American Heritage Dictionary), "Speaking, writing, written in, or composed of several languages." And as a noun, polyglot is defined as: "1. A person having a speaking, reading, or writing knowledge of several languages. 2. A book, especially a Bible, containing several versions of the same text in different languages. 3. A mixture or confusion of languages... pol"y+glot"ism or pol"y+glot"tism."

Some proud seminarians who "grace" (or should we say, "disgrace") the pulpit regale in displaying their great knowledge of the original languages of the Bible, but their meaning is often, to the common man, a "confusion of languages" like that which confounded those at the tower of Babel. These Polyglotist Preachers (not to be confused with Polygamist Preachers) utterly fail to apply the good sense of the apostle Paul who said in 1 Cor. 14:9 -- "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." Further, in 1 Cor. 14:19 he let it be known that "five words" spoken in a language that one's hearers easily grasp is better "than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." Ignoring all such practical advice, the pompous Pulpiteers of Polyglotism would rather amplify their learning than edify their congregation.

\* \* \*

EGOTISM -- This evil should, of course, never be seen in any family, especially the professed Family of God -- but often it is. It really needs little definition, but again, my Am. Her. Dict. defines it thus: "1. The tendency to speak or write of oneself excessively and boastfully. 2. An inflated sense of one's own importance; conceit. See Synonyms at conceit." When I was a boy, I recall hearing an expression that is not so often repeated today, but which is still too often, too close to the truth: "There is no conceit in his family; HE HAS IT ALL!" One might apply this to the arrogance manifested by the "Bell-Sheep" of many a religious group: "There is no conceit in his Church; HE HAS IT ALL!"

\* \* \*

There are several other "OTISMS" upon which one might elaborate as being present too often in too many denominations. But, here I forbear. The reader who has a good dictionary, enough time, and sufficient curiosity to do so, can find them for himself, or herself.

I shall conclude with this observation: -- one might pronounce what I have termed "OTISM" quite the same as the word "AUTISM" -- which latter word my dictionary defines in part as: "Abnormal introversion and egocentricity; acceptance of fantasy rather than reality." In some ways, then, the diseases of "OTISM" and "AUTISM" are very similar!

\* \* \* \* \*

12 -- NOT SHOWING DUE RESPECT -- AND -- USING FLATTERING TITLES

"Render therefore to all their dues... fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (KJV Rom. 13:7).

"Give everyone what you owe him... if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor" (NIV Rom. 13:7).

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17).

"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" (Job 32:21-22).

\* \* \*

## 01 -- Not Showing Due Respect

"To us, you are NOT Rev. Maxey," she said with disdain, "you are just Duane."

If I recall correctly, (way back in the 1960s) this was the acidic remark shot at me like a poisoned arrow from the embittered tongue of a woman who was a member of the church where I was pastoring. I was rather surprised that one who apparently professed holiness would manifest such bitterness, and fling such a demeaning and down-putting insult to her minister. I felt no such bitterness toward her, but responded with the question: "Sis. \_\_\_\_\_, do you have Perfect Love?"

I think she was as taken back by my mild, but penetrating question as I had been when struck by her belittling remark -- there was but a pause, a silence, and the evasion of a direct answer to the question. As I recall, after more bitterness again erupted from her mouth, I once again asked her: "But, do you have Perfect Love?" -- and, I never received a positive response.

Later, after the Lord had quite unexpectedly revealed to me that I was to resign that church, and I had announced the same to the members, at a final, official meeting, her husband flung one of his own ugly put-downs at me: "You have been bouncing around like a rubber ball that is flat on one side!" said he, and "you have been planning this for (x amount of ) time!"

I told the insulting man that "I love you," but No, I had not been planning this for some time, but that the Lord had quite suddenly shown me that I should resign -- which was the fact of the matter.

"I love you too," he shot back... but, nothing in the spirit, actions, and words of this man and his wife had, of late, given me any evidence of that. Instead, they had shown disrespect to the man whom God had called to be their pastor. It was GOD'S call that had sent me there -- not merely the vote of the members. And, it was GOD'S call that took me suddenly away -- and not the whimsical "bouncing around like a rubber ball that was flat on one side" ascribed to my resignation by the "Church Boss".

There are two extremes when it comes to showing honor and respect:-- in this case, there had been an extreme lack of respect -- disrespect, disdain, and put-downs shown by this couple toward their God-called pastor, instead of a showing of the honor and respect that was due.

With "Mrs. Church Boss," it was not a question of whether the use of the title "Reverend" was appropriate for preachers -- it was simply that she wanted to vociferously put me down as nothing and nobody but "Duane" -- a despicable excuse for a pastor who had failed to kow-tow to the great importance of herself and her husband.

But God does not take it lightly when disrespect is shown toward his called ministers! Twice in the Word, He warns: "Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalms 105:15).

When the Lord suddenly told me to leave that place, He also revealed to me that within 6 months or so, that church would be closed! I related this to the District leader, who apparently did not believe me. I said, "Bro. \_\_\_\_\_, you can call another preacher to come here, but I feel that the Lord has shown me that within about 6 months this church will be closed." Another preacher was called, but perhaps quite exactly within the time-frame I had stated, that church was closed, and the property sold!

Folks, when the self-imagined "pillars" in a congregation stand in the way of God's called minister; when they oppose everything he tries to promote under the Spirit's direction, and when they disdain and insult him to his face, and in front of others in the Church -- LOOK OUT! Bad things are about to happen! -- and in some cases such carnal cavilers are soon removed from the earth, and their final, ugly display of disdain and disrespect for God's man lands them in dark damnation, where they shall eternally regret having failed to show "honour to whom honour" is due -- "especially" to those "who labour[ed] in the word and doctrine" to them faithfully, and under a clearly, God-given call!

\* \* \*

## 02 -- Using Flattering Titles

The opposite extreme -- that of using flattering titles for ministers -- is not a manifestation of carnal bitterness, but often it is a sweet-sounding, yet sickening display of carnal pride. Sometimes flattering titles are flaunted by ministers themselves in order to inflate their pompous egos. Again, flattering titles are sometimes used in reference to other ministers by sychophantic, apple-polishing, and boot-licking place-seekers who hope to climb the ecclesiastical ladder by using those designations.

But the fact is, God hates the display of both disrespect and human exaltation in reference to the ministry. When Job 32:21-22 records: "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," -- can we not see in these verses that while God does not

condone the "disrespect of persons" to whom respect is due, neither does He approve of an undue amount of honor being shown toward any man -- even a minister.

In Acts 10:34, the apostle "Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." The Maker and Master of all does not show undue respect, favor, or honor to any, especially to those who consider themselves to be the elite, and who love to have flattering titles attached to themselves.

In Matthew 23:7-10, Christ roundly condemned those who loved pompous "greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 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."

The above scripture should show any Roman Catholic that the term "Holy Father" or "Father" given to their priests is a "flattering title" not approved by the Heavenly Father. But, throughout the centuries in professed Christendom many flattering titles have been attached to the clerics of many denominations -- pompous titles of which Christ disapproves.

I will not debate the use of the title "Reverend" -- but it is true that it is a term used only once in the KJV Bible and THAT in reference to GOD, not man:-- Psalms 111:9 -- "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and REVEREND is HIS NAME."

One time years ago when I was pastoring in Kirksville, Missouri an old tobacco-chewing fellow, who I think may have professed to be a Christian, quizzed me about whether I believed in being called "Rev-ner"? I think he should have been much more concerned about whether or not the use of tobacco was pleasing to God.

I read once of a man who asked, "Can you go to Heaven and chew [tobacco]?" He received the reply, in effect, that whatever the case about the "chewing" -- he would have to go to Hell to "spit"!

So, I think it likely that there ARE many more important things to consider than whether or not a preacher goes by the title "Rev-ner".

Still, I respect the persuasion of those ministers who feel that they should not attach this title to themselves, and I do not like to see extensions of that designation used: -- viz., The Right Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, The Most Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, The Holy Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, The Rev. Doctor \_\_\_\_\_, or even, The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_.

Frankly, I think it is a sad day in a denomination when the humble terms "Brother" and "Sister" are abandoned in favor of "Doctor" and "Mrs." -- or other such pompous designations.

Jealously, or hatefully, shot "put-downs" of ministers are never in order -- but there have been, and still are, numbers of clerics who need to have someone of something stick a pin in their inflated ego and deflate their pompous notions about themselves back down into the proper size.

Preacher, do you just "love" to attach "Dr." or "D.D." to your name? Do you flaunt it? or feel slighted if someone does not use it in addressing you? If so, you need some deflation! Here is a little ditty that might help you:

"There once was a preacher named "Tweedle"  
Who got his Doctor's Degree;  
'Twas bad enough being called "Tweedle,"  
But now he was "Tweedle, D.D."!

A proud young preacher ascended the platform, intent upon impressing the crowd with his oratory, but -- during the delivery of his polished sermon he "got into the brush" and greatly embarrassed himself. After the closing, he descended from the platform in a much more humble and humiliated posture.

A wise old saint approached him and said, "Son, if you had gone up into the pulpit the way you came down, you would have come down from the pulpit the way you went up!"

\* \* \*

### 03 -- The Conclusion

As in many other things, when it comes to "Not Showing Due Respect" -- on the one hand, or -- "Using Flattering Titles" on the other hand -- there is a legitimate medium between these two unBiblical extremes.

UnChristlike and unwarranted disrespect for preachers (or for anyone) is condemned by the Bible. But the Scriptures condemn with equal vigor the pride and egotism that is closely connected with "flattering titles" given to, and used by, many high-minded theologues.

In Romans 12:3, the apostle Paul wrote:-- "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

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### 13 -- TWO TYPES OF SILLY DOVES

Dated: April 9, 2003

Hosea 7:11 -- "Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria."

I would draw the reader's attention to two types of "silly doves":



\* \* \*

### First, POLITICAL "SILLY DOVES"

From the time the US began its ominous moves toward the removal of Iraq's demonized dictator, we have heard the outcries of "silly doves" in our nation -- people who want peace at any price -- even that of allowing this evil monster to remain in power and to continue slaughtering one and all in Iraq who dared question or challenge his authority.

POLITICAL SILLY DOVES ARE "WITHOUT HEART" -- BUT NOT "WITHOUT MOUTH"! -- while decrying the loss of life connected with removing this ugly cancer from the world, they say nothing about the millions who have been tortured and murdered by one who is obviously possessed of "many devils". These "silly doves" are "without heart" to stand against wrong -- they are gutless in defending liberty but gathered on streets and intersections to puke out their guts in nasty displays of their hatred for those who dare to defend it.

Someone has said that one thing worse than war is the philosophy that "nothing is worth fighting for" -- and such is the philosophy of many spoiled brats in America today who want all of our nation's freedoms with none of its responsibilities and sacrifices. But, a people who will "stand for nothing" will also "fall for anything" -- so long as they can continue in the mindless indulgence of their carnal passions and pleasures. These are they of whom President Dwight David Eisenhower warned when he said: "A people that values its Privileges above its Principles soon loses both!" Thank God, there are still millions in America who believe that "The price of Freedom is eternal vigilance" -- and, thousands of such are placing their lives on the line to end a reign of horror in Iraq -- one that has long threatened the entire world -- and, more than 100 of them from America alone (not to mention those from England) have given their lives to rid the earth of Saddam Hussein's evil regime and dark shadow.

Just days ago, liberal news reporters were saying: "Where are all of those Iraqi citizens who were supposed to greet the Coalition Forces with cheers?!" -- They were there all the time -- but feared to speak out lest they have their tongues cut out, lest they be fiendishly tortured, lest their loved ones be murdered, and lest they themselves be slaughtered. Today, numbers of freed Iraqis ARE cheering loudly as they see Hussein's fiendish regime crumbling -- some today cheered as a 40-foot tall bronze statue of this brutal tyrant was pulled down in the center of Baghdad -- and they pounded the image with sledges and shoes as well as danced in jubilation on the fallen image. Then, they beheaded the image and drug it down the street.

Let me now ask: "WHERE ARE THE SILLY DOVES WHO INSINUATED THAT SUCH JUBILATION WAS NOT FORTHCOMING?" Where are those "without heart" to stand against Hussein's evil? Increasingly, they now seem to be "without mouth" -- and speechless as the tyrannized but now freed Iraqis rejoice. Their silence is long overdue. Still, these heartless but mouthy and "silly doves" have already begun loudly asserting that the United Nations should or "MUST" set up the new government in Iraq -- something that would cause the US to "lose the peace" after "winning the war". May God forbid!

The "silly doves" of our text were those who would turn to wicked nations to deliver them -- turn to anyone but the Almighty who might protect them from having to risk their own lives in battle. But, a peace that is obtained by selling out to evil soon becomes the peace of servitude and bondage -- the ultimate fate of all who are too cowardly to stand against wrong and for right.

Patrick Henry once said: "Is life so dear and peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH!" -- In sad contrast, the cry of today's "silly doves" equates to this: "SAVE ME AND ALL OTHERS FROM DEATH, EVEN IF IT COSTS US ALL OUR LIBERTY!" No, they do not see it as such, but THAT is the inevitable result of their misguided peace-nic philosophy.

\* \* \*

## Second, SPIRITUAL "SILLY DOVES"

Since moving into our ground-floor apartment #1145 at 3830 Lakewood Parkway East in Phoenix, wife and I have fed the birds right outside the window to the left of my computer. We have both enjoyed watching them -- most of them being Great-Tailed Grackles, Doves, and Sparrows. BUT... I HAVE BEEN BOTH DISILLUSIONED AND DISAPPOINTED BY THE BEHAVIOR OF THE "SILLY DOVES"!

Why? -- Let me explain: -- When a new and ample supply of feed has been thrown out, sometimes the Great-Tailed Grackles do a bit of fighting among themselves for the feed; seldom, but occasionally several sparrows may spar a bit for the feed; but -- ALMOST ALWAYS I SEE "SILLY DOVES" FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES FOR THE FEED! -- and -- it is mostly when the feed is there in abundance. When the feed has been eaten down to the point that the doves must hunt and peck to find a bird-seed, they stop fighting and will all feed in peace.

Strange? Is it not? When there is plenty for all, they will run at one another pecking aggressively, fly at one another with claws ready to dig, and pull out one another's feathers! Plenty there for them all -- but many of them will spend much of their time running others away from this abundance of bird-seed! Meantime, I will see the sparrows feeding away while the "silly doves" are "fighting away" over who gets to feed!

I have thus become disillusioned about the nature of doves -- I thought they were all loving, harmless, peaceful and cooing -- but the "silly doves" outside my window are the most comrade-combative birds I have ever seen!

Is there not a sermon here? -- viz., -- When God's people, like these doves, have little, when they have to peck and scratch to make ends meet, when they MUST work to survive, they get along together more harmoniously than when they have plenty.

One might think that the doves outside my window would feed most harmoniously when there was more than enough for all -- and -- one might think that there would be the most harmony in the Church of God when all have an abundance with plenty to spare.

Alas! -- it is just the opposite! -- The more these "silly doves" outside my window have, the more they fight among themselves!

I have told Dorothea: "I'm tired of seeing it." For a week or so, we did not buy and throw out any more bird-seed. A couple of days ago, Dot bought more and threw it out -- same thing. Several glances out my window just a bit ago revealed that same selfish and aggressive nature among the doves -- while the sparrows feed in harmony!

I wonder? Could it be that one reason why God keeps His true spiritual "doves" poor and scratching, making them work hard for their needs, is: -- if they had much abundance, they would become feuding and combative, "silly doves" -- completely opposite from the nature of the Holy Spirit Who is symbolized as the "Dove of Peace"? Selah.

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#### 14 -- CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES

Adapted By Duane V. Maxey

From the Poem by John McCutcheon

On December 6, 2002

In Phoenix, Arizona

Here is a poem that will cause the reader to pause and think -- especially in light of the situation in our world at this very hour, and in light of Christ's Second Coming. While I have stayed with the basic message of the poem, I have de-secularized and Christianized it, by making some alterations throughout the poem, and by composing and adding the final four lines myself. The original poem was far from perfect in its meter and flow, and it is still thus imperfect, but I think that it is profound enough to grasp your attention, and to make you think.-- DVM

My name is Francis Tolliver, I come from Liverpool.  
Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.  
To Belgium and to Flanders, then to Germany and here,  
I fought for King and country that I love so very dear.

'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter hung,  
The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas song was sung.  
Our families back in England were remembering us that day  
Their brave and glorious lads upon the fields so far away.

I was lying with my messmate on the cold and rocky ground,  
When across the lines of battle came a most peculiar sound;  
Says I, "Now listen up, me boys!" -- each soldier strained to hear  
As one young German sang aloud a melody so clear.

"He's singing very well, you know!" my partner says to me;  
Soon, one by one, each German voice was joined in harmony;

The cannons rested silent, and the gas clouds rolled no more,  
As Christmas brought us respite from the battle of the war.

As soon as they were finished and a reverent pause was spent,  
"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" struck up some lads from Kent.  
The next they sang was "Stille Nacht." "Tis 'Silent Night'," says I  
And in two tongues one song was heard ascending to sky.

"There's someone coming toward us!" the front line sentry cried;  
All sights were fixed on one long figure trudging from their side;  
His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shown on that plain so bright  
As thus he, bravely, calmly, strode unarmed into the night.

Soon one by one on either side we grouped in "No Man's Land,"  
With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand.  
We shared some sweets and candy and we wished each other well,  
And in a flare-lit battlefield our hearts with love did swell.

We traded chocolates, sandwiches, and photographs from home--  
These sons and fathers far away from families of their own.  
Young Sanders played his squeeze-box and they had a violin;  
On Christmas Night we played and sang -- this curious band of men.

Soon daylight stole upon us and France was France once more;  
With sad farewells we each prepared to settle back to war.  
But the question haunted every heart ere since that wonderous night:  
"Whose family, in this battle, have I fixed within my sight?"

'Twas Christmas in the trenches where the frost, so bitter hung;  
The frozen fields of France were warmed as songs of peace were sung,  
For the walls they'd kept between us to exact the work of war  
Had been crumbled, and by Jesus' Love were gone forevermore.

My name is Francis Tolliver, in Liverpool I dwell;  
Each Christmas come since World War I, I see its lesson well:  
The ones who call the shots won't be among the dead and lame,  
And behind opposing rifles many soldiers are the same.

All the world is groaning, crying, for that DAY OF SWEET RELEASE,  
When all war shall end and Christ descend with Everlasting Peace!  
And as Christmas-time approaches once again, as every year,  
We are closer to that Advent, and HIS COMING DRAWETH NEAR.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE END