

(Continued from the front page)

7. He must not expect his children to be good because they are the preacher's children or because the brethren expect them to be good. They are to be good, because God wants them so to be.
8. He must not expect them to not make mistakes. They will. Not only will they make mistakes, he will, also.
9. He must not feel that it is no one's business what his children do. Godly parents welcome the spiritual interest of the spiritually minded. Busybodies are a different matter.
10. He must not believe that children have to sow their wild oats. Too many have sown wild oats and prayed for (or, hoped for) a crop failure. It doesn't work that way.
11. He must not think that his children must have the best of everything or everything he did not have. Remember what kind of clothing John the Baptist wore? Did Jesus wear scarlet robes? Only when they mocked him (Mt. 27:28-31).

"We have heard...O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them" (Ps. 44:1-3). The Psalmist shows the importance of fathers telling children about the mighty works of God.

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The Preacher's Attitude Toward His Children

"...Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward..."
(Ps. 127:3).

People assume great responsibility when they bring children into the world. This is no less true of a gospel preacher. What attitudes should he manifest toward his children?

1. The preacher, like every good father, should let his children hear him read God's word and pray to God every day. Children learn to sit quietly as they have lasting impressions made which help mold their lives. Young preacher, be careful how you deal with this privilege. When your children are a year old is not too early to begin.
2. He should expect obedience. With good reason God has required children to be obedient (Eph. 6:1-3). If obedience is not expected, it most likely will not be forthcoming.
3. He should restrain his children when they are disobedient. It was Eli who did not restrain his wicked sons (I Sam. 3:13). For this reason God was not pleased with him.
4. He should let his children see him love God, the church, the elders, deacons, teachers, and saints. If he does not manifest the proper spirit toward his fellow Christian, how will his children learn to love them? These things they will see as they attend each worship service and as they see him conduct himself with others. Their ears should never hear him gossip or backbite. Young preacher, you must control your tongue. Just because you know something, being the preacher does not give you the right to repeat it.
5. He should help them get their Bible lessons. While this is a refresher course for himself, it lets him give them a proper foundation in The Book. Of course, he should not let this be the only instruction they get. During summer break from school, one preacher took his family to the church building one morning a week for Bible study. During these periods, the family did extensive studying about the church: organization, work, worship, the relationship of one church to another, etc.
6. As the children grow, he must use wisdom in helping set his children's relationship to their peers, school, TV, computers, cars, work, and dating, always concerned with protecting their minds from corrupting influences.

(Continued on page 8)

Jesus' blessing pronounced upon the meek is that "they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5). On the face of it this might appear to be a rather weak blessing, but there is more here than we may first realize. Peddlers of the Watchtower Society's false doctrines point to this promise as an indication of a material inheritance on an everlasting earth, but a study of the expression "inherit the earth" refutes that argument.

The words and phrases of a language have a cultural heritage, and often it is necessary to consider that heritage in order to understand an expression. A key to understanding Christ's third beatitude is the fact that it is stated in the thirty-seventh Psalm: "But the meek shall inherit the earth..." (Psalm 37:11). In fact, a cursory reading of this psalm reveals numerous references to inheriting the earth or land. ("Earth" and "land" are translated from the same Hebrew word in the Old Testament and from the same Greek word in the New Testament, thus the two expressions are equivalent.) What did the psalmist mean by it?

Psalm 37 contrasts the nature and security of the wicked with those of the righteous. Some men devise wicked schemes, and seem to prosper in them (verse 7). They plot against the just, cast down the poor, and slay the upright (12, 13). They borrow and do not repay (21). On the other hand, the righteous trust in the Lord and do good (3), mercifully give when none is owed (21), and have God's law in their hearts (31). Regarding security, the wicked have none; they shall be cut down (2), cut off (9), and shall vanish away (20).

The repeated promise to the just in the psalm is that they shall "inherit the earth" or "inherit the land." (9, 11, 22, 29). In Hebrew culture, inheriting the land was a particularly precious blessing. Speaking of Canaan, God promised Abraham that He would give him "this land to inherit it." (Genesis 15:7). He led Abraham's descendants from bondage in Egypt to that land of promise and gave it to them as an inheritance. (Exodus 32:13). Faithful service to Him would bring blessings of all kinds, including dwelling in the land; but among the many curses for departing from God would be removal to foreign lands. (Deut. 28:11, 36, 68).

Inheriting the land thus came to symbolize the sum of all of God's blessings. Such usage appears in Psalm 25:13; Proverbs 2:21, 22; Isaiah 57:13; and Isaiah 60:21. This latter passage foretold the blessedness of life in messianic times: "Also your people shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified."

When Christ told His Jewish audience on the mount that the meek shall inherit the earth, it was no small promise of mere earthly existence, but a statement that the righteous will have the greatest of all of God's blessings as citizens in the messianic kingdom. As descendants of Abraham and students of the Old Testament, the hearers understood the cultural heritage of the expression "inherit the earth." This earth shall not last (2 Peter 3:10); but God's kingdom shall (Hebrews 12:28).

Some answer, Yes. From Luther's Small Catechism, p. 87, question 94: "What is original sin? Original sin (inherited sin) is the total corruption of our whole human nature." From The Baptist Manual by Hiscox, p. 60, "We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation, without defense or excuse."

"...I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). Does this passage teach total depravity? No! It may mean that he was born into a world where sin is committed just as some are said to "hear...every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born" (Acts 2:8). They were born where a certain language was spoken. The Psalmist was born where sin was committed. Some think the passage speaks of a sin committed by his parents. One thing is certain, the Psalmist did not speak of inheriting sin. Consider Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son...."

What about Paul's statement that "...by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." (Rom. 5:19)? Does that mean we were born in sin because of Adam's transgression? No, for the rest of the statement is "...so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." If men are made sinners unconditionally because of Adam's sin, then all men would be made righteous unconditionally because of Christ's death. That would mean universal sin and universal salvation -- UNCONDITIONALLY.

"...as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). The death spoken of would have to be spiritual death for all men die physically because of Adam's sin (I Cor. 15:22). Notice how spiritual death comes on all men: "...for that all have sinned." Reminds you of Ezekiel's words doesn't it? "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.." (Ez.18:20).

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). If the death in this passage were spiritual death, then the making alive would also be spiritual. Again, you would have universal sin and universal salvation -- unconditionally. The NT does not teach unconditional, universal salvation. In Mt. 7:13,14, Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hb. 5:9).

No! Men are not born totally depraved. (Dyersburg Pathfinder, 12-15-96, Adapted) --
GM

Issues Among Brethren
ARE THERE CHRISTIANS IN EVERY CHURCH?

Many today defend such a position. As one well-known preacher put it, "There are sincere, knowledgeable, and devout Christians scattered among the different denominations." But, is such an idea as this taught in the word of God? As we search the Bible for the correct answer, there are two questions that must be dealt with.

First, how does one become a Christian? Or, what does the lost sinner need to do, if anything, to have his sins forgiven? It's important that we find the correct answer to these questions from the Bible because all who claim to be Christians are not Christians in the sight of God. Jesus dealt with this problem when He plainly asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Lk.6:46. He was just as plain and emphatic when He taught, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," Mt.7:21. In light of these two verses one would have to close his eyes to God's truth to fail to see that one must obey the Lord if he is to have his sins forgiven, if he is to become a Christian. It's impossible to become a follower of Christ(Christian)without full, whole-hearted obedience to every command Jesus gives to be obeyed for the remission of sins. What does He require? Hear ye Him! (1) Faith. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," Jn.8:24. (2) Repentance. "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Lk.13:3. (3) Confession. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven," Mt.10:32. (4) Baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mk.16:16. A careful study of the book of Acts confirms the truth that all men who became Christians were told to believe in Christ, repent of sins, confess Christ and be baptized for the remission of sins. Inspired teachers taught this plan of salvation. Regardless of claims otherwise, no one becomes a Christian until he obeys this form of doctrine from the heart, Rom.6:17.

The second question to be answered is, "In which church can Christians be found?" Again, the correct answer will be found in the Bible. As we read from Acts 2:47, we are told the Lord adds the saved to the church. Notice, it is the Lord Himself Who adds the saved to the church. Men are not permitted to "join the church of their choice." Notice, too, that the Lord adds the saved to "the church." In the first century there was but one church. All Christians were members of that one church. It included all the apostles, all the inspired writers of the books of the New Testament and all who became Christians by obedience to the gospel of Christ. God's plan includes but one church for the saved, Eph.4:4; Eph.1:22-

23. This is the one church which the Lord will save, Eph.5:23.If one is not a faithful member of this church, he will be lost forever! 1 Cor.15:24

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First Principles

THE GOD WHO IS, REWARDS

Both warning them against discarding their faith in Christ and encouraging the Hebrew saints forward in steadfastness, the apostle affirmed that "The just shall live by faith" and that one may "believe to the saving of the soul", while God has no pleasure in one who draws back (Heb. 10:38-29). Faithfulness should be encouraged when one realizes that the God who IS is a REWARDER of those who diligently seek Him (11:6). Evidence abounds that He IS (being dealt with by another writer for this journal), and the inspired author offers testimony that He REWARDS.

Hebrews 11 has been called "the hall of fame of the Scriptures." This chapter recalls a host of diligently seeking believers who took God at His word when there was nothing to cling to but His promise. That faith in a God who is able to reward those who seek after Him is shown to be a worthy operative principle of life; for such a faith gives substance to the object of one's hope and conviction or assurance of things one cannot see. The writer's declaration that "God is a rewarder" flows naturally from what he had just avowed concerning Abel and Enoch. Abel had witness that he was righteous, God, in some manner, having testified to Abel's gifts; and Enoch, due to his faith, prior to his translation, had testimony that "he should not see death."

Allowing these to serve as the foundation for his affirmation that God is a REWARDER of the diligent seeker, the apostle recounts the faith of many in "the hall of fame" who looked to the reward. In a world completely engrossed in corruption, when Noah's faith moved him to prepare the ark as per God's direction, it redounded to the saving of his house (v. 7). Moving successively through Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, the scribe of this Hebrew letter compounds the evidence that God is a REWARDER of faith (vs. 8-29). Space not permitting biographical sketches of others to whom he wanted to call attention, the writer hastily enumerates the many and varied accomplishments of these great characters who were "diligent seekers" after God, all of whom obtained a good testimony through faith (vs. 30-38).

Now, dear reader, we turn our attention to you to inquire whether you "believe that God is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"? Those Old Testament saints peered, in faith, through the long ages to the fulfillment of a promise into the benefits

of which you and I have access (Heb. 11:39-40), benefits and blessings that accrue only to those in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26-28). Are you IN CHRIST?

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Personal Work

We should be personal workers because we love the souls of men. The mission of Christians is to save souls. We were saved to save others. Dear brother or sister how many souls have you saved? Are you interested in other people? Have you invited non-members into your home for a Bible study? Urge your friends and neighbors to attend service with you. Offer to come by let them ride with you. We need to be gentle but aggressive with the gospel. Every responsible person who has not obeyed the gospel is lost.

I believe one problem we have in the church with unfaithful members is just letting them go. When some one is absent from worship do you go by or call and see why they did not attend? It seems that most members leave that up to some one else. We all have a responsibility to each member. Paul said in Galatians 6:1 : "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." This does not say the preacher or elders are to restore such a one. This is addressed to everyone that is faithful. The member that is unfaithful, may not know any better. If so we need to teach them. They may be sick or be tending to sick folks. If so we need to help them. We may need to cook some food and take to them or go by and clean up their house and wash dishes or clothes for them. Whatever the need (physical or spiritual) we need to do what we can to help them. If it is spiritual they need to be taught the truth so their soul can be saved. They may just need encouragement. If every member would call or go by every time some one misses worship, it certainly would let them know that you care. But, we don't usually call or go by. We say they know where the building is and they know that they should be here. So, we just let them drift back into the world and lose their soul.

Brethren, how can we say we are faithful when we don't do the things we should. It takes more than just being faithful in attendance to be a faithful Christian. The soul on any individual is worth more than all this world. Dear brother or sister, you will outlive in eternity all who shall ever live upon this earth from Adam until the end of time. That one soul that you can change from darkness to light may well mean a thousand souls will go to heaven and escape the horrors of a devil's hell. Are you a personal worker in the Vineyard of the Lord? Why not start today and you will have more joy than you ever realized.

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Evidence EVIDENCE TO BE AN EVANGELIST

I've been asked to write twelve articles for THE STRAIT WAY using the theme of evidence. This writing seeks evidence for a man to consider in the decision to preach the gospel, to be an evangelist. This publication is designed to encourage those who are or would be gospel preachers. All men are not expected to preach. An old song says that "there is work for every Christian in the vineyard of the Lord. This discussion is not meant to detract from the truth that saints of all ages, male or female have important roles. We address young men, but men of mature years may well be pondering the decision to preach.

Firstly, is preaching simply an option, a choice among several? If so the evidence is clearly against preaching. Paul's charge in 2 Timothy 4:1-2 is that the word should be preached regardless of reception. Reproof and rebuke are required in preaching. A simple option will not furnish the determination of a clearly made choice. Jeremiah 20:9 discovers the word filling the prophet's heart like "a burning fire shut up in my bones," so much that he could not endure it! He HAD to preach. Preachers partially paid are not. "part-time" preachers. Preachers must preach. There will be discouraging times.

This raises a second point of inquiry. Can I work alone? Will I be able to deal only with the word regardless of how it is received? Only experience will tell, but we know something of ourselves. 1 Timothy 4:1 indicates some will receive preaching and later reject it for something more attractive. This rejection will likely include the preacher.

Finally am I willing to give the time needed for study? Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:15 concerning giving diligence (KJV study) to properly understand and apply the scriptures. A personal view is offered here. The preacher who feels he has studied enough has the wrong feeling. This security the gospel preacher must avoid. Still one must feel secure in his preaching, Paul knew, was sure of, what he believed according to 2 Timothy 1:12.

Older preachers are concerned about the younger generation, and properly so. We were once young. I've met young men whose conservative thinking is like that of yesterday's preachers. Each man must make his own decision to preach. 2 Corinthians 13:5 and James 1:25 require self evaluation. Counsel is helpful but only evidence convincing to the decision maker will be valid. The decision to preach should be made prayerfully..

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