

Milk & Honey

Vol. XXX April 2016 No. 4

Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

Separated Christians

Donald G. Barnhouse

What is the practical difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? How would a distant observer, regarding the American scene objectively, distinguish between those who are Christians and those who are not?

I was dining with a gentleman whose parents had been born in Scandinavia, and who had come to this country in their late youth. The son had been born in this country and had been brought up in the home environment of very strict and rugged simplicity that marks so many of the Protestant homes of northern emigrants. My friend remarked that such an atmosphere seemed to be lacking in what might be called typical American homes. He had recently been the guest in a home whose members attend church at least two or three times in a month. It is even possible that there was the brief prayer asking God's blessing on the meal that was eaten together. But the conversation, the outlook, the whole atmosphere in the home seemed to be utterly foreign to what he thought the tone of a Christian home should be. The conversation was all of worldly things. The young people in the home talked only of interests that were outside the sphere of Christian life and living. One could detect, in an evening's conversation, social ambition and desire to consider and exalt friendships with those who were marked by the amount of their possessions or by their family connections; but there was no spiritual word spoken, no evidence of any spiritual thought. Yet any one of these people would be shocked, probably, if he were told that his life and living were far from that which is the ideal for a Christian life. Also, these people would be amazed were they informed that any one would consider all that they were doing to be barren and sterile. Their moral tone and standard in their community is beyond reproach. But their lives are affected with pernicious spiritual anemia. They are not getting out of life all that it is possible for them to have.

How should a Christian live? What should be the things which characterize a Christian home and differentiate a believer from those who have not believed in Christ as Savior? The answer must be a positive answer and not a negative one. There are some people who have an entirely wrong idea about the main factors in Christian living. They think

of a Christian as one who does not do this, that or the other thing. The ideal Christian life must be marked by a positive state of mind and by a positive state of action. There can be no true Christian life without a positive faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

The positive assignment for the Christian has been very clearly given. It is this that should mark the believer in his daily life. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22,23). We do not need to emphasize the necessity for the presence of these gifts in the lives of followers of Christ in these trying days through which the world passes. The world is quick to recognize the true love of Christ, and we who have Him must not fail to let the world see in us that love for which it is starving without knowing it.

Just as there can be no normal, healthy life without the proper kind of food, so there can be no normal, spiritual growth without the food that God has ordained as the nourishment of the new life. "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). If the Bible is not the center of the home, the home cannot be called a true Christian home, even though all the members of the household are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. There is no spiritual life apart from the Bible, and the tragedy of the American home today is that so many people have abandoned the Book as the source of life and as the center of living.

There are certain, definite practices from which the Christian must abstain. I do not believe in giving a list of things that the Christian must not do. Those things which are expressly forbidden in the Bible are things that we must throw aside in our lives. All other choices must be determined in the light of the principles which are laid down by our God. We must not forget that the Bible is not a set of rules. It is a Book of principles. There are thousands of things in this modern, complex civilization of ours that are not mentioned in the Bible. But there is enough given to us in its pages to illuminate every choice that we shall ever be called upon to make.

Frequently, I have questions put to me by young Christians concerning modern practices which are not touched upon in the Word of God. They want to know if it be proper for them as Christians to dance, play cards, go to the the-

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The Bunker

Steve Hulshizer

There it sits, right in the middle of the beach. Sunbathers pay no attention to it. Few ponder why it sits so high above the beach on a number of telephone-pole-size pilings which are starting to twist under the massive weight of its seven foot thick concrete walls.

The bunker was built on the Cape May beach at the southern tip of New Jersey in 1942 when German submarines were menacing the east coast of the United States. When it was built it was nine hundred feet back from the water's edge, and level to the then existing beach. The large piers were driven into the sand to provide stability, but were never meant to support the entire weight of the massive structure.

Over the years the beach has eroded, leaving the massive bunker sitting on the piers well above the current beach. One can imagine the shock its original designers and occupants would suffer if they would visit it today. Only a small sign, which provides a drawing of its original design, explains how it came to be sitting so high above the beach.

As I pondered this strange sight I could not help but think of many local assemblies of the Lord's people. Built on solid spiritual foundations many years ago, and yet today so weak and teetering.

Like the bunker, many assemblies have seen erosion of their foundation. The fundamental truths of the Scriptures concerning the Person and work of Christ, God's "great salvation," the local assembly, the priesthood of all believers, the dispensations, and the heavenly hope of the church have been allowed to go untaught for years. Teaching on sanctification has been replaced by the belief that grace frees us from the "traditions" of the past. This has led to a casual approach to life and to the operation of the assembly. The assembly and the saints no longer endure sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3), but seek the softer sound of psychology and social, rather than spiritual, gatherings. As a result the following generations have no understanding of the foundational truths laid years before. (Heb. 2:1)

Now the sand of relevant sermons, music, social programs, and psychology has washed away, leaving them with no solid foundation. Just as the beach slowly eroded over nine hundred feet from its 1942 position, no doubt unnoticed on a daily basis, many assemblies have slowly experienced erosion of their foundations.

In light of the fact that the winds of enlightenment and change have eroded the foundation, simply put, we need to build it again. (Isa. 28:16) We need to get back to the Word of God and to regularly teaching the foundational truths. May the Lord give us the strength and courage to do so. (Matt.7:24) *

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the movies, smoke, drink, and a quantity of other things. My answer is always the same. I refuse to answer such questions. I am not to take the place of the conscience of the Christian. God has told us that all things are to be decided in our lives as under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Everything that you do is the fruit of the old nature of sin, or it is the fruit of the indwelling Christ. I know what occurred in my life when I put these things before my Lord for decision. I took one of these matters to God and asked Him to show me His will. When I understood from His Word that the source of action in my life was either the old nature of sin that was responsible for crucifying Christ, or else it was the new nature, led by the Spirit; I decided that Christ was to have the mastery within my life. There are thousands of people who are really Christians, who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, and yet they have never taken Jesus Christ as Lord. The question that you have to settle as a Christian is not, "Should a Christian do this, or that thing, follow this or that course of action?", but rather, "Is Jesus Christ to run my life or am I to run it myself?" If He is not Lord of all,

A Wake Up Call

William Newell

...now it is high time to awake out of sleep; (Rom. 13:11) There their Messiah was, in their midst, and they knew Him not! Why? Because they did not apply themselves to know the time they were in, although they could have known it, both from the prophetic Word which was being fulfilled before their eyes in Christ; and also "of their own selves," if they had set themselves to judge truly of the moral conditions about them and the necessities of action involved therein. If the Jews even then were called by our Lord "hypocrites." for applying their God-given discernment to the signs of the weather, and neglecting to apply it to spiritual things, and so going on blindly to judgment; how much more this should arouse us who have so much greater light and knowledge, in view of Christ's death and resurrection, and the presence of the Holy Spirit; and the certainty of our Lord's coming, and our uncertainty as to the day and hour!

Milk & Honey Information

There is no charge for Milk & Honey. It, like all ministries of Spread The Word, is supported entirely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. All gifts are tax deductible.

Publisher: **Spread The Word, Inc.**
2400 Admire Springs Dr.
Dover, PA 17315

Editor: Stephen Hulshizer
Fax/Phone (717) 467-5729 phone/fax
Web/Contact www.FoodForSaints.com
Circulation 5,600/month

Outside The Ark

C. H. Mackintosh

Let us now glance at the condition of those to whom Noah had preached righteousness. Let us now look at the lost....at those without. No doubt, many an anxious look would be cast after the vessel of mercy, as it rose with the water; but, alas! "the door was shut" - the day of grace was over - the time of testimony closed, and that forever, so far as they were concerned. The same hand which had shut Noah in had shut them out, and it was as impossible for those without to get in as it was for those within to get out. The former were irrecoverably lost; the latter, effectually saved. The longsuffering of God, and the testimony of His servant, had both been slighted. Present things had engrossed them. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." (Luke 17:26,27) There was nothing wrong in any of these things, abstractedly looked at. The wrong was not in the things done, but in the doers of them. Everyone of them might be done in the fear of the Lord, and to the glory of His holy name, were they only done in faith. But, alas! they were not so done. The Word of God was rejected. He told of judgment, but they did not believe; He spoke of sin and ruin, but they were not convinced; He spoke of a remedy, but they would not give heed. They went on with their own plans and speculations, and had no room for God. They acted as if the earth belonged to them, by a lease, forever. They forgot that there was a clause of surrender. They thought not of that solemn "UNTIL." God was shut out. "Every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually," and hence, they could do nothing right. They thought, spake and acted for themselves. They did their own pleasure, and forgot God.

And, my reader, remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." Some would have us to believe, that ere the Son of Man appears in the clouds of heaven, this earth shall be covered, from pole to pole, with a fair mantle of righteousness. They would teach us to look for a reign of righteousness and peace, as the result of agencies now in operation; but the brief passage just quoted cuts up by the roots, in a moment, all such vain and delusive expectations. How was it in the days of Noah? Did righteousness cover the earth as the waters cover the sea? - was God's truth dominant? - was the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord? Scripture replies, "The earth was filled with violence." "All flesh had corrupted His way on the earth." "The earth also was corrupt before God." Well, then, "so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." This is

plain enough. "Righteousness" and "violence" are not very much like each other; neither is there any similarity between universal wickedness and universal peace. It only needs a heart subject to the Word, and freed from the influence of preconceived opinions, in order to understand the true character of the days immediately preceding "the coming of the Son of Man." Let not my reader be led astray. Let him reverently bow to Scripture. Let him look at the condition of the world "in the days before the flood"; and let him bear in mind, that "as" it was then, "so" shall it be at the close of this present period. This is most simple - most conclusive. There was nothing like a state of universal righteousness and peace then, neither shall there be anything like it by and by.

No doubt, man displayed abundant energy in making the world a comfortable and an agreeable place for himself; but that was a very different thing from making it a suitable place for God. So, also, at this present time; man is as busy as he can be in clearing the stones off the pathway of human life, and making it as smooth as possible; but this is not "making straight in the desert a highway for our God"; nor is it making "the rough places smooth" that all flesh may see the salvation of Jehovah. Civilization prevails; but civilization is not righteousness. The sweeping and garnishing are going forward; but it is not in order to fit the house for Christ, but for Antichrist. The wisdom of man is put forth to cover, with the folds of his own drapery, the blots and blemishes of humanity; but, though covered, they are not removed! - they are underneath, and will, ere long, break out in more hideous deformity than ever. The painting of vermilion will soon be obliterated, and the carved cedar wood destroyed. The dams by which man sedulously seeks to stem the torrent of human wretchedness must soon give way before the overwhelming force thereof. All the efforts to confine the physical, the mental, and the moral degradation of Adam's posterity within those inclosures which human benevolence, if you please, has devised, must, in the sequel, prove abortive. The testimony has gone forth, - "The end of all flesh has come before Me." *

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FoodForSaints.com

April 2016

Two Spiritual Attitudes

August Van Ryn

This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?"
John 21:19-20

It appears to me that, in this incident, we have two kinds of spiritual attitudes illustrated. Simon Peter was told to follow the Lord; John followed without being told. How often a similar effect is seen in Christian experience.

Alas, there are believers who always seem to be like Simon Peter here. They never do anything of their own accord; they always have to be urged, encouraged, waited on, nurse-maided. This should not be so, for everyone who knows and loves the Lord has the invisible urge within to spur on in Christian living and Christian service, for "the love of Christ constraineth us henceforth not to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who dies for us and rose again."

But yet, there are believers who sulk when not asked or recognized; who seldom or never do anything on their own initiative. At times all of us need to be ashamed of our spiritual sleepiness.

Some years ago, my wife said to me, "August, don't you get weary sometimes? You preach to the Lord's people; you seek to stir their hearts' affection for Christ; you weep for them or thunder at them, and yet you see so little in the way of results."



"Yes, that's true," said I after a pause for reflection. "But I guess I operate pretty much the same as you do. You sweep the house, dust the furniture, wash the dishes and make the beds every day, and I don't see much in the way of results there, either. Now, just don't do the housekeeping for a month, and then you'll see results. So, said, I, "I'll keep on ministering to the saints (myself included), and if I can only do my share to keep them from getting worse, I will be very successful, for that's all that you accomplish at home."



Yes, my fellows brothers and sisters, it seems we need exhorting all the time; we're just failing humans at the best. If you are like John in our text, following without being told, I congratulate you. May the Lord bless you abundantly, and may you turn many a halting Peter into a fiery, fruitful follower of the Lord.

The secret for earnest devotion to Christ is found in that five-times repeated statement concerning the apostle John as recorded in his Gospel, when he speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." A deep appreciation of the love of Christ to me will make the power of the love of Christ in a mighty constraining force for good and restraining power from evil. *

York Bible Study Program

April 9	Mark Shelley	1 Peter
May 14	Craig Shakarji	2 Thessalonians
10 AM - 3PM, Lunch served		

**Lord willing the study with start again on
September 10th.**