

Index of Articles:	Page
<b>A Cry for Preservation</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Shepherds of the Sheep, pt. 1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Wonder of the Book, pt. 2</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Turning from God to Man, pt. 2</b>	<b>9</b>

## A Cry for Preservation

Murray Pratt

Christians learn very early in their Christian life that we continually need the preserving hand of God upon us, and must utilize the supply of all that He has ministered to us so that we might be preserved from sin. As we consider this subject briefly, we consider the teaching of the following verses that have to do with our need for constant preservation:

1. Psalm 16:1 "Preserve me, O God: For in thee do I put my trust."
2. Psalm 17:8,9 "Keep me as the apple of the eye, Hide me under the shadow of thy wings, From the wicked that oppress me, From my deadly enemies, who compass me about."
3. Psalm 86:2 "Preserve my soul: for I am holy (gracious; a subject of grace): O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee."
4. John 17:11 "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be as one, as we are."
5. 1 Thessalonians 5:13 "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole, spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

These verses, and others, show us that our need for Divine protection is real and that those of the Old and New Testament realized this great need. We live in an environment that is dominated by spiritual foes that are determined to attack anything that is of God or for His honor.

We learn from the Scriptures that we have

three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil, and it is because of these enemies that we have a great need for preservation! John tells us to "love not the world" (1 John 2:15): "the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever".

Peter warns us about our adversary the devil: "whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Peter 5:8,9). And James says: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." (James 4:7)

## The Sinful Flesh Within Us

No doubt all will agree that our greatest enemy is our sinful flesh within us! While the world system and the devil work actively to cause harm to a believer, the sins of the flesh that constantly affect us are the main influences against which we need constant preservation.

The majority of the epistles of the New Testament refer to various lists of sins of the flesh. Link these with some besetting sins in the lives of some in the Old Testament, including David, and we can understand why he prayed in Psalm 86:2 for the preservation of his soul, acknowledging that he was holy, or a subject of grace. In like manner, we must earnestly pray that we be preserved from a vast array of sins. These sins of the flesh include:

a) **adultery, fornication**--David experienced its bitter fruit

All issues of "Truths for our Day" are available by clicking on the link below. This will take you to the index:

[Truths For Our Day](#)

We encourage you to reprint any issue of "Truths for our Day" that you desire, either for yourself or to pass on to other believers. Nothing is copyrighted, but we do request that you copy the entirety of the articles and reprint them as they have appeared for accuracy, and that you give recognition to the author of each article.

We also hope you will let others know about "Truths for our Day" and encourage them to subscribe as well. They can do so by simply sending an e-mail to [truthsforourday@gmail.com](mailto:truthsforourday@gmail.com) Thank you!

b) **covetousness**--Achan rested his eyes on gold that wasn't his; David coveted another man's wife.

c) **theft**--"then Achan took it", and as a result, faced the judging hand of God upon him and his family.

d) **drunkenness** when in trouble, some turn to alcohol to relieve the pain, but they only receive more! How sad when some Christians advocate 'social drinking'!

e) **evil speaking**--which can lead to railing, even as Miriam learned the results of evil speaking, being shut out of the camp for 7 days

f) **malice**--an evil, vicious attitude toward others. Paul says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31)

g) **guile, deceit, lying** Ananias & Sapphira acted dishonestly, and paid dearly for their sin!

h) **hypocrisy** The Pharisees were called 'hypocrites' by the Lord Jesus. This sin causes much distress in any assembly.

i) **envy, jealousy** King Saul was jealous of David, and the jealousy consumed him to the point where he hunted David as a partridge

j) **pride** Absalom was proud of his appearance and his charisma with the people but it led to his eventual death.

k) **strife, division** Paul warned the Corinthians about pride, strife and division; he told the Galatians that if they continued to bite and devour one another that we would eventually consume one another!

### What will Preserve Us?

What will preserve us from the sins of the flesh? The first thing to notice is in Galatians 5:22, 23. It is the **power of the Holy Spirit** freely working in the individual believer. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance". It is a great encouragement to every believer to know that it is God's purpose to preserve His people from sin. We can read some promises having to do with preservation:

a) Psalm 31:23 "O love the Lord, all ye his saints: For the Lord preserveth the faithful, And plentifully rewardeth the proud doer"

b) Psalm 116:6 "The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me."

c) Psalm 145:20 "The Lord preserveth all them that fear him: But all the wicked will he destroy."

d) Psalm 146:9 "The Lord preserveth the strangers: he relieveth the fatherless and widow: But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down." Ruth was 'a stranger', but the Lord proved that he had great plans for her. She became the great-grandmother of David, and was eventually the royal line of the Lord Jesus.

e) 2 Timothy 4:18 "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever."

f) Jude 24 "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

One of the important purposes of the indwelling Holy Spirit is to guard the believer from the influence and power of the flesh. Notice Galatians 5:17: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

His presence indicates an aspect of God's power to overcome sin, for we admit that we are often helpless to accomplish this in ourselves. 1 John 4:4. . . "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world". It is through dependence upon and in harmony with His working that we are preserved from the domination of the flesh in our lives.

A very encouraging verse from the Old Testament is, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in thee: Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." (Isaiah 26:3,4). Our power for preservation relies upon the unfailing work of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this in each one.

A look at what the psalmist says in Psalm 121 reminds and encourages us of the unfailing, constant power and presence of God to

preserve His people, who are being kept and preserved in the midst of danger. How blessed it is to know this in a practical, personal way.

Secondly, we notice that, along with the operation of the Holy Spirit to combat such detrimental sins in our lives, we have the **infallible and invaluable Word of God.**

We read in 1 Peter 2:2 about the "sincere milk of the Word" Of old it has been well-said, "This Book (the Bible) will keep you from sin; but sin will keep you from this Book!" It is through reading and applying the truths of God's holy Word to our practices, thoughts and attitudes that we can be preserved in our spiritual life from falling. Sadly, in many cases, the Word of God is not allowed to have the place that it should. The devil knows this, and he is actively working to fill our lives and minds so that the power and desire for the Word is crowded out and time is not given to careful mediation on its truths. Moses commanded Joshua in his last moments, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Those principles have never changed, and we desperately need the preserving, cleansing effect of God's Word in our lives daily.

Another thing that will preserve us is to be **conscious of God's continual presence in our lives.** Notice James 4:8. . . "Draw nigh to God", so being conscious of God's Presence will preserve from sin. The more that we are conscious of His presence at every moment, the more careful it will make us to avoid anything that would bring about our ruin. We can become so busy in life so that we fail to allow the realization of that presence to control and guard us. This will inevitably lead to our downfall and ruin.

God has made another important provision for us, and that is the **unceasing work of our Great High Priest at God's right** hand. Hebrews 4:14-16 tells us, "seeing that we have a great High Priest. . ." It is a great encouragement to a believer to know that our Lord Jesus, Who loves us "unto the end," will never cease in His intercessory work on our behalf. He is there to keep us from sin through His unceasing

ministry of grace, and He also ministers on our behalf when we do sin (1 John 2:1-2). It is never God's purpose that we should sin, but He knows that we will sin. Therefore provision has been made to provide the necessary preserving powers for each one of us.

It is essential that we avail ourselves of these resources if we desire to live a life that is useful and pleasing to our blessed Lord. We need to have the same desire as the apostle John, expressed in 1 John 2:28: ". . . And now, little children, abide in him; that, when (whenever) he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

### **An Illustration**

Here is an Illustration of the victory that a believer has over sin: Once when Charles Garrett was preaching to a large congregation about the mysterious troubles that often come to the Christian, he was saying that we are not exempt from trouble, quoting, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth", and saying that some converted men had more trouble after their conversion than before. He had known Christian men who were steeped in trouble, and surrounded by it; they had trouble to the right, trouble to the left, trouble In front, and trouble behind. Then an old man in the gallery who had served God for 70 years, shouted, "Glory be to God, it's always open on top." The old man was right, for there is one eye that never slumbers, one ear that ever hears, and one heart that ever feels. "He ever lives for us." (Hebrews 7:25) ---Hy Pickering

**A cunning enemy we have to deal with; he knows our weak points since he has been dealing with me for these past six thousand years and he knows all about them. He is possessed of a gigantic intellect, though he be a fallen spirit; he is easily able to discover where sore places are, and there it is that he immediately attacks us. If we be like Achilles, and cannot be wounded anywhere but in our heel, then at the heel he will send his dart and nowhere else.**

## Shepherds of the Sheep

*Joel Portman*

God's people need Shepherds! Just as sheep cannot exist for long or thrive without a shepherd to care for them, so God has ordained that His people will be cared for, sustained and guided by those who are given the responsibility by God to do the same for His people.

The subject of shepherds and shepherding of the sheep is found in God's Word from Genesis 4 to Revelation 7:16-17. Israel is referred to as sheep nationally, and Jehovah declares that He is the true Shepherd, Who had cared for them from the beginning and who would do so to the end. The Lord looked upon those of His day, and because of the false shepherds and lack of spiritual care, they were like "sheep having no shepherd". His heart yearned over them, and in the evident lack of spiritual guidance and care, He ministered to their temporal and spiritual needs during His lifetime of perfect service. That shepherd care has not diminished or ceased; we read in Hebrews 13:20, that He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep, so that God's people continue to receive the care that flows from His heart of love for them.

We can learn from the examples in the Old Testament what God desires to be expressed in those who shepherd His people. We learn from those who physically cared for the sheep, from what He declares about His own care for the sheep, and from what He expects from those who have been entrusted to be "under-shepherds" in our day.

In every period of time, there is a great need for those who can and desire to fulfill that responsibility to the Lord's people. Many are quite happy to attend "business meetings" of the assembly and make the decisions that are needed in that venue. The work of pastoring or shepherding the saints goes far beyond that function, and definitely requires a whole-hearted commitment to their care that requires sacrificial service for the good of the believers. We hope that God will stir hearts of younger and older ones, to realize how important this work is for the preservation of assemblies and the blessing of individual believers.

## The Nature of the Sheep

Many, or most, animals that God created in the beginning are capable of defending and caring for themselves when they once reach adulthood. It seems that all of creation, including animals, were made by God with certain characteristics that serve to illustrate spiritual truths (Romans 1:20). We look at a lamb and see the character of meekness, humility, purity, and dependence that was characteristic of the perfect "Lamb of God." Sheep have distinct characteristics, being marked by a tendency to stray that could be the result of limited distance vision, and a vulnerability to wild animals and other natural enemies, including disease. (However, they have a good sense of hearing, which is the reason that shepherds put a bell on a strong leader sheep or a goat so that they can be oriented correctly toward the flock).

When one considers the sheep nature, think about how each one applies to our needs as believers. Generally, you cannot force a sheep to do something that is contrary to its nature. They will avoid certain environments because they are not content when exposed to something that is contrary to them. They do not like running water and prefer still water. By nature, they will always seek light and higher ground in the pasture, and by nature, they are fearful of those things that are strange to them, such as the dark or of things that are, to them, unknown. They are also conservative by nature; they prefer the familiar and resist change.

They also are marked by a strong tendency to follow the leader. This is evident in that the eastern shepherd never drove the sheep; rather, he went before them and they followed him. In some countries, such as in Iceland, they have developed a strain of sheep called "leadersheep". These are highly intelligent animals that have the ability and instinct to lead the flock home under difficult circumstances, and they have an exceptional capacity to sense danger. Sheep also tend to be gregarious, in that they will usually stay together in one group while they graze. A sheep will become highly agitated if it is separated from the group. This banding together helps to protect sheep from predators, since those animals tend to attack a sheep that is off by itself.

Normally, sheep require the presence of at least 4-5 sheep which maintain a visual link with each other when they are grazing. In addition, the normal reaction of a sheep when faced with danger is to flee, not to fight. The more that sheep are domesticated, so much more they depend on man to protect them from predators.

(Most of this material is taken, in part, from "The Artful Shepherd", by Ron Parker, in "Country Journal", and from other sources).

Other noted characteristics of sheep that are recorded include the fact that they prefer the routine, what they are more accustomed to. They also react negatively to shouting and other loud noises that frighten them. They will move best when they are not afraid, so those who handle them must work slowly and calmly. They also do not like to move into an area of darkness, preferring a well-lighted place. Many other characteristics have spiritual applications as well, but these summarize the majority of them.

A consideration of these physical characteristics will help us to see that sheep are apt illustrations of the needs of every one of God's people, whatever the dispensation. These all have spiritual applications that are helpful to understand.

Spiritual shepherds understand these characteristics, and with understanding of the nature of God's "sheep", they will seek to imitate the actions of those who sheltered and cared for sheep, seemingly from the beginning of history.

As Christians realize their character as sheep in this way, they will also realize that they need the care of a shepherd. We all have those same tendencies and needs that are illustrated by the sheep of the natural realm.

### **Men who Shepherded the Sheep**

The first man who is identified as a shepherd is Abel, who God says was a "keeper of the sheep" (Genesis 4:2). We need not look at the contrast between him and his brother, Cain, save to recognize that a keeper of sheep would be occupied with the care of those who were living, so that his attention would be directed toward others, outside of himself. The same relationship cannot exist between a "tiller of the

ground" and the objects that he cultivates. A "keeper of sheep" was one who fed the sheep and guarded them, meeting physical needs and knowing the sheep and their conditions.

In this example, we should recognize the personal relationship that should exist between one who cares for the sheep and those who he cares for. Keeping sheep involves knowing them and guarding them, sustaining them and meeting their needs. Each sheep is individual, with individual characteristics and personalities. They all have the same general needs in common, but there are those who, because of individual characteristics, need special attention that others do not need. A keeper of sheep in those days lived among the sheep, so that it would be true, as Paul says in Acts 20:18, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." Shepherds are not absent caretakers, but they are to be found with the flock. Neither are spiritual shepherds men who absent themselves from the assembly for periods of time, nor are they those who do not know the state of the flock (Proverbs 27:23: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.")

Jacob was the second notable keeper of sheep, and he epitomizes that characteristic of a shepherd. His continual presence with the sheep is the emphasis of his shepherding, for he could say that, (Genesis 31:38-40), "This twenty years have I been with thee; . . . Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes." He had maintained the welfare of the sheep so that they brought forth young that were healthy ("thy she-goats have not cast their young") and he had not personally eaten them ("the rams of thy flock have I not eaten"). He was with them in heat of the day, through the drought and the cold, spending sleepless nights and suffering with them through the nights. He had shared their experiences, and personally knew them as his own. His care for the sheep is also expressed in Genesis 33:13-14, for he would not drive them or bring them along the way too rapidly, lest they should suffer and die by the way. He serves as a pattern for shepherds of the saints, who also need to be aware of the needs and

conditions of the Lord's people under their care.

Many of God's notable men in the Old Testament were shepherds, including Moses. He was trained in all the wisdom and knowledge of Egypt for his first forty years, but that was not sufficient for the task of leading God's people. It required the next forty years of keeping the sheep in the wilderness to be prepared for that essential work (Exodus 3:1). David is another leader, who the Lord told that "He took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:" (2 Samuel 7:8). The lessons that he had learned in caring for the sheep provided the background training for him to properly lead a nation of God's people. When Samuel first came to Jesse's house, David was not there, for he was out keeping the sheep. But, he was the one selected in preference to his older brothers. His care for the sheep was expressed when he told Saul, prior to entering into the battle with Goliath, that he had defended them from the lion and the bear, which had come out to kill and devour the sheep. (1 Samuel 17:35), and in engaging Goliath on behalf of Israel's army, he was doing the same.

All these should be studied to learn the characteristics that should mark every true shepherd of God's flock. Their presence with the sheep, their care for the sheep, knowledge of their condition and concern for their welfare, along with other characteristics are those that are most suitable for spiritual shepherds who have been entrusted with the care of the saints of God.

(continued)

In a day of much activity in evangelical and other work there is great neglect of the cultivation of the inner life. The service of the outer courts may easily be allowed to interfere with the soul's devotions in the inner sanctuary. Great care may be given to that which is presented to man, while little time is given to the condition of the soul before God. Hours are spent in outward services while minutes in God's presence cannot last long. Spiritual vigor can only be by the cultivation of the inner life, and this requires time for heart searching, prayer and meditation on the Word in the presence of God.

## **The Wonder of the Book, pt 2**

*Dyson Hague, M. A.*

### **The Wonder of its Unification**

**A**nother thing: We talk of this Bible as a Book. We seldom or never think of it as a Library. Very few of us, save those who have of its studied the matter, ever think of this book as a Library consisting of sixty-six separate volumes, written by between thirty and forty different authors, in three different languages, upon totally different topics and under extraordinarily different circumstances. One author wrote history, another biography, another about sanitary science and hygiene; one wrote on theology, another wrote poetry, another, prophecy; some wrote on philosophy and jurisprudence, others on genealogy and ethnology, and some on stories of adventure and travel of romantic interest. Why, if these sixty-six books were printed separately, in large-sized print and heavy paper, and bound in morocco, I doubt if they could all stand on that table! And yet here we have them all, the whole sixty-six volumes, in a little book that a child can carry in its little hand. And the strangest thing of all is, that though their subjects are so diverse and so difficult, the most difficult and abstruse of all conceivable subjects, though there was no possibility of anything like concerted action or transfer of literary responsibility, for it was impossible for the man who wrote the first pages to have had the slightest knowledge what the men would write about who wrote one thousand five hundred years after he was born; yet this miscellaneous cento or collection of heterogeneous writings is not only unified by the binder in one book, but so unified by God the Author, that no one ever thinks of it today as anything else than One Book! And One Book it is, the miracle of all literary unity.

### **The Wonder of its Age**

Again, it is a wonder that that Book is here today. I say it is a wonder that we have a Bible at all when we think of its age. When we compare the Bible as a book with any other book in this respect it is a perfect wonder. I will tell you why. You all know that the greatest test of literature is time. Do you know of any book

that is read by anyone today to speak of, that was written one thousand years ago? Books that were the rage a few years ago are forgotten today. Whoever thinks nowadays of reading "Robert Ellesmere," or asks at a bookstore for Rider Haggard's "She"? Why, poor "David Harum" is almost unsalable, and we will soon hear nothing of "The Rosary." These books were born, were boomed, and died. The cold hand of oblivion is laid upon them. Hebrews 8:13. Their force is spent. Their power is gone. They were literary sky rockets; they are like Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-aye."

Where is the book, after all, that is five hundred years old and read by the masses nowadays, for, as we said, a book that is one thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years old is read by nobody. Horace and Homer may be studied by students of the classics, and school-boys may have Virgil and Xenophon thrashed into them, but whoever thinks of reading them? They are dead books in dead languages. For you can-put it down for a certainty that the older a book is the smaller is its chance of surviving, or being read by people of diverse nationalities.

Another thing. No book ever has had much chance of being circulated widely amongst a people from which it did not originate. No book, for instance, written by a Spaniard has much chance of being read by Germans. German works are read by Germans; English works by Englishmen. I know that I never could enjoy "Old Mortality," for I am not a Scot. What book do you know of, with a few great exceptions, such as Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, Dumas, Shakespeare, that has been able to overleap the bounds of nationality; and as to Turkey, India, or Mexico, or Brazil, what man out of a hundred could tell you whether they had any authors, or if they had, the name of one of their works. But the marvelous thing about the Bible is, that it is the only book in the world that has not only over-leaped the barrier of time, but it is the only book in the whole world that has been able to overleap the barrier of nationality. It was written largely in a dead language, for the Hebrew language is not a language that is either spoken or written today; and yet that Book, written in a dead language, written by men who died two thousand or three

thousand years ago, is not only living today but it is the most widely circulated book in the world.

### **The Wonder of its Sale**

Surely this is another marvelous thing. The Old Book is easily the best seller of the day. A leading bookseller was asked what book has the largest circulation. He did not mention the most recent novel or the latest scientific work. He said that the book which out-sells all the other books in the world was the book called the Bible. Other books compute their circulation by thousands; the Bible by millions. And yet the man on the street never thinks of this book as a book that was written in a dead language over two or three thousand years ago.

### **The Wonder of its Interest**

Another marvelous thing about this book is that it is the only book in the world read by all classes and all sorts of people. You know very well that literary people rarely read a child's book, and children would not read books of philosophy and science even if they could. If a book is philosophical and scientific it commands the attention of literary people, and if it is a child's book it is read in the nursery. A wonderful thing it is to think that there is one book that differs from all others; a book that is read to the little child and read by the old man as he t r e m b l e s on the brink of the other world; Years ago I heard the nurse reading a story to my child, and I said to her, "What is it that you are reading to the little one?" "I am reading the story of Joseph in the Bible," she answered.' And the little child, in excitement, cried, "Please don't stop her, please," as she listened with delighted interest to the reading of a book that was written in Hebrew probably three thousand five hundred years ago. And not far away from the room where the little child was listening, there sat one of the noblest of modern minds, one of the greatest of modern scientists, our foremost Canadian scholar, the great Sir William Dawson, President of McGill College, Montreal, reading with profound devotion and a higher delight the pages of that same marvelous Book. Here is a phenomenon. One of the ablest of modern scientists delights

in the reading of a book which is the joy of a little child in the nursery! Verily it is without a parallel in literature. Our boys and girls read and study it in myriads of homes and Sunday Schools, and great scholars like Newton, and Herschel, and Faraday and Brewster, and great statesmen like Gladstone and Lincoln, and great soldiers like Gustavus Adolphus, and Gordon, and Stonewall Jackson, have taken this book as the joy and the guide of their life.

### **The Wonder of its Language**

Another wonderful thing is that this Book was not written in Athens, the seat of learning in Greece, nor in Alexandria in Egypt. It was not written by men who received their inspiration from the ancient sources of wisdom. It was written by men who lived in Palestine, in Nazareth, in Galilee. Many of the writers were what we would call illiterate. Not only were they not university men, or scholars or original thinkers; they could not speak their own language properly. There is a strong probability that neither John nor Peter could speak grammatically. You remember Peter was trapped because his dialect betrayed him. He spoke like a Galilean. Did you ever hear a man of Yorkshire or Somersetshire talking? Did you ever hear the brogue of an Irishman from Galway? It was like that with Peter and John. (Matthew 27:73. Acts 2:7:4:13.) They were uneducated men. And many of the men who wrote the Bible were men of that character. One was a farm hand. Another was a shepherd. They were men of no literary reputation. And yet from men of that type educationally has come a book that God in His mysterious power has so divested of all provincialism that it has become the standard of the language of the most, literary nations of the world.

And not only so. It is a book that has gone, to the North and South and East and West. It is the strongest factor in modern life today, and yet it is of the ancient world. It is the most potent factor in the influence of the great nations of the progressive West, and yet it proceeded from the narrowest and most conservative people of the unprogressive East. All its authors were Jews, and the Jews by instinct and tradition, by education and sentiment, were the narrowest of all narrow people. The

Jew was not only narrow; he had no interest in other nations. You know what a time it took to get the idea into Peter's head that he ought to have an interest in the salvation of the Gentiles of the outside world. (Acts 10:14. Galatians 2:11-14.) A miracle of special revelation only did it. How do you explain then the fact that these ignorant men, these most unc cosmopolitan men, with all their provincialism, and exclusiveness, and insularity, were enabled to write a book which has become not only the Book of the Jews, but the Book of all men, and The Book of the world today. It is for only one tongue, and that is, the world's. It is for universal man as man. It is the proud boast of the Church of Rome today that it has but one language, and that a dead language, the Latin. But the Bible Society have a prouder boast. It is their boast that they have printed the Bible in over five hundred living languages; that they are giving the Living Word to every nation under heaven, that they may hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. Yes! God has so overruled the history of His world that there has been born a Society which has re-established the miracle of Pentecost. It is truly a miracle. It is a wonder to think that an old Hebrew book, written by a lot of Jews, has in God's mystic Providence been so divested of all orientalism and Judaism, and rabbinism, that the millions upon millions of boys and girls and men and women who read it never think of it as the writing of Hebrews or the language of an ancient and oriental race. To them they are simply the words of their own dear mother-tongue. It is the English Bible; the best that our literature can give in simple, noble prose, as Frederic Harrison once said in a lecture at Oxford. And yet, wonderful to think of, the German never thinks of it in any other way. To him it is the German Bible.

(continued)

***There is Light in Christ to illumine ; Life to quicken you, Grace in Christ to sanctify you; Comfort in Christ to cheer you, Power in Christ to deliver you; and Righteousness in Christ to justify you; therefore Christ, always go to Christ for everything, go to Christ alone.***

## Turning from God to Man,

### pt. 2

*Robert Surgenor*

### False Reports

In history atrocities have been committed in the name of Christianity—specifically the Crusades, and the Inquisition. However, these people were acting contrary to the teachings of Christ, and were not genuine Christians, but mere professors of Christianity. The blame lies on these perverts, not on true Christianity, for Christ taught to love even your enemies! Many historians state, “In every case in which Christians are blamed for violence, a closer look largely exonerates them.”

Generally speaking, when Christian restraints have been removed from a society, atrocities are magnified, as seen in the regimes of Hitler, Mao, Stalin, and Pol Pot which were essentially atheistic bloodbaths. These twentieth century despots alone account for well over 100 million murders. The evidence is strong that when the restraining influence of Christianity has been removed from a country or culture, unmitigated disaster will naturally follow. I fear that the United States is in for perilous times as we continue to drift from Christian principles. Christianity’s theme to the world is the equality of human beings, and the preciousness and worth of every human life. As put by D’Souza, Christianity was the propelling force behind the campaign to end slavery, the movement for democracy and popular self-government, and human rights. If our country gives up Christianity, there will be a systematic erosion of values like equal dignity and equal rights that people cherish. Also, there will arise the restoration of infanticide, demands for the radical redefinition of the family, the suppression of freedoms of religion and expression, and political tyranny.

What is the “age” like? It is like a mold that seeks to deform all who are in it. Actually, it is several molds or world views (interpretive framework), the standard by which we interpret reality, or one mold with several facets.

The word “age” (aion) in the bible is very often translated, “world,” and as W.E. Vine states, “signifies the condition of humanity, which since the fall, is in spiritual darkness, with a nature, tendencies, and influences controlled

by the powers of darkness in opposition to God, and now under the prince of this world.” Scripture warns Christians against being conformed to this age (Romans 12:2). The conforming of the Christian is found in Romans 6:17. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” Another version reads, “that form (mold) of doctrine unto which ye were delivered.” In other words, Christians are poured into a specific mold, consequently conformed to that mold. That mold is the doctrines of the New Testament. Christians are conformed to the Word of God, not the principles and schemes of this world.

The age also has its several molds (the world’s standard) that seek to deform all who are in it. Here are some of them:

### The World’s Mold of Secularism

The word secular means “the world in terms of time.” We all live in the secular world, the world of time and space, but Christians are warned against adopting the secular world view, which views all within the limits of this present time. Contrariwise, Christianity thinks of life in terms of eternity.

The secularist believes that when one dies, he ceases to exist. However, the Christian believes that we shall all be in heaven or hell and by God’s grace he will be in The secularist believes that when one dies, he ceases to exist. However, the Christian believes that when a Christian dies, he goes to heaven. Does our world have a supernatural or secular orientation? Consider what kind of world is pictured in the world’s popular magazines, movies, and TV. Do these mediums portray the human race in sin, traveling down the broad way to destruction? Does it picture the world fashioned by God, sustained by God, and loved by God? Of course not!

The world represented in the press, TV, movies, and by journalists and politicians is quite the opposite. Secular modernism pictures humanity as a self-sufficient world. It pictures man as a self sufficient and progressive creature, making the world better and better, day by day, until finally, a utopia will be reached, solely through man’s ingenuity and wonderful

achievements. God is not in the picture at all. In fact, in many instances, they consider Christianity as a hindrance to man's progress, and an enemy of man's free thought, and simply a crutch for feeble, weak minded people. It is a world consumed with acquiring more and more possessions and comforts, then all is over when you die. There is no God to meet.

### **The World's Mold of Humanism**

The root of humanism may be traced to ancient Greece, to the pre-Socratic philosopher Protagoras (480–10 BC). His motto was, "man is the measure of all things." Man, in himself, is the ultimate norm by which values are to be determined. He is the ultimate being and the ultimate authority; all reality and life center upon man.

Humanists believe that every mortal is essentially good, while God teaches that man is a fallen and sinful creature in need of the new birth. Humanism is man-centered. Christians are God-centered. Humanists claim to be humanitarian, i.e., caring about people. However, humanism is atheistic and secular. This world is all there is. There is no divine revelation. Mankind is the only source of morals. The humanist will stand one night outside a prison protesting capital punishment, yet the next morning he will stand outside an abortion clinic defending the right of a doctor to kill an unborn baby. He loves humanity, yet he will fight for legislation to protect 40 or 50 spotted owls—legislation that will cost 50,000 people their jobs.

Humanism is irrational. It wants Christian ethics without Christ. Humanism has invaded the church in the form of theological liberalism. It is anti-supernatural thus it has done away with all the supernatural elements of Christianity, such as, miracles, the resurrection of Christ, the atonement of Jesus, and the Virgin birth. The humanist thinks only of his own happiness and needs. The Christian says, "What can I do to help the church?" The humanist says, "What can the church do to help me?" Humanism is essentially selfish, self centered, irrational, and atheistic.

### **The World's Mold of Existentialism**

The father of existentialism was Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), who penned the slogan,

"God is dead!" He took secularism to its logical conclusion. If this world is all there is, then there is no God, no ultimate essence beyond this present existence. If there is no God, then life is meaningless. All human life is shut up to the here and now. There is no exit to the eternal. Values and truth are what we make them.

This world view has been embraced by the arts, whether in painting, popular music, or the theater, including TV and the movies. Human passion has changed from meaningful and lovely romance to a meaningless and coarse animal drive. All of life is meaningless. In other words, we are all animals who through the evolutionary process have pulled ourselves up to the superior standard we presently possess. As an animal, why not fulfill all your animal lusts. Do your thing, live it up for you only live once, and there is no God to give an account to. What a horrible deathbed some of these have faced.

### **The World's Mold of Relativism**

Out of secularism and existentialism comes relativism. There is no ultimate reference point. Nothing is absolute. There are no absolutes in religion or morals. Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein said, "If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put." In relativism there are no hinges.

If "everything is relative," as many moderns say, then we cannot condemn Hitler. He believed he was right to exterminate Jews. Why should we condemn him? Relativism ultimately leads to statism, totalitarianism, and Antichrist because eventually it becomes intolerable. It leads to emptiness and division. Someone has to bring unity.

The issue will serve to illustrate the relativistic world view. America has been severely divided over the issue of abortion. Some vehemently oppose it, others favor it. In the middle are people who say, "I would not choose to have an abortion, but I believe every woman has the right to make that choice for herself." This middle position is the stance of the relativist.

The relativist hates rules and regulations. They feel that it isn't right to impose rules on anyone else. Why should another

person tell me what right or wrong, or whether I'm allowed to do my thing or not? I should be free to do anything, whatever it is! That is their mindset.

Relativism has greatly affected thinking about Christian missions. The Bible teaches that Christianity is true. All other religions are false. People must trust Christ for forgiveness or be lost. Relativism says that there are many paths to God, one no better than the other.

Consider a church bible reading and the question is asked, what does the passage under consideration mean? Not so today when relativism has invaded the church. Today the question would be, "What does this passage mean to me?" In other words, there is no certain meaning to the passage. There are as many meanings as there are members of the class. Such an attitude is relativistic. While all would agree that various Christians may apply a passage in a variety of ways, the meaning of the text is absolute. There may be several applications, but there can be only one meaning. Not so with the relativist.

### **The World's Mold of Materialism**

Materialism is the philosophy that says that matter is all that there is. It is a variation on secularism. It works itself out in a life that centers on money and possessions. The materialist looks to wealth to give him purpose and meaning.

His possessions are his god. The happiness of his being is determined by his wealth. His beautiful home, luxurious automobile, finery, and large bank account all contribute to his happiness. However, if by chance these "gods" are taken away, despair, and sometimes suicidal tendencies invade his mind. Since his joy was based on his possessions, when his possessions flee away, so also does his joy. How different for the Christian, whose joy is the Lord. As scripture says, "The joy of the LORD is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). Since the Lord has promised the Christian that He will never leave them nor forsake them (Hebrews 13:5), and their joy is found in Him, consequently it too will never leave them nor forsake them.

I remember, many years ago visiting an aged black Christian couple who lived in a

shack. They had nothing of this world's entertainment or goods. They lived in poverty. She was blind. I will never forget my visit. Knocking on the door, the brother invited me in and announced to his bed ridden blind wife, that it was brother Surgenor. She was delighted and said loudly, "Brother Surgenor, I'm so glad to see you!" Then she went on to tell me all the blessings that the good Lord had given to her. She was a most happy Christian. I thought of all I had, and I also thought of all the unhappy rich sinners that I had met in my lifetime, and looking down on the beaming face of that poor blind black invalid – I wept. She has the Lord 24/7 and the joy. The spiritually destitute materialist knows nothing of this.

Doctor Walter Wilson of Kansas City told a story of Caleb Baker, a Christian businessman. His warehouse burned down. Young Dr. Wilson said, "I'm sorry Caleb." Mr. Baker replied, "Young man, I gave this business to the Lord 20 years ago. If He wants to burn His own warehouse it's all right with me. Let's have a cup of coffee."

(continued)

### **Faithfulness to the Word**

*"Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"*

Ecclesiastes 7:16

**There is a strong tendency among Christians to allow human reasoning to replace Scriptural principles, thus making ourselves "wiser than God". Paul said, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"(1 Corinthians 2:4). The real challenge is that our reliance on human wisdom is difficult to detect and we often don't even realize we are doing it. But clear divine instructions set aside in favor of the reasoning of men will always leave us cold and disappointed. "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Colossians 1:10).**