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Some Admonitions

BY ERWIN COWEN

"Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4.)

The world in which we live is definitely opposed to the true teaching of God. This is true because of Satan's influence and his determined efforts to lead every responsible person away from God. This has been true of this evil one ever since his deceitfulness in the garden of Eden. The devil, who possibly was an angel in the beginning, rebelled against God and became hopelessly estranged from God. There is no good whatsoever in the devil, and he is forever at work trying to seduce all men to his unholy way of life. There is no way for Satan to return to his original purity. Of him Isaiah wrote, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations." (Isa. 14:12.)

So with total depravity as his lot, it isn't surprising to see the devil at work day and night in his efforts to defeat every possible righteous act. God being aware of Satan's efforts has warned and commanded his servants to be on the watch at all times, and to resist Satan's every effort at seduction. This accounts for the many warnings and admonitions against wrong doing, and for the admonitions to live righteously.

The Lord has faithfully promised to help his people when they fight against Satan. Paul wrote, saying, "There hath no temptation taken you but such that is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Cor. 10:13.) James shows how Satan works to lure men away from God in James 1:13-15, saying, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God

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Teaching With Love

BY HAROLD TURNER

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. 4:15.)

In the above Scripture, Paul sets forth the most important qualification for sharing the message of Christ with others. He indicates that it is not enough just to speak the truth, but we must speak it in love. Jude encourages Christians to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.) But Jude was not suggesting that we be contentious in our concern for the faith. Solomon pictures a contentious person in Prov. 26:21, saying, "As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife." Paul warned Titus to avoid contentions (Titus 3:9). The proper attitude toward others is vital in our efforts to win them to Christ.

A person may become so frustrated in his efforts to convince others of the truth that he becomes more interested in winning his argument than winning the soul

of the person to Christ. Some have become overbearing and insulting to those with whom they were sharing the truth, and have caused their subjects to stop their ears from ever listening to the truth from anyone. While such may have presented doctrinal truth, the attitude with which it was presented caused more harm than good. When we have offended others with the truth by a quarrelsome attitude we certainly have not "handled aright" the word of truth.

A love for the souls of others will cause us to be patient and understanding with their lack of knowledge in the truth. The apostle Peter said that God "is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9.) And that we are to "account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation . . ." (2 Peter 3:15.) If God is patient toward those who have sinned against him, should not we also be patient toward them in presenting the

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Divorce For Every Cause?

BY LARRY PRICE

"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and

shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matthew 19:3-9.)

The skyrocketing divorce rate within the church seems to be accompanied by a desire to justify divorce "for every cause." Those seeking justification for what they have done, or are about to do, go about seeking an answer that tickles their ears, not realizing that they are now also guilty of devising self-satisfying, but incorrect reasons for their own behavior. Such rationalization is often encouraged by preachers and elders who should know better. The result is that the divorce cancer spreads more rapidly. The truth is compromised, and the fellowshiping of the guilty spreads this cancer to other parts

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DIVORCE FOR EVERY CAUSE?

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of the body. Following this cancerous compromise of truth is the disregarding of what God has to say about remarriage.

The excuses for divorce heard by this writer range from the seemingly reasonable to the totally ridiculous. One Christian family was broken apart when the wife decided that she "needed more space." Another decided her husband of seven months was too immature. Still another divorced her husband when he got into tax trouble. A preacher divorced his wife saying he was justified since she defrauded him of the physical relations of marriage. The excuses are unending but still unscriptural! It is sad that Christians will disregard God's law when it does not suit them, and it is even sadder when those who are leaders in the church will sympathize with and encourage those seeking to divorce their mate for "every cause."

Poor advice often comes from well meaning people. The woman mentioned above who "needed more space", was led to believe that the Bible permits divorce as long as one does not remarry. Likely the arguments she heard were centered on I Cor. 7:10-11. where Paul says, "Let not the wife depart from her husband, but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband." However, there is no comfort here for those wanting to divorce for every cause. The fact that Paul tells the departed wife to remain unmarried does not sanction the sin of putting away one's mate. Would Paul say don't do it, but if you do it, it is okay? Isn't Paul simply pointing out that regardless of the Lord's commandment to "not depart" some would disobey? Under this condition isn't it better that the husband and wife remain unmarried so that reconciliation can occur?

It is wrong to put away (divorce) one's mate for any cause other than fornication. When the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Jesus answered, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." In other words, Jesus answered with a resounding NO! It's not lawful. Jesus then continued to show the one exception, "except for fornication." God has always hated the putting away of one's mate. Mal. 2:16.

Those advising the woman who "needed more space" were indirectly advising her to do the following: (1) They advised her to break her wedding vows. Instead of "for better or worse, to love, honor, and obey," she divorced her husband because she needed more space. God would have us to "Pay that which thou hast vowed." (Eccl. 5:4.) (2) They advised her to take her husband before a court of law contrary to the admonishment of Paul in 1 Cor. 6:1-6. (3) They advised her to defraud her husband of the physical aspects of marriage, contrary to 1 Cor. 7:1-5. (4) They advised her to refuse to be in subjection to her husband in violation to Eph. 5:24. (5) They advised her to teach her children, by her example, to divorce their mates someday for "every cause." (6) They advised her to destroy her husband's possible service as an elder or deacon. (7) They advised her to take away her husband's right to train up his children in violation to Eph. 6:4. (8) They advised her to cause her husband and children many emotional and physical problems. Surely no crown of righteousness awaits those who disregard God's laws, or for those who give such advice.

SOME ADMONITIONS

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cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." But in spite of Satan's effort to plant the seeds of temptation in our hearts, John tells us that we can overcome; "because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (I John 4:4.)

The many admonitions in the New Testament to do good are sufficient to show us that God wants his people to be pure and holy. In I Peter 1:16 God said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." Paul told the

Corinthians that he had espoused them to one husband that he might present them as a pure virgin to Christ, 2 Cor. 11:2.

No decent man wants an impure wife, and no decent woman wants an impure husband, and it is certain that Jesus does not want his bride, the church, to be guilty of sinful relationships with those who are opposed to him. God created man in his own image, and he has shown that he loves this creation, especially, those who live in the right covenant relationship with him. And because God feels this way about his people, we may be certain that he will never cease, through his inspired word, to warn and admonish us to refrain from evil, and to strive to do good. Therefore James wrote, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7.)

It matters not how defiant and rebellious one may have been, the Lord will welcome him into the fold where salvation is found if he will turn to God and submit himself to His divine will. God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9.) In Isaiah 1:16-18 God pleaded with his rebellious people saying, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well... Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This passage shows God's desire to save those stained with sin if they will turn from their evil ways and come to God and do his will.

To choose friendship with the world is to choose to be an enemy to God and a friend to Satan: to reject the one who loves us and to embrace the one who wants to destroy us eternally. What choice have you made with your life?

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Mister World and Miss Christian

BY DONNIE MANGRUM

This article will deal primarily with a Christian trying to live a Christian life when they have a partner or friend who is not a Christian. This is not to say that it would be impossible, but it is more difficult. The faith of a partner is a very important matter for young people to consider before entering marriage. The Christian and non-Christian relationship is a repelling force which pulls in opposite directions. To illustrate the danger of this relationship we might picture a young Christian lady upon a table trying to pull her non-Christian mate upon the table. Is it easier for her to pull him upon the table, or for him to pull her down to the floor where he is?

Mister World, the non-Christian, has his mind set on the things of the world. His interests are not on Christ or Christian activity. On the week-ends his interest is more on fishing trips and other activities that do not include worshipping God. Miss Christian will have to decide whether or not she wants to spend her week-ends with Mister World, or to stay at home and attend the worship with God's people. While Miss Christian may realize her duty to visit the sick and help others, Mister World has no time for anyone but himself.

Mister World has but one goal in life, to possess as many things of this world as possible, and to indulge in every activity that suggests pleasure. He has no time to think about heaven or spiritual things. He takes pride in iceing down cold beer, hitching up the old fishing boat and luring as many Christians as possible to go to the lake with him on Wednesday evenings or Sundays. He works hard to convince them that Wednesday evening Bible Study is not important, or that they can attend worship next week. On the other hand, Miss Christian has a different set of values and interests. She is interested in obeying the words of Jesus, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." She works hard to convince others that spiritual things are of greater importance than worldly things. She tries to encourage others to worship God and live a Christian life. She remembers the words of

John, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." (3 John 11.)

But how long can she hold on to her values? How long can she remain strong when there is a constant pull from Mister World? With so much worldliness around her the Christian life may begin to grow less meaningful to her. Is it worth the constant hassel? Mister World presents a real problem to her in her desire to associate with her Christian friends. His manner and language is embarrassing to her when her friends are around. He and his friends are interested in worldly fun and excitement. So they have a conflict of their friends. Her continual exposure to Mister World and his friends will likely soon tear her down, if not totally, at least partially. Miss Christian will likely begin to weaken. Mister World's daily temptations will one day at a time start tearing her apart. She must compromise some of her principles and values to get along with him.

Poor Miss Christian, she never knew that she would one day trade her robe of righteousness for the ways of Mister World. She is now willing to put on a skimpy bathing suit and go to the lake on Sunday instead of worshipping her heavenly Father. She has allowed Mister World to win her over, even though her every intention was to hold on to the truth and stand fast. Miss Christian has turned out to become Mrs. World. Her continued association with worldly things has overcome her Christian life. Poor Mr. and Mrs. World, now both will lose their soul when the Lord returns. She will never win him over now, for she has convinced him that Christianity is not better than worldliness. Miss Christian never dreamed that Mr. World could change her life from Miss Christian to Mrs. World. Her parents knew it, but she refused to listen to their warnings.

The world is out after all of us. The devil has a lot working for him. He used the things that we can see to divert us from the promises of God. It is so important to be associated with Christian friends. Especially is this true for the younger people who might be considering marriage. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is as wise in marriage as in other activities. Be joined together with those who have a lot in

common with you, and especially concerning the most important thing in life — God and eternal life. Choose companions and friends in life who will help to strengthen you spiritually, rather than those who will be constantly pulling you away from righteousness. Don't let Mister World destroy your hope of living with God eternally.

"God never closes one door on life without opening another, but we usually stare so long at the one he's closed that we don't see the one he's opened for us."

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truth to them? After all it is not against us that they have committed sin; why are we so quick to lose patience?

The apostle Paul is often referred to as the greatest gospel preacher of all time. Whether or not we consider this to be true, one thing is certain, Paul is a good example for all of us. He encouraged Timothy to "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 1:13.) Too, he said, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2.) Paul pictures himself as an example to others who teach the word. But, what was his attitude in presenting the truth? In 1 Thess. 2:7-8 He expressed his attitude saying, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." Paul was gentle not quarrelsome in presenting the truth because he was more interested in winning souls to Christ than in winning his arguments about the truth.

In 2 Tim. 2:24-26 Paul wrote, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." The word strive as used here is translated from the Greek word, 'machomai', which is defined as, "to fight, to quarrel, dispute." Those who serve the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but rather gentle in their efforts to save the lost. James tells us that "where envy-

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STEWARDSHIP OF ABILITY

BY ROBERT BALL

Webster defines the word "steward" as a person put in charge of another's property.

God has given each of us some abilities. We are to be good stewards of the abilities which God has so freely given us (Rom. 8:32). All of our abilities come from God and we are totally dependent upon him for them (James 1:17).

God has given different abilities to different people. To some he has given exceptional mental abilities. I am sure we have all heard of mathematical geniuses and people with a photographic memory. These people have exceptional mental powers. To others God has given exceptional physical powers. We have all seen examples of this in all phases of athletics. We cannot accomplish these exceptional skills. Most of us have a variety of skills in a very normal range.

God does not give all gifts to any one person (1 Cor 12:4-11), but he does give each one something (Rom. 12:4-8). We all have some gift or talent. They may vary in kind, number, or degree, but whatever they are we should recognize, accept, and develop them for use in God's service.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), the talents were entrusted according to individual ability. Why do you think Christ signified the one talent man to fail in this parable? I would like to suggest that Jesus may have signified his failure because he had the least to do. He had but one talent to take care of. He had but one thing to do, and he didn't even do that. If he had, he would have received the same reward as the other two servants.

Some times people with five talents reason as the one talent man. They say, "Oh, I'm not very talented. I'm really just pretty insignificant, so I just won't do anything; who's going to notice?" All would recognize that a person with many talents should use them. How many times have you heard people say, "That person is so talented, he should be using that talent in the work of the Lord."

The truth is, a person with only one talent will be held just as responsible for using that one talent as the person who has many talents will be for using all of

his talents. God never requires more of us than we can do. When we use our talents in his service, he does not require a 100% success rate, but he does expect us to try! If we try, he promises to help us (Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:31).

How much does God expect us to do? He expects us to use what we have, no more, no less. In the parable of the talents, how many talents was each servant expected to use? God never expects us to do the impossible, but to start where we are with what we have and do as much as we can with that (Luke 12:48). We find many examples of this in the Bible. Look at the woman with the Alabaster box in Mark 14:6, 8. Jesus said, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me . . . She hath done what she could." In 1 Sam. 17:40, David did not have a rifle to kill Goliath, but he used what he had. In Mark 12:42 the poor widow did not have a hundred dollars to give, she only gave two mites, but she gave all she had.

What are some of our abilities? We should think long and hard about this question. If we will let God use what ever talents he has given us, much more can be accomplished. Paul encouraged Christians with this thought in Eph. 3:20, saying, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." In Acts 14:27 Paul did not relate what he had done for God, but "all that God had done for them." He told the Corinthians that we are not working alone, but said, "For we are labourers together with God." (1 Cor. 3:9.)

We must give an account for the talents which God has given us. And if we do not use our talents, they will degenerate; and we will lose them (Matt. 25:28). For example, if you had been running everyday and had developed the ability to run two miles, then you quit running for a year or so and then decided to start running again, what do you think would happen if you tried to run the two miles again? You will find that you have lost the ability to go that distance. But if you had not quit running for that year, but had continued running everyday you could soon have been running three, four, or even five miles a day. Your ability

would have increased with use. Just so, our ability to serve God will increase with use. We are responsible for developing our abilities for serving Christ. We are responsible for what we can become as useful servants (2 Tim. 2:20-21).

God gives us his talents, we, in using them, become partners with God (1 Cor. 3:9). God has a reason for everything he does. He gives us talents for his purpose, which he expects us to use in serving him. Let us all dedicate all of our talents completely to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and to his cause.

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ing and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (James 3:16.) The person whose life and attitude is characterized by strife is not of God, but rather of evil.

As an unskilled surgeon can do more harm than good, so also will the unskillful teacher. We are urged to study in order to be able to handle aright the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). We must learn the seriousness of our work in teaching the lost. It is easy to be offensive if we fail to have the proper attitude toward the lost. May we work hard to become more like Jesus, who expressed patience, understanding, compassion, and love toward those whom he taught. "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification . . . even as Christ pleased not himself . . ." (Rom. 15:2-3.)

75569 Amos 1:1-2, 13-15, 17-18, 21-22, 24-25, 27-28, 30-31, 33-34, 36-37, 39-40, 42-43, 45-46, 48-49, 51-52, 54-55, 57-58, 60-61, 63-64, 66-67, 69-70, 72-73, 75-76, 78-79, 81-82, 84-85, 87-88, 90-91, 93-94, 96-97, 99-100, 102-103, 105-106, 108-109, 111-112, 114-115, 117-118, 120-121, 123-124, 126-127, 129-130, 132-133, 135-136, 138-139, 141-142, 144-145, 147-148, 150-151, 153-154, 156-157, 159-160, 162-163, 165-166, 168-169, 171-172, 174-175, 177-178, 180-181, 183-184, 186-187, 189-190, 192-193, 195-196, 198-199, 201-202, 204-205, 207-208, 210-211, 213-214, 216-217, 219-220, 222-223, 225-226, 228-229, 231-232, 234-235, 237-238, 240-241, 243-244, 246-247, 249-250, 252-253, 255-256, 258-259, 261-262, 264-265, 267-268, 270-271, 273-274, 276-277, 279-280, 282-283, 285-286, 288-289, 291-292, 294-295, 297-298, 300-301, 303-304, 306-307, 309-310, 312-313, 315-316, 318-319, 321-322, 324-325, 327-328, 330-331, 333-334, 336-337, 339-340, 342-343, 345-346, 348-349, 351-352, 354-355, 357-358, 360-361, 363-364, 366-367, 369-370, 372-373, 375-376, 378-379, 381-382, 384-385, 387-388, 390-391, 393-394, 396-397, 399-400, 402-403, 405-406, 408-409, 411-412, 414-415, 417-418, 420-421, 423-424, 426-427, 429-430, 432-433, 435-436, 438-439, 441-442, 444-445, 447-448, 450-451, 453-454, 456-457, 459-460, 462-463, 465-466, 468-469, 471-472, 474-475, 477-478, 480-481, 483-484, 486-487, 489-490, 492-493, 495-496, 498-499, 501-502, 504-505, 507-508, 510-511, 513-514, 516-517, 519-520, 522-523, 525-526, 528-529, 531-532, 534-535, 537-538, 540-541, 543-544, 546-547, 549-550, 552-553, 555-556, 558-559, 561-562, 564-565, 567-568, 570-571, 573-574, 576-577, 579-580, 582-583, 585-586, 588-589, 591-592, 594-595, 597-598, 600-601, 603-604, 606-607, 609-610, 612-613, 615-616, 618-619, 621-622, 624-625, 627-628, 630-631, 633-634, 636-637, 639-640, 642-643, 645-646, 648-649, 651-652, 654-655, 657-658, 660-661, 663-664, 666-667, 669-670, 672-673, 675-676, 678-679, 681-682, 684-685, 687-688, 690-691, 693-694, 696-697, 699-700, 702-703, 705-706, 708-709, 711-712, 714-715, 717-718, 720-721, 723-724, 726-727, 729-730, 732-733, 735-736, 738-739, 741-742, 744-745, 747-748, 750-751, 753-754, 756-757, 759-760, 762-763, 765-766, 768-769, 771-772, 774-775, 777-778, 780-781, 783-784, 786-787, 789-790, 792-793, 795-796, 798-799, 801-802, 804-805, 807-808, 810-811, 813-814, 816-817, 819-820, 822-823, 825-826, 828-829, 831-832, 834-835, 837-838, 840-841, 843-844, 846-847, 849-850, 852-853, 855-856, 858-859, 861-862, 864-865, 867-868, 870-871, 873-874, 876-877, 879-880, 882-883, 885-886, 888-889, 891-892, 894-895, 897-898, 900-901, 903-904, 906-907, 909-910, 912-913, 915-916, 918-919, 921-922, 924-925, 927-928, 930-931, 933-934, 936-937, 939-940, 942-943, 945-946, 948-949, 951-952, 954-955, 957-958, 960-961, 963-964, 966-967, 969-970, 972-973, 975-976, 978-979, 981-982, 984-985, 987-988, 990-991, 993-994, 996-997, 999-1000.