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Harold Camping: *The Anatomy of a False Prophet*

By J. A. Billings

Acts 5:34–39 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Introduction

In 1992 Harold Camping made his first fantastical prediction that the world would come to an end in 1994. Since then many people have speculated and others have strongly argued that he is a false prophet. Prior to his first of many erroneous end-of-world predictions, dogmatic judgments against Mr. Camping were not generally entertained. The main reason was due to the fact that many people had testified they had been saved through listening to his radio program. The other reason is that Family Radio has broadcast good preaching from substantial men, since the time the station came on the air in 1961.

The three reasons so many have been uncomfortable with Mr. Camping's "ministry" is because: 1. He is not an ordained minister and has

never submitted himself to any pastor or church during his tenure as the President of Family Radio; 2. His "ministry" has never been connected to or ratified by a local assembly as a viable Gospel ministry; 3. He has adopted the heretical approach to the interpretation of Scripture called the "Allegorical Method of Interpretation." This ancient heretical approach of interpretation was designed by the Church Fathers, Philo the Jew (20 B.C.–42 A.D.) and Origen (182–251 A.D.) to soften the orthodox historical-grammatical approach to interpretation. It was argued that the Historical-Grammatical approach offended the natural sensibilities of the Greek mind. The allegorical theory posited that there are three levels of truth in the Word of God: 1. The literal or carnal sense; 2. The moral sense; 3. The pneumatic or spiritual sense. This extra-biblical theory enables the interpreter to state that there is always a deeper, more spiritual interpretation found beyond the literal interpretation. Thus the interpreter can make the text mean anything he desires it to mean.

The Allegorical method of interpretation is Mr. Camping's approach to the Word of God but he has substituted the term "Parabolic" for "Allegorical." He has based this new term on his misuse of Mark 4:34 "But without a parable spake he not unto them:..." He believes that the whole Bible is written as a parable, and that beneath the parable is the real or spiritual meaning. In doing this Mr. Camping has been able to interpret the literal as figurative and the figurative as literal. Any passage can mean whatever he desires it to mean. He has hidden behind this new term of "Parabolic Interpretation" knowing he would be severely denounced if he admitted he believed the Allegorical method of interpretation was a valid

approach to the Word of God. The truth of the matter is that the two methods are the same.

Many have overlooked these glaring issues because of his seeming “success.” Also, no one can deny the patience and kindness that Mr. Camping has displayed over the many decades that he has been on the air. On a nightly basis he answered those who called in to his radio program, even answering the same questions over and over as if they had been asked for the first time.

The Church is the Ground and Pillar of the Truth, Not Family Radio

God has ordained the church to be the Pillar and Ground of the Truth. He has also ordained that the advancement of His Kingdom is primarily accomplished through the institution of the Local Church. God did not ordain Para-Church Organizations, Psychologists, Televangelists or Radio Personalities. He only ordained preachers who minister through the local church. Any man who seeks and establishes a “ministry” outside of God’s ordained means is building an organization that cannot be defined within the parameters of the New Testament. In the end, all religious institutions that exist apart from the God ordained means will be proven to be ministries of vanity. This does not mean that many have been mightily used of God, but in the end they always leave the faith. For example, Yale University, Princeton University and Brown University were originally established as religious institutions of higher learning for the purpose of preparing and educating men for the ministry of the Gospel. All of them have since left their originally intended function and are now decidedly anti-Christian in their world views.

Mr. Camping’s Converts

A general analysis of the attitude of Mr. Camping’s followers reveals that very few of them have an understanding of the place of the local church in the New Testament. Very few of them understand that the God-ordained means of grace for the believer are found in church membership (i.e., bap-

tism, the Lord’s Supper, preaching, congregational prayer, worship and fellowship with believers). Many of Mr. Camping’s followers have not understood the great blessings that are found in faithfulness to a local church and its pastor. Large numbers of his followers hop from church to church and are primarily faithful to the Universal Invisible Church of Family Radio. Harold Camping has never taught his listeners the importance of submission to New Testament principles and practices of believers in the context of the local church, as the primary means of grace in persevering in the faith. Over the years, most people have overlooked this glaring contradiction in Mr. Camping’s theology because they reasoned that “the good” that was accomplished by this man outweighed “the bad.”

1994

In 1992 Camping published a book entitled *1994*. In it he posited that the end of the world *may* take place September 6, 1994. Mr. Camping alleged that there was a calendar hidden within the pages of the Bible according to Daniel 12:9 and Revelation 22:10 and that he had broken the code. He had to, out of expediency to sell his book, ignore the clear teaching of the Word of God concerning end of the world prophesying. Jesus explicitly taught that only the Father knows when the end of time will take place *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only”* (Matt. 24:36).

Of course Mr. Camping’s prophecy came and went but the lives of many were destroyed. Many of his followers sold their homes, quit their jobs, ran up debt and destroyed their own Christian testimony. Mr. Camping’s credibility was severely damaged but he persevered. He stated in his book that the real date would be May 21, 2011. He went on to preach that the New Testament church was apostate and on his newly appointed day the church would be raptured, signifying the end of the “Church Age.” Of course, on May 22, 2011 Mr. Camping had to change his position. He shockingly stated that Oct. 21, 2011 would definitely be the

end of the world.

A new generation of Camping followers has arisen since his 1994 prediction. They, of course, have made the same devastating mistakes their predecessors made before them. Many, this last year, sold their homes, quit their jobs, gave their life savings to Mr. Camping and his family, some moved to isolated areas of the country to be safe and some decided to run up debt, thinking they would be Raptured and would not be liable for the debt. It is impossible to calculate how many lives have been ruined by this man.

Heretical Positions

Mr. Camping, in recent years has departed from the fundamental doctrines of the faith. He has, in recent years, synthesized Calvinistic doctrine and human Free-Will. He has forsaken the Biblical doctrine of Hell and eternal punishment for the unconverted and preaches annihilation. Lastly, he has been preaching that God’s churches have become apostate, implying that his followers should leave their assemblies. He has been, for some years now, telling his listeners that the only means of grace they should attend to is personal Bible study and listening to Family Radio. This also implies that his followers should give their tithes and offerings to him only.

A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing

Many have demanded that Mr. Camping return the money he swindled from his way-ward followers but that has not happened. He has shown himself to be a hireling according to the teaching of Christ in John 10.

Paul warned the Elders of the church at Ephesus that grievous wolves would enter into their church and devour the flock. This has always been a problem and will continue to be a problem in Christ’s churches. Paul warned *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own*

selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:28–30).

Mr. Camping, through the air waves of America has been seducing men and women out of God’s ordained churches, which God purchased with his own blood. He has proven himself to be a wolf that will not spare the flock, who speaks perverse things in order to draw away disciples to himself. The reality is that pastors of churches have been fighting his anti–New Testament influence for over fifty years.

The Worldly Wisdom of Gamaliel

The worldly wisdom of Gamaliel has proven to be excellent advice. In fact, his insight into the nature of the Kingdom of God and his keen understanding of human nature was so profound that God made it part of the inspired canon of Scripture *“And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God” (Acts 5:38–39).*

Many in our generation have taken the advice of Gamaliel and have withheld judgment concerning Mr. Camping over these many years. Many have been patient, knowing that God will not be mocked. But the facts now reveal that the many people who have followed Mr. Camping, over the last fifty years are now scattered. His “ministry” has come to naught and the ones who have been hurt are the ones who put their trust in him. This is a great tragedy and we must show great compassion and understanding on these sheep who are without a shepherd.

Conclusion

The reason it is important to bring out the truth concerning Mr. Camping is because the world must have confidence that the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not destroy lives, it only saves lives. False prophets, like Mr. Camping always give the world reason to disdain the Gospel of Grace. There is no doubt that many have found Jesus Christ

through the ministry of Family Radio. But we must assert it was despite Mr. Camping not because of Mr. Camping. He made merchandise of the Word of God and did not care for the flock.

Mr. Camping has now taken his place with those who have gone before him. He now stands with Theudas and with Judas of Galilee. He stands with a long list of heretics and sects that have come to naught over the centuries. He stands with the many that have walked before him that have made it their life’s work to *“...bring in damnable heresies.”* Sadly, the result is always the same; many *“...shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:...” (II Peter 2:2–3).*

Many false prophets have come into God’s churches and deceived some of the people, many have come in and taught doctrines contrary to the Word of God, many have come and seduced the weak. Many more will still come. There will always be those who rise up to oppose God’s churches. Harold Camping is now gone and we can be sure that there is already someone else to take his place. The good news is that the Church of the Living God cannot be destroyed. Jesus told Peter that not even the Gates of Hell shall prevail against it.

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An Introduction to Islam Part 3: The Quran

By Dr. Arthur L. Mellon

The Quran is the “holy Book” of Islam. Dr. Ahmad A. Galwash writes: *“The word “Quran” is derived from the Arabic Qara’a, i.e. to read, to recite. It is designated “al-Furqan” (the distinguisher), kalamul-Lalt (the word of God), the Kitab (the Book), Nur (the light) and al-Huda (the guidance).¹ The Quran contains 114 Surahs (Chapters), 6,616 verses, 77,934 words. 86 Surahs were given at Mecca and 28 Surahs² at Medina. “The word sura (plural suwar) also occurs in the text, but its derivation is doubtful. The most*

accepted view is that it comes from the Hebrew shurah, ‘a row’, used of bricks in a wall and of vines.”³ Sixty percent of the Quranic verses are Jihadic verses. 114 peaceful verses have been abrogated under the doctrine of nasikh and have been replaced by Jihadic verses.

None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: don’t you know that Allah has power over all things. (Surah 2:106)

When We substitute one revelation for another, - and Allah knows best what He reveals (in stages), - they say, “You are a forger”: but most of them do not understand. (Surah 16:101)

The Quran is not in chronological order, but from the longest Surah to the shortest. The Quran was written by Scribes, because Muhammad could not read or write.

(It is) in Books held (greatly) in honor, Exalted (in dignity), kept pure and holy, (Written) by the hands of scribes. Honorable and pious and just. (Shurah 80:13-16)

The Quran is divided into 30 parts; each part is to be read on one day during the month of Ramadan. According to tradition, in 610 A.D., when Muhammad was 40 years of age and following in the footsteps of Jewish and Christian ascetics who made spiritual retreats, Muhammad often retreated to a cave on Mount Hira a few miles northeast of Mecca. During the month of Ramadan⁴ (and while he was in retreat) Muhammad said the angel Gabriel appeared to him, telling him to “recite” and after reciting what Gabriel said a few times, Gabriel said, *“O Muhammad, thou art the Messenger of God,...”⁵* This vision was the starting point of the Quran.

Muhammad wrote nothing down, being illiterate. Abu Bakr the companion of Muhammad and first Caliph commissioned Zayd-ibn-Thabit to start compiling these verses written on stones, animal skins, palm leaves, etc. Many scholars believe the verses were collected on parchment. After Abu Bakr the task went to Umar the second

Caliph, and on Umar's death it was Uthman the third Caliph who finished the task. For anyone to say there is error in the Quran or to question the Quran is considered blasphemy and is punishable by death. Yet Caliph Umar was frank about the limitations of the effort to collect and standardize it. Many versions of the Quran were collected and burned in the standardization process. Which version was the correct one? There have always been Muslims who believe that it was wrong to burn what might have been verses that belonged in the Quran. Aisha the wife of Muhammad said verses were left out that should have been in the Quran and others added that should have been left out.

"Let no one of you say that he has acquired the entire Quran, for how does he know that it is all?"⁶

There are a number of scientific errors in the Quran. When the Sun goes down, it goes down in a well full of water and mud.

When he reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring... (Surah 18:86)

The Quran teaches the Earth is flat and mountains were created to stabilize the Earth, due the people living on the Earth.

And we have set on the Earth Mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with them... (Surah 21:31)

And at the Earth, how it is spread out? (Surah 88:20)

Islamic law scholars agree that the phrase "spread out" means the Earth is flat no matter what Science claims. These errors demonstrate the seventh century mind and their knowledge of the world at that time.

There are historical errors in the Quran. One error is that Mary the mother of Jesus was the sister of Moses and Aaron.

O sister (Mary) of Aaron! Your father was not a man of evil... (Surah 19:28)

There are many other errors in the

Quran. There are grammatical errors, sentence structure errors, incomplete phrases, omitted words and meaningless words in the Quran. How can anyone put their trust in a book that has so many errors? Yet it is required of every Muslim to accept the Quran on blind faith as the perfect word of Allah and not to question the Quran on pain of death. The Quran is supposed to be the Book that is timeless and fits the needs of every part of life throughout all generations. Professor Gerd R. Puin of the Institute of Oriental Studies University of Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, Germany writes:

"The Koran claims for itself that it is mubeen, or 'clear'. But [contrary to popular belief], if you look at it, you will notice that every fifth sentence or so simply does not make sense... The fact is that a fifth of the Koranic text is just incomprehensible."⁷

In 1972 while restoring the Great Mosque of Sana'a Yemen thousands of parchments and paper documents were uncovered that give different readings of the Quran than the authorized version. These variant readings of the Quran call into question the belief of its "inerrancy." These documents are currently being researched in Germany under low-profile, due to the stir these variant readings may cause in the Islamic world.⁸

When Islamic terrorists say they are just following the edicts of the Quran; they are telling the truth. Most all Islamic scholars will admit that Jihad is to be offensive in nature, by the sword and this is based on the teachings of the Quran. Their hope is that this nation will stay ignorant or give in under terrorist's acts and threats until Islam and the Islamic Law are established in this country. To say it will never happen in this country is foolishness. This nation has been warned over and over again, but we don't seem to get the message. Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders called upon the Netherlands to "*ban this wretched book like Mein Kampf is banned.*"⁹ The Orientalist William Muir contended that the Quran was one of "*the most stubborn enemies of Civilization, Liberty, and the Truth which the world has yet known.*"¹⁰

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- ¹ Dr. Ahmad A. Galwash, *A Handbook Of Muslim Beliefs*, (Goodword Books: New Delhi, India), 2001, p. 169.
- ² George W. Braswell Jr., *What You Need to Know About Islam & Muslims*, (Broadman & Holman Publishers: Nashville, TN), 2000, p. 24.
- ³ W. Montgomery Watt and Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Quran*, (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh), 2008, p. 58.
- ⁴ Ramadan is the month of fasting and its observance is one of the 'Five Pillars' or 'Five Duties' of Islam. Each day of the month a section of the Quran is to be read.
- ⁵ Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources, Inner Traditions*, (Rochester, VT), 2006, p. 45.
- ⁶ Serge Trifkovic, *The Sword of the Prophet: Islam*, (Regina Orthodox Press, Inc.: Boston, MA), 2002, p. 76.
- ⁷ Ibn Warraq, *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text & Commentary*, (Prometheus Books: Amherst, NY), 2002, pp. 120-121.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.
- ⁹ Robert Spencer, *The Complete Infidel's Guide to the Koran*, (Regnery Publishing, Inc.), 2009, p. 4.
- ¹⁰ W. Montgomery Watt and Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Quran* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh), 2008, p. 113.

Progression in the Ministry: *The Study of the New Testament*

By Dr. W. R. Downing

1 Timothy 4:14-15 ...give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

There is a wide-spread reticence toward the study of the original languages on the part of both the pulpit and the pew in our day. In the age before statist, "Progressive Education" in the early twentieth century, formal schooling, if possible, usually extended to about the eighth grade for most young men. By that time, however, one would have had a good foundation in elementary math, science, history and the classics in addition to a year or two of Latin and possibly some knowledge of the Greek language. This gave to the young man a perspective of himself as living at a given point in history, a grasp of the principles of politics and responsible citizenship, some acquaintance

with the ancient classics, with science and math and possibly some knowledge of the New Testament in the original language. Modern statist education by contrast, from its philosophy to its subject matter to its implementation, is largely atheistic, humanistic and behavioristic. The student is conditioned to and by his environment rather than instilled with the knowledge and essentials for a disciplined, meaningful life as a responsible, moral and intelligent citizen.

Turning to the religious education of many ministerial students, some hold that men ought to be ordained to the gospel ministry without any formal education, as “only God can make a preacher.” Sadly, often consonant with such a view is that a man neither needs further education nor progress in self-education, either! Thus, study in general and the study of the original languages in particular continue to be either denigrated or altogether absent.

One of the main reasons is found in the “Bible School” Movement of the late 1800s. Many of the Theological Seminaries had been betrayed to Rationalism, “Destructive Higher Criticism” and “Liberalism” through the departments of Old Testament and the Languages. The most forceful reaction against this trend was the “Bible School” Movement, which held that the study of the English Bible was sufficient. This mentality continues to the present day. Other reasons could be mentioned—the example and ignorance of older preachers, native indolence, the tendency to simply read after others and not discipline one’s self to the task and the foreboding thought that one’s theology might not stand the test of actually opening the text in the original!

In 1 Timothy 4:15, The Apostle urges young Timothy to give himself to his studies that his progress may appear to all.¹ It is this “progress” that we will address, and in this “progress,” some encouragements for the study of the Greek New Testament.

First, true progression in the ministry and in the individual Christian pilgrimage is largely dependent on one’s relationship to and knowledge of the Scriptures. To limit one’s knowledge to

a version of a translation is at best to possess only a second-hand knowledge of the Word of God. This is inescapable. No version of a translation of any writing can carry the force and nuances—the full and exact meaning—of the original. Such a second-hand knowledge in any other area of knowledge or science would be ridiculous and considered irrational or absurd—especially if one attempted to speak with authority on a given subject! Yet in the area of declaring Divine Truth, many profess to be astute students of the Scriptures whose knowledge is at best second-hand, and at the worst, often filled with inadequacies if not outright error.

Second, the very nature of Christian experience, the Christian ministry and the Word of God all combine to demand the most careful and exact knowledge of the Bible. Christian experience and practice are to be grounded in biblical doctrine. Biblical doctrine derives from and depends on Divine revelation. Divine revelation depends on language. Language depends on distinct words, grammar and syntax, and the words, grammar and syntax of the very Word of God are properly considered only by a careful exegesis in the original language. This is the necessary and logical manifestation of belief in verbal, plenary inspiration, as opposed to a defective, philosophical idea of mere “inspired concepts.”²

One may exegete the text in the Greek of the New Testament, but not attempt an exegesis of that text in a version of a translation. The best that might be attempted is an exposition of the given text. This is both absolutely essential and critical to comprehend. Exposition is not exegesis.³ Upon the fallacy that these are synonymous is often grounded the proof texts of the various cults. Examples: the Russellites seek to use the rules of English grammar as applied to the Greek text of John 1:1, and thus mistranslate, “...and the Word was a god.”⁴ The Campbellites do the same with Acts 2:38, making the verbs “believe” and “be baptized” compound verbs and thus equal, which they are not.⁵ Even the *Revised Version* of 1901, usually a very trustworthy version, mistranslates Romans 1:17, “For

therein is revealed a righteousness of God ...”⁶ It must then be marked with great care that there is a great difference between the exegesis and the exposition of the text. Limited to the rules of English grammar, or intruding with such rules into the original languages through ignorance is inexcusable and sinful.

Third, the testimony and examples of all the biblical writers, prophets, preachers, our Lord himself and the inspired Apostles teach us that we should and must open the text of Scripture accurately and fully.⁷ Such necessities and examples ought to be the greatest encouragements for the sanctified study of the Greek New Testament.

Fourth, we must stand amazed and yet encouraged by the examples of many uninspired but inspiring men who have gone on before us. Consider such men as John Gill (1697–1771), who by the age of twelve had mastered Hebrew, Greek and Latin. He was home-schooled and self-taught. In the dark and cold times among the Baptists of the eighteenth century it was John Gill who maintained the orthodoxy of the faith and championed the cause of God and truth. John Brown of Haddington (1722–1787) learned Greek without a teacher, without a grammar and with but the rudiments of a short time spent in Latin.⁸ C. H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) was largely self-taught, but worked through the original languages in all his sermon preparation and writings. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813–1875) was an uneducated iron worker, who taught himself several languages, including Greek and Hebrew, to read the Scriptures as an act of worship. He became a prominent biblical scholar. These men were all great and unparalleled in their day as to their sanctified, practical and eminently useful study of the languages. Should not we be greatly encouraged and strengthened to do likewise? We owe it to God to be faithful to His Word. We owe it to our people and to ourselves to be true to the Scriptures. Who can maintain a clear conscience if he has not done what he could?

Ω

¹ The term “profit,” is σου ἡ προκοπή, lit: “to beat [cut] forward, to lengthen by hammering” [Thayer]. This term denotes to make progress, “to blaze the way,” cut a path. The pos. of σου stresses the pointedness of your progress. The ministry is to be characterized by the spiritual, mental and academic personal progression of the minister.

² Many modern versions of Scripture, such as the New International Version and the Living Bible are far removed from the literal to a “dynamic” form, i.e., in reality, often a paraphrase. These are often woefully inadequate and give much room for error and misunderstanding.

³ “Exegesis,” ἐξεγήσεις, “lit: “a leading or bringing out,” i.e., to bring out the meaning and force from the original.” Cf. the term ἐξηγέομαι, translated “declared” [ἐξηγήσατο] in Jn. 1:18. Jesus Christ is the “Exegesis of God,” i.e., a revelation and explanation of the Original. “Exposition,” the thought of ἐκτίθημι, to set out, expose, expound,” or ἐπιλύω, “to loose, release, signifies to solve, explain, expound.” See. W. E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of NT Words.

⁴ “Russellites” [Jehovah’s Witnesses] deny the deity of the Lord Jesus. καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. The word θεός is emphatic by position and anarthrous, i.e., does not possess the definite article. Thus the construction stresses character or quality. We would translate: “The Word as to His essence was Deity,” exactly the opposite of The New World Translation.

⁵ The Campbellite [“Church of Christ” Church] theology from this proof text is: “Repentance plus baptism equals salvation.” Their slogan is, “You meet the blood in the water!” μετανοήσατε, [φησίν,] καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν. “Repent” is a 2 pers. pl. aor. imp. “All of you immediately, with determination, Repent!” The words “be baptized” are in the 3 pers. sing. Aor. imp., imply an individual, permissive notion, not the full force of the first aor. imp., i.e., “let everyone of you be baptized.” Further the prep. εἰς, may be translated, “with a view to,” not necessarily “for.” This would be justified by the analogy of faith, as well as the grammar.

⁶ δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται. The anarthrous construction emphasizes that the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel is the very righteousness which God recognizes. The English must insert the definite article to equate this.

⁷ See the Article in the last issue of The PIRSpective (April 2011) on “Opening the Text.”

⁸ John Brown was accused of witchcraft by his own pastor for his self-education in NT Greek, a burden under which he labored for years. We include the moving account of his obtaining his first Greek Testament as a sixteen year old orphaned shepherd boy:

*At age sixteen, wearing homespun clothes and barefoot, he walked twenty-four miles to the Bookshop at St. Andrews University to purchase a Greek New Testament. When asked for the leather-bound volume on the shelf, the proprietor asked what he would do with it. “I’d try to read it,” he replied. One of the University professors, in the bookshop at that time, asked for the volume to be placed on the counter, and said, “Boy, if you can read that book, you shall have it for nothing!” Young John read a passage and walked home with his prize fairly won (Condensed from *The Life of John Brown of Haddington*, by Robert Mackenzie, pp. 31–35).*

How to be Found Useful in the Kingdom of God

By M. A. Bailon

I am sure if you are a Christian that you are bothered by the fact that the basic Christian doctrines of salvation and sanctification are clear and easy to understand yet difficult to consistently follow. If God has saved us then we have repented of our sin. We have believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation from sin. Moreover, we are to mortify the deeds of the flesh in this life. Sanctification is the process of becoming more and more conformed to our Lord Jesus Christ; easy enough. But it is the converse of sanctification, as stated above, that makes it clearer why our experience as Christians is anything but easy enough. Christians have forsaken their life of selfish ambition for a life lived for the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel. Our will is replaced by His will. To be *more* like Christ is to be *less* like our old sinful self, in reality not so easy. The true indication of the strength and integrity of our faith is how much of our time, energy and thought is given to the cause of Christ. It can be compared to the basis of economics. There are finite resources in the world. Most of the time one must make a choice. As one example, do I use the resource of money for entertainment or godly books? For the Christian, the big decisions also revolve around our use of time. Whatever we do for the Lord is an investment in eternity, after we are dead, roughly speaking. Of course, whatever we do that has benefits restricted to this life is ours until we die.

Then it is gone, forever. If you truly believe this, then choosing anything for the cause of Christ rather than for yourself is the logical thing to do. If, on the other hand, we are not too sure about eternity we hedge our bets and do some things for Christ and some for ourselves. These things should be common knowledge to the mature believer. The difference between eternal and temporal investments is clearly addressed in the Bible, especially in the gospels.

Now, considering Simeon from Luke chapter 2, verses 25 through 28, we read of a man who was just and devout. He was an upstanding man and citizen, and one who carefully kept the Law of Moses. Standing in the Old Covenant he expressed his faith by strictly observing the law. Moreover, his genuine faith in God was also expressed in his thought life. According to Luke’s testimony, Simeon was expecting and hence waiting for the consolation of Israel. He was looking for the promised Messiah, the hope of Israel who would bring peace and prosperity to His people. Simeon’s life manifestly was devoted to his God. The way he lived his life was a direct consequence of his faith. In him we see how an Old Testament believer lived. His understanding was not exactly ours but he obeyed God as was required at that time, at the threshold of the New Covenant. His public life was impeccable. His religious beliefs shaped his character and produced a sterling reputation. No one could criticize the Jewish religion because of him. What he cared about most was the cause of Jehovah. If you don’t have a life that is the New Testament equivalent of Simeon’s and you are a Christian, I hope you want to do something about that.

There is another aspect to Simeon’s life that is Old Testament and which has an equivalent place in the life of the New Testament believer. The Holy Spirit was upon this devout man. And the Spirit revealed to him that he would see the Lord’s Christ before he died. The way Luke puts it is that this revealed promise was constantly in Simeon’s thinking. He woke up every morning looking for the appearing of

the Messiah. He contemplated the promise all the time. He surely was reassured by the Spirit every time he went to the temple that he was going to see the Messiah one day. The promise was not an empty one. Simeon knew it was true and it made him joyful. He also went to bed each night knowing that he would wake up the next day because he had not seen the Messiah yet. In old age this must have been a great blessing. And he enjoyed all of these things because his life revolved around his God, and he lived for God. Simeon was promised a Messiah and he lived a holy and righteous life because of it. We are promised eternal salvation and we should therefore live a holy and righteous life in obedience to our Lord and Savior, in the power of the Holy Spirit. There is comfort and joy knowing that we have obeyed and followed the Lord each day. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. But the Spirit does not do this in vain. We must be as devout as Simeon.

On the day that Simeon is going to see the Messiah he is led by the Spirit to the temple. There the Lord Jesus Christ is going to be circumcised according to the Law of Moses. Luke puts it delicately. He says that they (his parents) were at the temple to perform the established custom of the law concerning a newborn child. So, on this day in the temple, because of two devout families, Simeon's and Joseph's, Simeon has the privilege of seeing the Lord. But as is common with our gracious God, Simeon not only gets to see the Christ but he gets to hold him in his arms. Simeon was told that he would see the Lord and God exceeded that promise. Imagine how thrilled Simeon was when the promise was fulfilled. We in the New Testament have the greater promise. The true Christian eagerly looks forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory and lives accordingly. And the true Christian is overjoyed when God answers prayer and when He saves a sinner. The whole point of living for the Christian ought to be to glorify God by being obedient to His will as revealed in the Word of God. God uses faithful Christians to fulfill His will. Do you want Him to use you to fulfill His will and bring glory to His name?

Ephesians 3:20-21 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, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Ω

The Queen of Sheba: A Sign for the Times¹

By M. A. Carling

From the book of 1 Kings 10 we find a narrative concerning the Queen of Sheba. We are told in vs. 1 that "...when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions." The Hebrew word for "hard questions" means "riddles," or "perplexing sayings." She didn't come to "prove" or "test" Solomon with frivolous questions of mental quickness, but rather she sought for the meaning of some of the most puzzling sayings known to her.

In the Gospel record of Matthew, our Lord used the narrative of the Queen of Sheba to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees of His day. They demanded to see a sign from Him concerning all that He was saying about Himself. Jesus told them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. 12:39). The whole population of Nineveh, from the king to the humblest of servants, repented at the preaching of Jonah. In contrast, the scribes and Pharisees ignored the words of Christ and sought His death. Jesus then used another illustration from history, "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42). They not only refused to hear the call to repentance made by a greater prophet than Jonah, but they also slighted the wisdom taught by the One greater than Solomon. How is it that the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment against that gener-

ation, and for that matter, our generation as well? We see it through her conduct. The conduct of the Queen of Sheba condemns unbelievers and chastens believers. At least six actions of the Queen of Sheba served to condemn that generation and ours.

#1 She was interested in the report of Solomon's wisdom.

This action is a strong condemnation of many in the world whose thoughts never rise above their bodies. Their only question is, "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The Queen of Sheba will rise up in the judgment, and condemn multitudes of careless folk in this worldly generation because they are too lazy to seek the wisdom of the claims of one Jesus of Nazareth.

#2 She believed the report of Solomon's wisdom when she heard it.

She was not only interested in hearing about his wisdom, but what she heard she believed. The unbelief and skepticism of this age is sadly due in part to many false prophets who proclaim a false gospel. The urgency to flee from sin and turn to Christ is lost when sinners are made to feel comfortable in their sin. The Queen of Sheba will rise up in condemnation of this generation for its unbelief.

#3 She was not only interested and believed, but she acted upon her belief.

There are many in our generation who profess to believe everything that they hear concerning the wisdom of Christ, and yet, they do not act upon it. James tells us to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). The Queen of Sheba will rise up in condemnation of this generation for its inaction.

#4 She not only acted upon the report she received and believed, but she persevered in doing so under very great difficulties.

There are many who would like to hear of the wisdom of Christ, but they fear that it would cost them too

much. It would cause their lives to change; it would involve too many hardships. The Queen of Sheba may have been afraid of thieves and other evildoers who she may have encountered on her search to find Solomon, and yet she persevered with anticipation. The Queen of Sheba will rise up in condemnation of this generation when it gives up on Christ because of so-called great difficulties.

#5 She humbled herself when she sought out Solomon

Her position as queen involved greater difficulties than many others would have experienced. She left her throne to seek out Solomon. She put her dominion at risk by leaving it to seek wisdom. Most of us are not in such a position of wealth that it would cause a hinderance for us in coming to Christ. This woman had the responsibility of an entire kingdom, and yet she sought out Solomon for wisdom. The Queen of Sheba will rise up in condemnation of this generation, for she condemns those who have very little and yet will not humble themselves before a holy, righteous and just God.

#6 She made great use of Solomon when she reached his court, for she asked him hard questions

Solomon's fame reached the Queen of Sheba, probably through the caravan traders that regularly passed through Israel. She travelled to meet with Solomon to see for herself whether the glowing reports about him had been exaggerated or not. We are told that, "...she communed with him of all that was in her heart" (1 Kings 10:2). Solomon did not hold anything back. He "...told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not" [or, there was nothing which he could not explain to her] (1 Kings 10:3). The Queen of Sheba will rise up in condemnation of this generation, for she condemns those who have spiritual questions, questions concerning eternal things, and yet make no effort to seek the answers.

Each generation has the same sort of passions and the same sinful tendencies. Each generation therefore needs to take interest in, believe and act upon the call of the Gospel. If they do not, the Queen of Sheba, the queen of the south will rise against them in condemnation.

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¹ This article is adapted from a sermon by C.H. Spurgeon, #2777, *The Queen of Sheba, A Sign*.

John 1:1

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος
καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν
καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

Images from Church History



From *Martyrs Mirror*, Thieleman J. van Braght, p. 1094

Anneke van den Hove buried alive in Bruxelles, AD 1597

At Brussels, under the reign of the archduke Albert, there was apprehended for her faith and following Christ, a young maiden named Anneken van den Hove (being the servant maid of Nicolaes Rampaert's sister), having been betrayed, as it was said, by the pastor of the Savel church at Brussels.

This Anneken was imprisoned two years and seven months, in which time she suffered much temptation, from priests, monks, Jesuits and others, who thereby sought to make her apostatize from the faith she had accepted; but however great pains they took with her, in the way of examining, tormenting, fair promises, threats, long imprisonment, and otherwise, she nevertheless constantly remained steadfast in the faith in her Lord...

O God, be merciful also unto us that are still living, that continuing faithful unto the end, we may with her, and all the saints receive Thy blessed inheritance.