

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

A WORD CONCERNING “GREED”

W. N. “Bill” Jackson

No, I’m not an admirer of this deadly sin, and I’m certainly not about to recommend this spiritual malignancy to any child of God, but it *is* a fact that we have not been giving “greed” its due in some of our writings in recent years. So very many articles have been written regarding preachers leaving the pulpit, and there are certainly some areas of health, family, and personal problems that would require such. But we wish now to speak concerning some of the other reasons about which so much has been written.

First, we need to face the fact that preachers, like any other brethren, can become enamored of material and fleshly things and have his head and heart turned away from spirituality. Luke 8:14 excludes no preacher from being tempted through **“the cares and riches and pleasures of this life.”** Not many, in writing of the preacher shortage are saying this, but it’s time it was said by someone. Within the writer’s personal knowledge are those men who left full-time preaching, and now you can be around them for only a few minutes before they’re speaking of lands, farms, cattle, bonds, savings, and securities. They often seem to be in a completely new world, and yet they were the very ones who preached to the rest of us concerning spiritual values being the most important, treasure laid up in heaven as the desired savings, a name written in heaven as being worth more than names on securities, and **“what shall it profit a man**

if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). After all of this preaching, and all of it Biblical, now they speak most of lands, stocks, business prosperity, the securities. Brethren, we haven’t said enough about “greed” causing some to leave the pulpits!

Secondly, in writing on the problems of preacher treatment, preacher support, the leadership problem, congregational indifference problems, etc., the impression is often left that these are twentieth [or 21st—**Editor**] century problems! More, these problems then are dealt with as if to justify preachers leaving full-time work because of them. Let us know that there is a great deal more of this world’s goods placed in a preacher’s hands today than ever before, and beyond that, there is as much real security (the spiritual kind) in proclaiming the gospel as there ever was! The tone of some articles dealing with the preacher shortage is that the pioneers to whom we owe so much should have spent their energies in something else. And we can just take that on back to the apostles and to the Lord! Why didn’t the apostles, in seeing so many problems in the church of their day, which problems resulted in most of the New Testament epistles being written, just quit preaching and get into some prospering business endeavor? Why didn’t they complain that there’s “just no security in preaching”?

Again, we acknowledge that there are real and personal problems sometime that dictate a man’s leaving full-time preaching. But in writing concerning problems that exist, and which contribute to preachers leaving, let’s not forget “greed.” Preachers aren’t immune—and *it needs to be said!*

—Deceased

IN THIS ISSUE.....

A WORD CONCERNING “GREED” – W. N. JACKSON	1
BUT A STEP—THE DEATH – G. K. WALLACE	2
BEYOND REDEMPTION – GUY. N. WOODS	3

Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
dpbcftf@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS received by CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH and/or its Editor are viewed as intended FOR PUBLICATION unless otherwise stated. Whereas we respect confidential information, so described, everything else sent to us we are free to publish without further permission being necessary. Anything sent to us NOT for publication, please indicate this clearly when you write. Please address such letters directly to the Editor David P. Brown, 25403 Lancewood Dr. 77373 or dpbcftf@gmail.com. Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

FREE—FREE—FREE—FREE—FREE—FREE

To receive CFTF free, go to www.cftfpaper.com and sign up. Once done, you will be notified when the current issue is available. It will be in the form of a PDF document that can be printed, and forwarded to friends.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES
FOR THE PAPER EDITION
Single Print Subs:**

One Year, \$25.00; Two Years, \$45.00

**NO REFUNDS FOR CANCELLATIONS OF
PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS**

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH exists to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we will not knowingly print anything to the contrary.

**CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH
25403 Lancewood Dr., Spring, Texas 77373
Telephone: (281) 350-5516**

**Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917–October 10, 2001**

Guest Editorial . . .

BUT A STEP—THE DEATH

G. K. Wallace

David said to Jonathan, “**There is but a step between me and death**” (1 Sam. 20:3). This is true of us all. Life is uncertain and one step can take us into eternity. However, we cannot and must not forget the following:

1. It is a step that all must take. Science, philosophy, even religion cannot prevent death. “**There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power over the day of death**” (Ecc. 8:8). “**It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this cometh judgment**” (Heb. 9:27).

2. We do not know when the step of death may be taken. James says we know “**not what shall be on the morrow**” and that our life is as a “**vapor**” that will “**vanish away**” (Jam. 4:14). God may say to us, “**Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee,**” and suddenly we will leave this world (Luke 12:20).

3. It is a parting step. In death we will leave our property (Luke 12:20; Job 7:10). We will leave our bodies. Peter said that he knew that the “**putting off**” his “**tabernacle**” (body) was coming “**swiftly**” (2 Pet. 1:14). Paul said he was “**willing to be absent from the body**” to be at “**home with the Lord**” (2 Cor. 5:1-11).

4. It is a solemn and mysterious step. No man jests in the time of death. It is not a time of laughter, merry-making, nor is it a jamboree. Death is not a time of fun and frolic. Job called death the “**land of darkness and the shadow of death**” (Job 10:21).

5. We must take the step of death alone or with Christ. If Christ is with us we have no fear of death. He goes with us through the “**valley of the shadow of death**” (Psa. 23:4). “**Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord**” (Rev. 14:13).

6. Preparation for the step of death is necessary. Our years will come to an end “**as a sigh**” and for this reason we should “**number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom**” (Psa. 90:9, 12). To be prepared we must hear the gospel, believe, and obey the gospel and live a faithful Christian life.

—Deceased

BEYOND REDEMPTION

Guy. N. Woods

The frightening possibility of apostasy by even the most favored of the Lord's people, is clearly evidenced in the remarkable narrative which follows:

For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6).

The Hebrew treatise was written to warn the saints of the threat of Judaizing teachers. It is obvious, from many things appearing therein, that the people for whom it was particularly written, had embraced Christianity, but were being seduced by false teachers whose design was to lead them to repudiate Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, and to return to the law of Moses as the only proper basis of salvation. Some had already succumbed to the temptation to return to the religion of their fathers, with consequent rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and had thus put themselves beyond redemption.

Tragic as it was to fall away from the favor of God, the guilt of those who thus did was compounded by virtue of the heights from which their apostasy occurred. Never were people more highly blessed; never was there less excuse for the fatal fall these of whom the apostle wrote deliberately experienced.

They were (a) once enlightened; (b) they tasted of the heavenly gift; (c) they were partakers of the Holy Spirit; (d) they tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come: and then (e) deliberately forsook the Saviour to return to the shadows of the old order. They had, of course obeyed the gospel; only of those who were children of God could it be affirmed that they were "**once enlightened,**" had "**tasted of the heavenly gift,**" had been partakers of the Holy Spirit, and had imbibed the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. These characteristics can belong only to Christians. Men are enlightened by the light of God's word (Eph. 5:8; Psa. 119:50); the heavenly gift of salvation is bestowed on children of God only. Moreover, these "**fell away,**" from Christ and from salvation; they must have once been with Him in order so to do. Here is, obviously, a clear cut case of apostasy.

It seems exceedingly strange, in the light of the foregoing facts, that great religious bodies would teach that it is impossible for a child of God to sin to the extent of losing his soul in hell. There are, indeed, more than twenty-five hundred warnings of the possibility of apostasy in the sacred writings; why, if such a possibility does not exist, should such earnest and repeated warnings have been delivered? Why did the inspired writers of the word spend so much time solemnly warning the people to beware of apostasy if God has decreed that such is forevermore impossible?

That apostasy is not only possible, but *certain*, when men forsake the faith, is affirmed in Hebrews 6:6. Moreover, of these it is said that "**it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.**" It is, from this, clear that those contemplated were in a special class, inasmuch as many passages of scripture offer pardon to penitent people (Gal. 6:1; 1 John 1:7-9). We are assured that if we confess our sins, the Lord will graciously forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Why then, in this case is no forgiveness promised, or possibility of repentance granted? *The answer is to be seen in the nature of the apostasy characteristic of these people.*

These were not ordinary apostates—individuals who had succumbed to temptation and sin through weakness, indifference or stupidity. They had repudiated Christ as their Saviour, and had returned to the law of Moses, as the only proper system of religion, on the assumption that a *future* Messiah would appear, more acceptable to the Jews than Jesus of Nazareth.

The law could not justify; no Messiah was yet to come; their repudiation of Jesus eliminated the possibility of salvation through Him; and thus their situation became hopeless. It should be observed that the reason they could not be saved was that it was impossible "**to renew them unto repentance.**" Thus, their helpless situation resulted from no failure on God's part, but from an unwillingness on theirs, to comply with God's plan. By their permanent rejection of the Christian system, they had made it impossible to be saved by the only plan possible—through Christ. They erected the barrier; not God. But, cannot those who have repudiated Christianity, be made to see the error of their way and return, and find forgiveness at the hands of God? Yes, if they *return!*

These, contemplated in the text under study, were past

Contending For The Faith
25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, Texas 77373

the possibility of returning. They had themselves deliberately gone beyond the point of no return.

So abandoned indeed were they that **“they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”** So hardened were they toward Christ, they would not hesitate to repeat the shame of Calvary! Of course such hardened characters will not in penitence turn to Him who alone can save. The writer vividly pictures, in figurative fashion, the condition characterizing them:

For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned (Heb. 6: 7, 8).

If those who had been privileged to enjoy the unspeak-

able gifts set out by the apostle could, and did fall away, how very, very careful should we be that we, too, do not fall victims to the blandishments of Satan. It is fatal for us to assume that because we have obeyed the gospel and are in possession of salvation from past, or alien, sins, we may live at ease and glide through life with the assurance that our redemption in heaven is secure. Faith, repentance, confession and baptism, in water, indispensable conditions of pardon, are *not the conditions of going to heaven*. Obedience to the primary conditions is the ground-work of salvation; such is necessary in order to get into the sphere where we may prepare for eternal salvation. The condition of going to heaven is a *faithful* life. Those who thus live are indeed secure.

—Deceased