

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

"NINE LOST BIBLES"

Recently, there was a notice in an exchange bulletin that there were nine lost Bibles in the church office. The notice encouraged those who had lost these to come by and pick them up. That notice struck this writer like a ton of bricks. Not that there is anything new about people forgetting their Bibles and leaving them at the building, but that the Bible is lost in more ways than one.

The Bible is lost in many churches. They have new Bibles in the racks but the message is lost. Those Bible are just for looks. The preaching and teaching that is done comes from a human creed book instead of the word of God. Men refuse to believe, obey, and practice the things God has required in His book. Many are traveling down the broad way that leads to destruction and they refuse to change. The Bible is lost in a world of "religion" and so-called "born again" Christianity. As far as many are concerned, Jesus might just as well not have bothered to come to the earth to die for them. Yes, the Bible is a lost book as far as many are concerned. They are like the Jews of old who lost the Word of God in the Temple. Can you imagine? The written copies of the Law were actually LOST in the Temple complex (II Kings 22:8). This is the way it is in many religious organizations.

The Bible is lost in many homes across this country. It is doubtful that we could go into many homes in our land and not find a Bible on the coffee table or shelf. Yet, as far as the message of the Bible is concerned, it is a lost book. Daddy is not fulfilling his place in the home as God has said; Mother is in subjection as God has instructed her to be; children do not obey their parents like God wants them to do (Ephesians 6:10); there is always a fuss going on which should not be there; and, so on and so on. Is this a Christian home? THINK ABOUT IT! If the family would read and study that Bible which is collecting dust on a shelf they would realize that they cannot be truly happy unless they obey the will of God which is contained in that book. Parents need to learn their responsibilities to their children and children need to obey their parents. The moral decay of our society is a direct result of the breakdown of the home. The lost Bibles in the homes of our people is the cause of this breakdown.

The Bible is lost in the lives of many church members. These people ought to be "living epistles" (2 Corinthians 3:2). The lives of church members might be the only "gospel" the world will ever see. If this "gospel" is perverted, the world will not get the true picture of what Christianity is all about. Those church members who refuse to attend the services of the church are telling the world that Christ and the church are not very important. These can lead more souls to hell than ten of Satan's best. Those church members who live ungodly lives while still claiming full fellowship with the church are hypocrites of the first order! All the world has to do is take a look at their lives and know that Christians do not act that way. When the world goes to the X-rated movies and the "Christians" are there, what do you suppose they think? When the people in the world will not even wear the skimpy bathing suits and shorts but they see the "child of God" wearing such, what do you suppose they think? When the people of the world go to the cocktail parties and see those who claim to have been "born again" enjoying the DEVIL'S BREW, what do you suppose they think? YOU KNOW WHAT THEY THINK! The world sees the ungodly and inconsistent lives of church members who have lost the pure message of the Bible and they turn in disgust. They are repulsed at the very sight of such.

The nine lost Bibles in that church bulletin were simply Bibles which had been left at the church building. The lost Bibles of the above cases are far worse. The message

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

Text: _____

I. John's _____ of the Lamb

Notes:

II. John's _____ of the Lamb

Notes:

III. John's _____ of the Lamb

Notes:

THE MOST...

- The most destructive habit.....Worry
- The greatest joy.....Joy
- The greatest loss.....Loss of self respect
- The most satisfying work.....Helping others
- The ugliest personality trait.....Selfishness
- The most endangered species.....Our youth
- The greatest "shot in the arm".....Encouragement
- The greatest problem to overcome.....Fear
- The most effective sleeping pill.....Peace of Mind
- The most crippling disease.....Excuses
- The most powerful force in life.....Love
- The most dangerous pariah.....A gossip
- The most incredible computer.....The brain
- The worst thing to be without.....Hope
- The deadliest weapon.....The tongue
- The two most power-filled words....."I can"
- The greatest asset.....Faith
- The most worthless emotion.....Self pity
- The most beautiful attire.....A smile
- The most prized possession.....Integrity
- The most contagious spirit.....Enthusiasm
- The most powerful channel of communication
.....Prayer

of God is clear and plain if men will read it. Do not leave your religion at the church building as some did their Bibles. Make the Bible a book of daily study and meditation. You have only your soul to gain. WHAT WILL YOU DO?

-Gerald W. Miles

SEVEN AGES OF MAN

R.M. Cornelius identifies "Seven Ages of Man:"

- 6 weeks—all systems go
- 6 years—all systems "No!"
- 16 years—all systems know
- 26 years—all systems glow
- 36 years—all systems owe
- 56 years—all systems status quo
- 76 years—all systems slow

I don't know about you, but it shocks me to see that I am already firmly entrenched in the fifth age—all systems owe. Where has the time gone? Surely Job knew what he was talking about when he said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle" (Job 7:6). It seems that "the hurrier I go, the behinder I get."

The most precious commodity we have today is not silver or gold, but time. John Randolph reminds us, "Time is at once the most valuable and the most perishable of all possessions." When we squander it on things that don't matter, we are so foolish. Paul warns us, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). When we look around us, we can see that the days we are living in are truly evil, with sin rampant in our world. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, however, that "this time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it." What we need to deal with out time is a heavenly perspective: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3).

What will you do with time? I find Henry Thoreau's observation thoughtful: "As if you could kill time without injuring eternity" (Walden I: Economy). Will we "injure eternity?" We are each given twenty-four precious hours daily. How will we use them? Whatever age we find ourselves in, whether 6 or 76, we must serve faithfully.

-Bob Prichard

WITH EVERY FIBER OF OUR BEING...

Absolute and total commitment and devotion should characterize all in which we believe and we do. Anything worth doing is worth doing wholeheartedly because there is little worse in the world than fickleness and lukewarmness. In fact, Jesus on one occasion rebuked a group of people for being lukewarm and fickle regarding their religious devotion. To the church at Laodicea He said: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16). There was no room among His faithful followers for those who could not make up their mind as to whether they wanted to serve God or self. Thus He commanded them to clearly state their intention—will they be hot or cold? Lukewarmness was not going to cut it. There is a phrase that we often use when we attempt to illustrate a particular degree of devotion. We will state that our commitment is to something "with every fiber of our being." God gives us some clearly stated expectations and desires for each of His children that He wants us to incorporate devotedly in our lives. And with every fiber of our being should we comply.

With every fiber of our being we should hate sin. Part of the problem the Laodiceans faced was that they just were not convinced that sin was all that bad. Now, mind you, they were not convinced it was entirely good either, but they just could not bring themselves to hate sin. God, though, hates sin. Solomon listed six things that God hates, seven that were an abomination to Him (Proverbs 6:16-18). And the Bible explicitly identifies the righteous as those who follow Divine example and hate sin as well:

- Psalm 97:10—"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked."
- Psalm 101:3—"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."
- Psalm 119:104—"Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."
- Proverbs 8:13—"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."

And especially did God plead for His faithful to hate sin. Amos, the country prophet, plead for repentance among God's people, but knew it would not come unless they hated sin. Thus he pled: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:15). If we truly are servants of God, then according to His divine will, we will hate sin with every fiber of our being.

With every fiber of our being we should love God. The other half of the Laodiceans' problem was that they were not convinced that God was all that good. Of course, they did not believe He was all that bad either; but something had developed within their minds and lives that kept them from fully devoting themselves to God. Manifold are the inspired passages that not only tell us of God's love for man, but also seek to instill within man a love for God. Foremost that comes to mind is a conversation that took place between Jesus and a certain lawyer:

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:25-27).

Did you notice the description of the degree of love that man should have for God? With all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind. In other words, with every single part or fiber of our being we should feel and show love for God. Thereby can we find eternal life.

With every fiber of our being we should serve mankind. This does not mean that our lives should be lived according to the stubborn will of the world and what they want. This does mean that we should live to provide them with what they need as prescribed by God. We should teach them about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come (Acts 24:25). We should be an encouragement to them to put away sin and cleave to a life of enduring obedience to God's divine will. Such is not only our opportunity but our responsibility (Matthew 28:18-20). And such should be our mission with every fiber of our being.

What we do, we should do wholeheartedly. Preeminently that means we should serve God with everything we have to offer, which is often far more than we give. See the evil of sin, the goodness of God, and the satisfaction of serving your neighbor and work for righteousness with every fiber of your being.