

MAN'S GREATEST CONCERN – continued from page 1.

Third, one should notice how God moves people to come out of a life of sin. Jesus had more to say about hell than anyone else we read of in the Bible; and the reason why is that He does not want anyone to go to that terrible place (Mat. 25; 2 The. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:9-13; Rev. 22:17). Is it not obvious that one of the ways to understand just how God views sin is to understand the place that God has prepared for those who die in sin? Do we try to get people to see the eternal consequences of their sinful lives (Rom. 2:3)?

God's great love for sinful man is the other factor that helps us see sin as God sees it (Rom. 2:4). "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8; John 3:16). To study in the Bible the loving, sinless life of Christ and to meditate on is-agonizing sinless- life of Christ and to meditate on His agonizing and shameful death is a great motivating factor for man. In so doing one realizes that Christ freely left Heaven and the form of God to take upon himself to be tempted as all men are tempted, yet without sin (Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 4:15).

Surely, few people meditate on what God has done for them that they never could do for themselves! If the consequences of a devil's hell for the sinner and the love of God to redeem sinful man will not move one to turn to God in penitence and obedience to the gospel. **NOTHING ELSE IS AVAILABLE TO TURN THE SINNER FROM HIS ETERNAL APPOINTMENT WITH THE FIRES OF HELL!**

People who take the Lord's name in vain, commit adultery and other immoral acts; who lie, cheat, gossip, steal, teach false doctrine, etc., are going to burn in hell eternally. The unfaithful members of the Lord's church who have ceased to worship according to the Bible; who do not study the Bible; who are covetous; who murmur and complain; who are immoral; who repudiate Bible authority; who are hypocrites and who hate their brethren who love and obey the truth will also suffer the torment of the raging fires of "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8; 2 Pet. 2:20-22). **ASSUREDLY, THE ELDERS AND PREACHERS WHO SEE A LOST WORLD AND SINFUL MEMBERS AND SO NOT TRY TO CONFRONT BOLDLY SUCH SINFUL PEOPLE WITH GOD'S TRUTH, WILL OCCUPY ONE OF THE HOTTER AND LOWER PITS OF HELL!**

If precious souls are to escape the horrors of hell we must do our part as Christians to get men to see what sin is. Let us not forget to set forth the Christ who is "...the way, the truth, and life:" (John 14:6).

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BELVEDERE BEACON
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MAN'S GREATEST CONCERN

The story is told of a preacher who preached a very graphic and descriptive sermon on sin. After the sermon, one "well meaning" and prominent church member approached the preacher with the following advice. The person said, "We don't want you to talk so plainly about sin, because if our children hear you talking so much about sin they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but don't speak so plainly about sin."

Shortly thereafter the "well meaning" member was visiting the preacher's home. The preacher presented a bottle of strychnine marked "Poison" to his visitor. Reminding the "well meaning" member of the earlier advice given to the preacher, the preacher then said to his visitor, "I see now what you meant in your recent advice. You want to change the label. But suppose I take off this label marked 'Poison' and put some mild label, such as 'Oil of Anise,' can't you see what happens? **THE Milder YOU MAKE THE LABEL, THE MORE DANGEROUS YOU MAKE THE POISON.**"

Our Lord did not place a "mild label" on sin. He made it clear that sin is man's greatest concern. It is the responsibility of the church (gospel preachers in particular) to make sin as real and abhorrent to people as possible if there is to be any hope of convicting anyone of sin and thereby truly converting them to Christ.

First, we must realize that God is the only one who can evaluate sin properly. Let us, therefore, strive to see sin as God sees it.

Second, God defines sin to be "...the transgression of the law," as well as omitting what is authorized. (1 John 3:4). Sin separates men from God (Isa. 59:2; Col. 2:13). Hence, to die in sin is to be lost eternally in a devil's hell. (Gal. 5:19-24; Rev.2 1:8; Mat. 25:41-46).

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The following article deals with a question that should concern us all as it relates to seeking to reach our relatives or friends within denominational churches or, for that matter, those who are members of unsound or unfaithful churches of Christ. We should indeed do all that we can to convert people and also restore brethren to the truth who have deserted the Lord's way for a way of their own choosing.

ATTEND A DENOMINATIONAL SERVICE?

QUESTION

Is it right to attend church services at a denomination with a friend in order to get him to attend services with me?

ANSWER

If you are talking about attending a denominational service with a friend at a time when the Lord's church is not assembling, and provided you do not in anyway participate (such as singing while they play an instrument of music, or giving money to support their work), fellowship those in error, then go with your friend. However, if you mean attending a denomination on Sunday morning/evening or otherwise when the Lord's church is meeting-, that would be wrong (Hebrews 10:25).

The best intentions do not justify violating the scriptures. Shall we "do evil that good may come" (Romans 3:8)? Certainly not! I have attended denominational services before to investigate their teaching and claims, but never when the Lord's church was meeting, and I was careful not to do anything that appeared as an endorsement.

A denominational church asked me to speak one Sunday, after our church services had ended. I agreed, since they put no restriction on the message. I preached slightly over an hour, and covered the distinctive nature of the Lord's church and examples of conversion. Needless to say, I was not invited back. Many were offended at the sermon, but a couple mentioned that they had never before studied that topic, and planned to investigate further. Let us stand for truth, and never compromise with error.

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NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron' sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter, and Tim Smith. Kathy Treadway has gone on vacation to Hawaii and other places. She will be back later this month. Tameka Key is in Atlanta this weekend.

Remember, on July 11 we will have a low country boil. Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to participate.

WHAT DO I OWE MY CONGREGATION?

I owe it loyalty. I must help carry out every good work it undertakes. I should help other congregations in special efforts, but I should not neglect my home congregation.

I owe it my dependability. I am depending on it for many things it does in my behalf. It is not fair and right for me to depend on it and not be such that it cannot depend on me. I must fully keep faith.

I owe it my financial support. It takes money to operate the church and preach the gospel. I am responsible to the Lord to give as he has prospered me. My home congregation has first call on my financial ability, for if the members of the church do not support the work of the home congregation, it will not be supported. The expenses go on whether I am there or not, so I should make up my contributions when absent.

I owe it my presence. If everyone stayed home there would be no church services. I am responsible as anyone to attend all of its services. I must not be a parasite.

I owe it the influence of a godly life. The life I live either helps others to obey the gospel or makes it harder for them. How I live effects or makes it harder for them. How I live affects the work of the church and the salvation of the lost. I should live in such a way that my life will be a blessing to others.

Author Unknown