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THE SWORD AND TRUMPET monthly magazine is a faith ministry directed by a Board representing various constituencies of the Mennonite Church. It is committed to defending, proclaiming, and promoting the whole Gospel of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes neglected truth and contends for "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." This publication exposes and opposes doctrinal error which compromises that faith and leads to apostasy.

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elephants, dogs, lizards and—in the ancient past—dinosaurs.

The implication, the researchers said, is that birds almost certainly did not descend from theropod dinosaurs, such as tyrannosaurus or allosaurus. The findings add to a growing body of evidence in the past two decades that challenge some of the most widely-held beliefs about animal evolution.

"For one thing, birds are found earlier in the fossil record than the dinosaurs they are supposed to have descended from," Ruben said. "That's a pretty serious problem, and there are other inconsistencies with the bird-from-dinosaur theories."

"But one of the primary reasons many scientists kept pointing to birds as having descended from dinosaurs was similarities in their lungs," Ruben said. "However, theropod dinosaurs had a moving femur and therefore could not have had a lung that worked like that in birds. Their abdominal air sac, if they had one, would have collapsed. That undercuts a critical piece of supporting evidence for the dinosaur-bird link."

"A velociraptor did not just sprout

feathers at some point and fly off into the sunset," Ruben said.¹

I'd like to especially call attention to the first paragraph of the excerpt. As stated by Ruben, after centuries of study we still didn't, and very likely still don't, fully understand a basic aspect of bird biology. In light of that admission regarding something that exists in the present that we can study "hands on," how can we invest any significant faith/trust in the scientific community, which consists of fallen men, regarding the study of the past in an evolutionary context? When dealing with the past, without the availability of an eyewitness account, any interpretation hinges on the worldview or bias (and its inherent assumptions) of the interpreter. That's why we need an absolute standard of truth (the Bible) on which we can base our assumptions, given by someone who is infallible (God/Jesus/Holy Spirit) and was there. From that standard we can then measure or validate all of our conclusions and interpretations. ■

ENDNOTE

1. *Discovery raises new doubts about dinosaur-bird links*, Contact: John Ruben, Professor of Zoology, Oregon State University; http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2009-06/osu-drm060809.php

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Person of the Month:

Walter E. Yoder

(1889-1964)



On a farm near Howe in Lagrange County, Indiana, Walter E. Yoder was born to Eli D. and Sarah (Hooley) Yoder on January 8, 1889. Walter was one of eleven children in the family which was composed of seven sisters, two brothers, and a half brother.

In 1892, Walter and his family moved to the southwestern part of the county near Topeka, Indiana. The family attended the Maple Grove Mennonite Church in the area during Yoder's childhood and youth.

In 1899, at the age of 10, Walter Yoder experienced an event which would significantly impact his future. A music salesman happened by the home of the Yoder family in hopes of selling them a reed organ. Being invited inside, the salesman demonstrated his product while the family joined him in song. As a result, the organ was purchased and Walter subsequently began taking music lessons.

In December of 1903, the evangelist Jacob Gerig held evangelistic meetings at Walter's church. As a result of those meetings Walter Yoder accepted the Lord as his Saviour. Walter was now 14 years old and in the eighth grade. During his high school years, while attending a Sunday school conference at his home church, Brother Walter was encouraged to yield his life to the Lord, for whatever service the Lord might choose, which he did willingly.

In 1908, at the age of 19, Walter Yoder graduated from Topeka High School. During that summer Yoder took a twelve-week course at Goshen College to prepare him to teach school. For the next school year Brother Yoder taught at a school in Lagrange County. Then he returned to the college to finish his freshman year. After teaching a second year at the same school Walter decided to go to summer school again, but this time his course of study was to prepare him to receive a music teacher's certificate. Finishing summer school, Brother Yoder spent the fall term teaching at a school in Johnson County, Iowa. In addition, Walter was busy teaching singing classes at East Union Church in Kalona. Yoder now knew that his direction for the rest of his life would be in music. Returning to Goshen again, he finished his studies and received his music certificate in 1913, at the age of 24. Brother Yoder then taught music classes and directed the music for services for many well-known Mennonite evangelists of his time.

On November 1, 1917, at the age of 28, Walter E. Yoder married Matilda M. Schertz. Eventually God blessed their family with the births of four daughters and three sons. The year 1917 brought other changes into the Yoder family. World War I broke out and because Brother Yoder stated his Biblical conviction of nonresistance he was not drafted, but as a result he was also not allowed to leave the country to conduct singing classes that he had previously scheduled in Canada. Needing a source of income, Walter and Matilda moved to Metamora, Illinois, so that Yoder could farm with his father-in-law.

(continued on page 7)

I Call It Heresy!

by A. W. Tozer

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts [evil desires] in your ignorance” (1 Peter 1:14).

The Scriptures do not teach that the Person of Jesus Christ nor any of the important offices which God has given Him can be divided or ignored according to the whims of men.

Therefore, I must be frank in my feeling that a notable heresy has come into being throughout our evangelical Christian circles—the widely accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need Him as Saviour and we have the right to postpone our obedience to Him as Lord as long as we want to!

This concept has sprung naturally from a misunderstanding of what the Bible actually says about Christian discipleship and obedience. It is now found in nearly all of our full gospel literature. I confess that I was among those who preached it before I began to pray earnestly, to study diligently, and meditate with anguish over the whole matter.

I think the following is a fair statement of what I was taught in my early Christian experience and it certainly needs a lot of modifying and a great many qualifiers to save us from being in error.

“We are saved by accepting Christ as our Saviour; we are sanctified by accepting Christ as our Lord; we may do the first with doing the second!”

The truth is that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred Scriptures. Peter makes it plain that we are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience” (1 Peter 1:2).

What a tragedy that in our day we often hear the gospel appeal made on

this kind of basis:

“Come to Jesus! You do not have to obey anyone. You do not have to change anything. You do not have to give up anything, alter anything, surrender anything, give back anything—just come to Him and believe in Him as Saviour!”

So they come and believe in the Saviour. Later on, in a meeting or conference, they will hear another appeal:

“Now that you have received Him as Saviour, how would you like to take Him as Lord?”

The fact that we hear this everywhere does not make it right. To urge men and women to believe in a divided Christ is bad teaching for no one can receive half of Christ, or a third of Christ, or a quarter of the Person of Christ! We are not saved by believing in an office nor in a work.

I heard well-meaning workers say, “Come and believe on the finished work.” That work will not save you. The Bible does not tell us to believe in an office or a work, but to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Person who has done that work and holds those offices.

Now, note again, Peter’s emphasis on obedience among the scattered and persecuted Christians of his day.

It seems most important to me that Peter speaks of his fellow Christians as “obedient children.” He was not giving them a command or exhortation to be obedient. In effect, he said, “Assuming that you are believers, I therefore gather that you are also obedient. So now, as obedient children, do so and so.”

Obedience Taught Throughout Bible

Brethren, I would point out that obedience is taught throughout the entire Bible and that true obedience is one of the toughest requirements of the Christian life. Apart from obedience, there can be no salvation, for salvation without obedience is a self-contradictory impossibility. The essence of sin is rebellion against divine authority.

God said to Adam and Eve, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Here was a divine requirement calling for obedience on the part of those who had the power of choice and will.

In spite of the strong prohibition, Adam and Eve stretched forth their hands and tasted of the fruit and thus they disobeyed and rebelled, bringing sin upon themselves.

Paul writes very plainly and directly in the Book of Romans about "one man's disobedience"—and this is a stern word by the Holy Spirit through the apostle—by one man's disobedience came the downfall of the human race!

In John's Gospel, the Word is very plain and clear that sin is lawlessness, that sin is disobedience to the law of God. Paul's picture of sinners in Ephesians concludes that "the people of the world are the children of disobedience." Paul certainly means that disobedience characterizes them, conditions them, molds them. Disobedience has become a part of their nature.

All of this provides background for the great, continuing question before the human race: "Who is boss?" This breaks down into a series of three questions: "To whom do I belong?" "To whom do I owe allegiance?" and "Who has authority to require obedience of me?"

Now, I suppose of all the people in the world Americans have the most difficult time in giving obedience to anyone or anything. Americans are supposed to be sons of freedom. We ourselves were the out-

cropping of a revolt. We spawned a revolution, pouring the tea overboard in the Boston harbor. We made speeches and said, "That sound of the clash of arms is carried on every wind that blows from the Boston Commons" and finally, "Give me liberty or give me death!"

That is in the American blood and when anyone says, "You owe obedience," we immediately bristle! In the natural sense, we do not take kindly to the prospect of yielding obedience to anyone.

In the same sense, the people of this world have a quick and ready answer to the questions: "To whom do I belong?" and "To whom do I owe obedience?"

Their answer is: "I belong to myself. No one has authority to require my obedience!"

In the Name of "Individualism"

Our generation makes a great deal out of this, and we give it the name of "individualism." On the basis of our individuality we claim the right of self-determination.

In an airplane, the pilot who sits at the controls determines where that plane is going. He must determine the destination.

Now, if God had made us humans to be mere machines we would not have the power of self-determination. But since He made us in His own image and made us to be moral creatures, He has given us that power of self-determination.

I would insist that we do not have the right of self-determination because God has given us only the power to choose evil. Seeing that God is a holy God and we are moral creatures having the power but not the right to choose evil, no man has any right to lie.

We have the power to lie but no man has any right to lie.

We have the power to steal—I could go out and get myself a better coat than the one I own. I could slip out through a side door and get away with the coat. I have that power but I do not have the right!

I have the power to use a knife, a razor,

or a gun to kill another person—but I do not have that right! I have only the power to do it.

Actually, we only have the right to be good—we never have the right to be bad because God is good. We only have the right to be holy; we never have the right to be unholy. If you are unholy you are using a right that is not yours. Adam and Eve had no moral right to eat of that tree of good and evil, but they took it and usurped the right that was not theirs.

The poet Tennyson must have thought about this for he wrote in his *In Memoriam*: “Our wills are ours, we know not how; our wills are ours to make them Thine!”

Oh, this mystery of a man’s free will is far too great for us! Tennyson said, “We know not how.” But then he girds himself and continues, “Yes, our wills are ours to make them Thine.” And that is the only right we have here: to make our wills the wills of God, to make the will of God our will!

God Is the Sovereign

We must remember that God is who He is and we are what we are. God is the Sovereign and we are the creatures. He is the Creator and therefore He has a right to command us with the obligation that we should obey. It is a happy obligation, I might say, for “His yoke is easy and His burden is light.”

Now, this is where I raise the point again of our human insistence that Christ may sustain a divided relationship toward us. This is now so commonly preached that to oppose it or object to it means that you are sticking your neck out and you had best be prepared for what comes.

But how can we insist and teach that our Lord Jesus Christ can be our Saviour without being our Lord? How can we continue to teach that we can be saved without any thought of obedience to our Sovereign Lord?

I am satisfied that when man believes on Jesus Christ he must believe on the

whole Lord Jesus Christ—not making any reservation! I am satisfied that it is wrong to look upon Jesus as a kind of divine nurse to whom we can go when sin has made us sick, and after He has helped us, to say “Good-bye”—and go on our own way.

Suppose I slip into a hospital and tell the staff I need a blood transfusion or perhaps an x-ray of my gall bladder. After they have ministered to me and given their services, do I just slip out of the hospital again with a cheery “Good-bye”—as though I owe them nothing and it was kind of them to help me in my time of need?

That may sound like a grotesque concept to you, but it does pretty well draw the picture of those who have been taught that they can use Jesus as a Saviour in their time of need without owning Him as Sovereign and Lord and without owing Him obedience and allegiance.

No Such Concept of Salvation

The Bible never in any way gives us such a concept of salvation. Nowhere are we ever led to believe that we can use Jesus as a Saviour and not own Him as our Lord. He is the Lord and as the Lord He saves us, because He has all of the offices of Saviour and Christ and High Priest and Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption! He is all of these things and all of these are embodied in Him as Christ the Lord.

My brethren, we are not allowed to come to Jesus Christ as shrewd, clever operators saying, “We will take this and this, but we won’t take that!” We do not come to Him as one who, buying furniture for his house, declares: “I will take this table but I don’t want that chair”—dividing it up!

No, sir! It is either all of Christ or none of Christ!

I believe we need to preach again a whole Christ to the world—a Christ who does not need our apologies, a Christ who will not be divided, a Christ who will either be Lord of all or who will not be Lord at all!

I think it is important to agree that true salvation restores the right of a Creator-

creature relationship because it acknowledges God's right to our fellowship and communion.

You see, in our time we have over-emphasized the psychology of the sinner's condition. We spend much time describing the woe of the sinner, the grief of the sinner, and the great burden he carries. He does have all of these, but we have over-emphasized them until we forget the principal fact—that the sinner is actually a rebel against properly constituted authority!

That is what makes sin, sin. We are rebels. We are sons of disobedience. Sin is the breaking of the law and we are in rebellion and we are fugitives from the just laws of God while we are sinners.

By way of illustration, suppose a man escapes from prison. Certainly he will have grief. He is going to be in pain after bumping logs and stones and fences as he crawls and hides away in the dark. He is going to be hungry and cold and weary. His beard will grow long and he will be tired and cramped and cold—all of these will happen, but they are incidental to the fact that he is a fugitive from justice and a rebel against law.

So it is with sinners. Certainly they are heartbroken and they carry a heavy load. The Bible takes full account of these things; but they are incidental to the fact that the reason the sinner is what he is, is because he has rebelled against the laws of God and he is a fugitive from divine judgment.

It is that which constitutes the nature of sin; not the fact that he carries a heavy load of misery and sadness and guilt. These things constitute only the outcropping of the sinful nature, but the root of sin is rebellion against God. Does not the sinner say: "I belong to myself—I owe allegiance to no one unless I choose to give it!" That is the essence of sin.

But thankfully, salvation reverses that and restores the former relationship so that the first thing the returning sinner does is to confess: "Father, I have sinned

against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luke 15:18, 19).

Thus, in repentance, we reverse that relationship and we fully submit to the Word of God and the will of God, as obedient children.

Now that happiness of all the moral creatures lies right here, brethren, in the giving of obedience to God. The Psalmist cried out in Psalm 103:21, "Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure."

The angels in Heaven find their complete freedom and highest happiness in obeying the commandments of God. They do not find it a tyranny—they find it a delight.

I have been looking again into the mysteries in the first chapter of Ezekiel and I don't understand it. There are creatures with four faces and four wings, strange beings doing strange things. They have wheels and still other wheels in the middle of the wheels. There is fire coming out of the north and there are creatures going straight ahead and some that lower their wings and wave them. Strange, beautiful beings and they are all having the time of their lives utterly, completely delighted with the Presence of God and that they could serve God!

A World of Disobedience

On the other hand, Hell is certainly the world of disobedience. Everything else that may be said about Hell may be true, but this one thing is the essence—Hell is the world of the rebel! Hell is the Alcatraz for the unconstituted rebels who refuse to surrender to the will of God.

I thank God that Heaven is the world of God's obedient children. Whatever else we may say of its pearly gates, its golden streets, and its jasper walls, Heaven is Heaven because children of the Most High God find they are in their normal sphere as obedient moral beings.

Jesus said there are fire and worms in

Hell, but that is not the reason it is Hell. You might endure worms and fire, but for a moral creature to know and realize that he is where he is because he is a rebel—that is the essence of Hell and judgment. It is the eternal world of all the disobedient rebels who have said, “I owe God nothing!”

This is the time given us to decide. Each person makes his own decision as to the eternal world he is going to inhabit.

A Serious Decision

This is a serious matter of decision. You do not come to this decision as though it were a matter of being interviewed for a job or getting your diploma at a school.

We have no basis to believe that we can come casually and sprightly to the Lord Jesus and say, “I have come for some help, Lord Jesus. I understand that You are the Saviour so I am going to believe and be saved and then I am going to turn away and think about the other matters of lordship and allegiance and obedience at some time in the future.”

I warn you—you will not get help from Him in that way for the Lord will not save those whom He cannot command!

He will not divide His offices. You cannot believe on a half-Christ. We take Him for what He is—the anointed Saviour and Lord who is King of kings and Lord of lords! He would not be who He is if He saved us and called us and chose us without the understanding that He can also guide and control our lives.

Brethren, I believe in the deeper Christian life and experience—oh, yes! But I believe we are mistaken when we try to add the deeper life to an imperfect salvation, obtained imperfectly by an imperfect concept of the whole thing.

Under the working of the Spirit of God through such men as Finney and Wesley, no one would ever dare to rise in a meeting and say, “I am a Christian” if he had not surrendered his whole being to God and had taken Jesus Christ as his Lord. It was only then that he could say, “I am saved!”

Today, we let them say they are saved no matter how imperfect and incomplete the transaction, with the proviso that the deeper Christian life can be tacked on at some time in the future.

Can it be that we really think we do not owe Jesus Christ our obedience?

We have owed Him obedience ever since the second we cried out to Him for salvation, and if we do not give Him that obedience, I have reason to wonder if we are really converted!

I see things and I hear of things that Christian people are doing. As I watch them operate within the profession of Christianity I do raise the question of whether they have been truly converted.

Brethren, I believe it is the result of faulty teaching to begin with. They thought of the Lord as a hospital and Jesus as chief of staff to fix up poor sinners that had gotten into trouble!

“Fix me up, Lord,” they have insisted, “so that I can go on my own way!”

That is bad teaching, brethren. It is filled with self-deception. Let us look unto Jesus our Lord, high, holy, wearing the crowns, Lord of lords and King of all, having a perfect right to command full obedience from all of His saved people!

Remember What the Bible Says

Just remember what the Bible says about the Person and the titles and the offices of Jesus.

“God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36b). *Jesus* means Saviour, *Lord* means Sovereign, *Christ* means Anointed One. The Apostle, therefore, did not preach Jesus as Saviour—he preached to them Jesus as Lord and Christ and Saviour, never dividing His person or offices.

Remember, too, that Paul wrote to the Roman Christians:

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine

heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved (10:8, 9).

The apostle did not say that “You shall confess with your mouth the Saviour.” He said,

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (verses 10, 12, 13).

Three times he calls Jesus Lord in these

passages telling us how to be saved. He says that faith in the Lord Jesus plus confession of that faith to the world brings salvation to us!

God desires that we be honest with Him above everything else. Search the Scriptures, read the New Testament, and if you see that I have given a germ of truth, then I urge you to do something about it. If you have been led to believe imperfectly in a divided Saviour, be glad that there is still time for you to do something about it! ■

—Reprinted from the book *I Call It Heresy!* authored by A. W. Tozer, edited by Gerald B. Smith.

—WALTER E. YODER . . . cont'd. from page 1 —

The next few years brought sorrow for the Yoders. A daughter, born in November of 1918, died in August of 1921. A few years later a son, born in September of 1924, died eleven months later in August of 1925.

In that same year (1925), at the age of 36, Walter Yoder began a men’s chorus with men from several of the area Mennonite churches. Yoder continued to direct the chorus until September of 1931, at which time he left the farm and moved his family to Goshen where he accepted the position of music teacher and director of choruses at Goshen College. This opportunity opened up to him as a result of his good work in directing the college’s Young People’s Institute in 1930.

In 1933 Brother Yoder received his bachelor of science degree in education at Goshen and then through summer sessions he completed his master of music degree from Northwestern University in 1937 at the age of 48.

Walter was responsible for a major in music being offered at Goshen; he composed music himself thus encouraging his students to do the same and using their compositions with his choirs; he saw his dream of a college orchestra come to fruition before his retirement; he enjoyed writing hymns, his best well-known being “Teach Me Thy Truth”; he knew how to put good poetry and good music together; he was one of those involved in the compiling of songs for *Life Songs 1 & 2*; he was involved in the production of the *Church Hymnal*, *Junior Hymns* (three-part songs for ages 9-13), *Songs of the Church*, and *Our Hymns of Praise*, etc. His final contribution to the church was a joint hymnal revision project initiated by the Mennonite and General Conference Mennonite churches of which Brother Walter Yoder (representing the Mennonite Church) and Brother Lester Hostetler were co-editors.

A gracious Christian gentleman who had a sincere interest in others, Brother Yoder greatly influenced music in the Mennonite church for many years.

Walter E. Yoder died in Goshen, Indiana, October 30, 1964, at the age of 75. His funeral service, at Goshen College Mennonite Church, was held on the day which would have been his forty-seventh wedding anniversary, Sunday, November 1, 1964. He was buried in Violett Cemetery.

— Gail L. Emerson

From the Editor's Desk



Paul M. Emerson

GUEST EDITORIAL

The Erotic vs. the Spiritual

by A. W. Tozer

The period in which we now live may well go down in history as the Erotic Age. Sex love has been elevated into a cult. Eros has more worshippers among civilized men today than any other god. For millions the erotic has completely displaced the spiritual.

The Factors

How the world got into this state is not difficult to trace. Contributing factors are the phonograph and radio, which can spread a love song from coast to coast within a matter of days; the motion picture and television, which enable a whole population to feast their eyes on sensuous women and amorous young men locked in passionate embrace (and this in the living rooms of "Christian" homes and before the eyes of innocent children!); shorter working hours and a multiplicity of mechanical gadgets with the resultant increased leisure for

everyone. Add to these the scores of shrewdly contrived advertising campaigns which make sex the not too slyly concealed bait to attract buyers for almost every imaginable product; the degraded columnists who have consecrated their lives to the task of the publicizing of soft, slinky nobodies with the faces of angels and the morals of alley cats; conscienceless novelists who win a doubtful fame and grow rich at the inglorious chore of dredging up literary putridities from the sewers of their souls to provide entertainment for the masses. These tell us something about how Eros has achieved his triumph over the civilized world.

Now if this god would let us Christians alone I for one would let his cult alone. The whole spongy, fetid mess will sink some day under its own weight and become excellent fuel for the fires of Hell, a just recompense which is meet,

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and it becomes us to feel compassion for those who have been caught in its tragic collapse. Tears and silence might be better than words if things were slightly otherwise than they are. But the cult of Eros is seriously affecting the Church. The pure religion of Christ that flows like a crystal river from the heart of God is being polluted by the unclean waters that trickle from behind the altars of abomination that appear on every high hill and under every green tree from New York to Los Angeles.

Evangelicals Affected

The influence of the erotic spirit is felt almost everywhere in evangelical circles. Much of the singing in certain types of meetings has in it more of romance than it has of the Holy Ghost. Both words and music are designed to rouse the libidinous. Christ is courted with a familiarity that reveals a total ignorance of who He is. It is not the reverent intimacy of the adoring saint but the imprudent familiarity of the carnal lover.

Religious fiction also makes use of sex to interest the reading public, the paper-thin excuse being that if romance and religion are woven into a story the average person who would not read a purely religious book will read the story and thus be exposed to the Gospel. Leaving aside the fact that most modern religious novelists are home talent amateurs, scarcely one of whom is capable of writing a single line of even fair literature, the whole concept behind the religio-romantic novel is unsound. The libidinous impulses and the sweet, deep movings of the Holy Spirit are diametrically opposed to each other. The notion that Eros can be made to serve as an assistant of the Lord of glory is outrageous. The "Christian" film that seeks to draw customers by picturing amorous love scenes in its advertising is completely false to the religion of Christ. Only the spiritually blind will be taken in by it.

The current vogue of physical beauty and sparkling personalities in religious promotion is a further manifestation of the influence of the romantic spirit in the Church. The rhythmic sway, the synthetic smile and the too, too cheerful voice betray the religious worldling. He has learned his technique from the TV screen, but not learned it well enough to succeed in the professional field, so he brings his inept production to the holy place and peddles it to the ailing and undersized Christians who are looking for something to amuse them while staying within the bounds of the current religious mores.

A Time to Speak

If my language should seem severe, let it be remembered that it is not directed at any individual. Toward the lost world of men I feel a great compassion and a desire that all should come to repentance. For the Christians whose vigorous but mistaken leadership has wooed the modern Church from the altar of Jehovah to the altars of error I feel only love and sympathy. I want to be the last to injure them and the first to forgive them, remembering my past sins and my need for mercy, as well as my own weakness and natural bent toward sin and error. Balaam's ass was used of God to rebuke a prophet. It would seem from this that God does not require perfection in the instrument He uses to warn and exhort His people.

When God's sheep are in danger the shepherd must not gaze at the stars and meditate on "inspirational" themes. He is morally obliged to run to their defense. It is time for the prophet and the seer to make themselves heard and felt again. For the last three decades timidity disguised as humility has crouched in her corner while the spiritual quality of evangelical Christianity has become progressively worse year by year. How long, O Lord, how long? ■

—Reprinted with permission from *The Evangelist of Truth*, September 2010.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



A Devotional Commentary



by David L. Burkholder

APRIL 3, 2011

Faithful Example

2 Timothy 2:8-19

This is very likely Paul's last letter, written from a Roman prison to his dear son in the faith, Timothy. Paul longs to see Timothy once again (1:4; 4:9, 21), but in the interim sends this letter in which he bares his soul for the ongoing integrity of the church for which he has given his life effort and is about to give his life literally. In this epistle he gives encouragement for Timothy's personal life and work as well as instruction for maintaining a pure church and establishing qualified ongoing leadership.

In our passage for today Paul reiterates the heart of the gospel (v. 8), his imprisonment for the cause of Christ (v. 9), and the hope of eternal life with the Christ he has served (v. 12). He challenges Timothy to be a workman approved of God and to encourage fellow leaders to concentrate on the important aspects of the message and to stand unshakably for the truth.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from death was the central message of the early church and, because of Paul's faithfulness in preaching that message, the reason he was now in prison. However, though he was in chains, he was thankful that the Word of God was not bound but was being freely preached. His life commitment is stated in verse 10. He was willing to suffer and even give his life for the cause of Christ, that others might hear and accept the saving gospel of Christ.

Verses 11 through 13 may have been a hymn or a confessional of the early church, speaking of God's faithfulness to Himself (v. 13) and His faithfulness to those who serve Him, suffer for His cause, or die in His service. This statement gives assurance to Paul's situation. He had suffered for Christ, he was facing death for his commitment to Christ, and he had the assurance that death would usher him into the presence of God.

Paul urges Timothy to remind those spoken of in verse 2 of these things. He is also to encourage them to not get involved in wordy disputes about minor points which only confuse and destroy faith (see 1 Timothy 4:7).

Paul challenges Timothy to be an approved workman for God by diligence in the study of the Word and its application to life and in teaching it to others. Useless words, senseless chatter, will eat away at faith as gangrene destroys the physical body. He illustrates his point by referring to two men who undermined the faith of some by asserting that the resurrection had already taken place.

However, Paul states, the church of Jesus Christ will remain sure and steadfast even under the threat of evil forces (see Matthew 16:18). God knows those who are truly His children. It is their responsibility to remain faithful to Him and turn from iniquity (see Titus 2:12; also read the rest of 2 Timothy 2).

Paul was ready to die, assured of a home in Heaven, and having given final instructions for the ongoing health of the church which he so loved.

PAGE 10

SWORD AND TRUMPET

For thought and discussion

1. What makes the resurrection of Jesus so central to the Christian message?
2. Something to think about: To what extent am I willing to go for the cause of Christ? Am I willing to suffer or die in His service?
3. What are some useless wranglings which too often occupy our time to the detriment of fruitful spiritual discussions? How can we avoid such or steer conversations away from them? Discuss.
4. Being an approved workman for God requires effort and diligence. What are some ways we can make this happen in our individual lives? Discuss.
5. What are some current-day heresies confronting the church, and how can they best be addressed? Discuss.
6. Review the history of the church of Christ, how it has withstood the attacks of evil through the ages. What has kept it going? Are you doing your part to keep it alive and vibrant, now and into the future? Think about it.

Lesson emphasis: Faithful leadership and personal commitment are essential for the ongoing health of the church.

Key verse: 19

APRIL 10, 2011

Exhortations to the Faithful

Jude 17-25

Jude's original intention in writing was to expound on the common salvation enjoyed by all believers. However, being alerted to the insidious inroads of false teachers who had crept into the church, he redirected his focus to warning against their pernicious influence. His concern for the purity and integrity of the church parallels that of the Apostle Paul as we studied in last Sunday's lesson. Read all of Jude to familiarize yourself with the setting and concern expressed by Jude.

In verses 17-19 Jude characterizes the

error of these false teachers. He reminds his readers first of all that what he is writing is not new to them but simply a repetition of what the other apostles had warned against. Due to the seriousness of the issue he feels compelled to refresh their memory.

These mockers were interested only in fulfilling their ungodly lusts and influencing others away from the faith through derisive comments, making light of spiritual matters. They perpetuated division within the Christian brotherhood, the very antithesis of the unity achieved through oneness in Christ. Jude says bluntly, that they do not have the Spirit of God in their lives. They are a godless scourge on the church.

Jude then turns from condemnation of these mockers to encouragement for the faithful. He gives several guidelines to help them reinforce themselves against deception. They should give attention to strengthening their faith. This can be accomplished by prayer, by keeping themselves in the love of God; in other words, living in a manner to stay in His favor, and by anticipation of His coming to usher them into eternal life. A God-oriented attitude will shield against the spurious teaching of the mockers.

However, Jude does not completely write off those who have fallen away from the truth. He then gives guidelines for restoring them to faith. Different tactics need to be used for the various levels of unbelief. Some could be won back through gentle persuasion. With some, harsher methods need to be employed, somehow putting the fear of God into their hearts. But it must be done with care in that the rescuer does not become entangled in the false teaching himself. He must approach the erring one in love but with loathing of his sin.

Jude closes his little letter of warning and encouragement with a beautiful doxology of praise to the One who is able to preserve faithfulness and present the soul unblemished before God on that final day.

The joy will be Christ's for having brought a soul through safely and the joy will also be of the one brought safely through to glory.

"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." And, Amen!

For thought and discussion

1. One of the best defenses against apostasy is continual attention to the truth. Discuss ways which this can be done most effectively.
2. Which carries the most damaging influence—attacks from within the church or those from without? Good for discussion.
3. What are some of the current damaging influences affecting the unity of the church?
4. There are several things listed in this passage to help build oneself up in the faith. What are some others? Are we as individuals utilizing all the help at our disposal? That is a question to be answered individually.
5. Discuss how best to implement tactics to warn and snatch the wayward from potential doom.
6. Are you praising God for His keeping power?

Lesson emphasis: Being alert to influences threatening the faith and developing strategies for reclaiming those falling away from faith.

Key verses: 24 and 25

APRIL 17, 2011

Hail, the Messiah

Mark 11:1-11

Today is Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter when we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This was the beginning of the Passion Week when Jesus would experience arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. It would be a significant week, not only for Jesus and

His immediate followers, but would have a world-changing impact.

Jerusalem was crowded with faithful Jews there to celebrate the Passover. Jesus had been teaching and healing throughout Galilee and Judea, His name and fame were widespread, and the people were in a heightened state of anticipation. Is He truly the long-expected Messiah? Will He at this time declare Himself to the nation?

As our text opens here in Mark 11 we see Jesus making preparations for His final entry of recognition into Jerusalem. It has been called His triumphal entry. He came offering Himself as the King of peace, meek and riding on a donkey. Warrior kings rode a horse; peaceful kings, a donkey. That was significant in terms of His interpretation of the event as opposed to the expectations of the people.

Though things would soon seem to be moving beyond His control, Jesus had obviously made preparations for this event. Jesus likely had previously alerted a friend to the need of a donkey and it was readily released to His disciples on demand. That this was an untrained colt speaks loudly of Jesus' mastery of every situation and that all things are under His control.

The disciples improvised a saddle for this untrained beast of burden and then as Jesus made His way down the descent of the Mount of Olives they and the crowd spread garments and palm branches on the roadway. They were honoring Him as a King. They also cheered Him with shouts of adulation, "Hosanna; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." They recognized by this statement the connection between Jesus and David and that His Kingdom was of a spiritual rather than a political nature.

However, the shout "Hosanna" can be interpreted as "save now" and may have carried overtones of their expectation that this Messiah would indeed immediately begin to deliver them from the oppression of Roman rule. It is evident as events

moved forward that their expectation and Jesus' intention did not mesh. Only a few days later many of this same crowd had changed their shout to "crucify."

Upon His entry into Jerusalem, Jesus made His way to the temple. After observing things there He and His disciples retired to Bethany for the night, perhaps staying with friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He had offered Himself to His people but they were obviously misunderstanding of His true mission and in a few days would turn against Him and call for His death. But through it all Jesus remained in control. He was indeed the Deliverer. If only they had embraced His concept of deliverance.

For thought and discussion

1. Briefly review Jesus' ministry to see how this event fits into its total scope. Jesus' ministry was not haphazard; there was a plan. This event was a significant part of that plan.
2. How do we respond when Jesus asks use of our possessions for His ministry?
3. Jesus' deliverance from sin is only part of His ministry. What are other benefits of His ministry for us? Discuss.
4. One of the Christian virtues is hospitality. Discuss how hospitality enhances Christian brotherhood.
5. Notice the obedience and cooperation of Jesus' disciples and friends. Let this be a lesson for each of us.

Lesson emphasis: To recognize Jesus as the Messiah-Deliverer sent from God for man's benefit.

Key verse: 9b

April 24, 2011 (Easter)

Christ Is Risen: Go and Tell

Matthew 28

Today's lesson portrays the most stupendous, dramatic, and earth-shaking event this world has ever experienced. The resurrection of Jesus from death is

unparalleled in the annals of man. Not only is it a unique historical event, it is the foundation stone of the Christian faith. Our entire belief is based on the miracle of Christ's resurrection which provides us with the power of new life and with the anticipation of our eventual resurrection to eternal life.

Is it any wonder that Jesus' enemies sought to discredit and deny this tremendous display of divine power? It shattered their philosophies and put them on the defensive in the battle for men's minds. Their unwitting witness to the empty tomb and the upheaval of natural forces only added credence to the truth of the event and that it was something far beyond their control. However, we note that this event affected people in far different ways.

Early on the resurrection morning faithful women disciples came to the tomb to more thoroughly prepare Jesus' body for burial. But they were too late. Jesus had risen from death. He was alive and presented Himself to them as they left the tomb to bring the wonderful news to the rest of the disciples.

Imagine the fright of the soldiers from the earthquake and the sight of the bright angel sent as a messenger from Heaven. Fear shook them to the core. They had never experienced anything even remotely like this in their lives. When they reported this stunning supernatural event to the religious leaders they were bribed to keep it quiet and so allowed a lie to be perpetuated to downplay the significance of the event.

The message of both the angel and the resurrected Jesus to these wondering women disciples was: "Fear not." They also both gave the command to go and tell. These faithful followers of Jesus were to be the first to tell the glorious news that Jesus was alive. The text tells us they went with joy to share this wonderful and astounding news.

Following the news, and in obedience to Jesus' instructions, sometime later the

disciples gathered in Galilee at a place predetermined by Jesus. There they worshiped Him. It is difficult to believe that the doubt expressed here in verse 17 was from any of the eleven disciples. They had all seen Him in Jerusalem. Some commentators feel this may be the situation referenced by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:6 where it states that over 500 of His followers were gathered together and saw the risen Lord. From among that crowd there may have been those not yet fully convinced of the news of His resurrection.

While Jesus' mission to earth was accomplished, the completion of His task needed to be carried out by others. Therefore He commissioned His disciples to go forth into the world under His authority, teaching, instructing, and baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He also assured them of His guiding, protecting presence as they carried out this task. That task is still the ongoing mission of His followers, those whose lives have been transformed by the power that raised Him from death.

Christ is risen! Praise God!

For thought and discussion

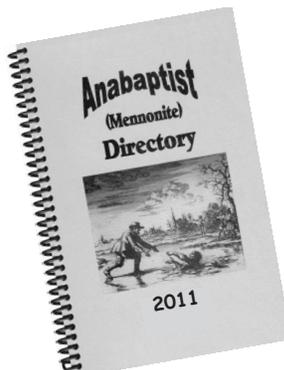
1. Read adequate context to provide background for today's lesson.
2. Notice the contrasting roles of the angel. He struck fear into the heart of the soldiers. He removed fear from the heart of the women. How do angels minister on behalf of God's people today?
3. In the face of the evidence of Jesus' resurrection, why did the Jewish leaders try so hard to deny its reality? What was their problem? Discuss.
4. Jesus' mandate for His followers is still valid today. How well are we carrying out His command to take the Gospel to the ends of the world? What are some valid methods of fulfilling His commission? Discuss.
5. Be sure you understand the significance of Jesus' resurrection as it relates to the total Christian movement. Perhaps class discussion would be helpful.

Lesson emphasis: To rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus and accept the responsibility of sharing that message of hope with a dying world.

Key verse: 6



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When Looks Can Kill

“Laura Pillarella was hugely disappointed the first time she had plastic surgery. The naturally-attractive, but insecure, young woman had hoped the procedures to remove the bags under her eyes and insert a chin implant would improve not only her looks, but also her life. They didn’t.

“ ‘When the bandages came off, I was disappointed,’ she says. ‘I wasn’t beautiful, just different. It wasn’t enough.’

“So Laura planned another operation . . . and then another. For the next decade she became trapped in a vicious cycle of surgery, dissatisfaction, and more surgery.

“Finally, after her 15th procedure, a plastic surgeon told her the real problem with her looks was that she had had excessive amounts of surgery. It was too much for Laura to bear.

“After spending more than \$60,000 trying to be beautiful, she seriously thought about taking her own life.

“Laura is typical of many cosmetic surgery patients who are left profoundly depressed by their appearance afterwards. New research shows that behind the ‘easy glamour’ of nip’n’tuck lies a silent epidemic of disappointment, leading to a wave of suicides. Women who undergo plastic surgery have a much higher risk of killing themselves, say experts in the journal, *Current Psychiatry Reports*.”

—Excerpt from “When Looks Can Kill” in the *UK Daily Mail*

While women can take a direct lesson from this story/trend (in the same way

men can take a direct lesson from the play-boy story last month), both men and women see vividly illustrated the fakiness, hollowness, and horribleness of that which is touted, by the world around us, as pleasure, success, and personal power in the relational/emotional realm. There is nothing as discouraging and disheartening as working incredibly hard for something only to find that your efforts are producing the polar opposite effect of what you are trying to accomplish. Because sin is a lie, because Satan is a deceiver, because the decision to sin is based upon us not seeing accurately the end result of a sinful action, sin always produces that discouraging, disheartening feeling, once the results start rolling in.

One of the most powerful tools that I have discovered in my personal life to break a sinful pattern is to intentionally and analytically evaluate the end result of that pattern. When I see what that pattern produces, it removes the desire and motivation to continue. It’s not an automatic victory, but it’s helpful. Jesus said a lot about light (truth) driving away the darkness. Truth showing sin for what it really is and what it really does (without its false advertising hype), drives the darkness of sin away.

* * * * *

Federal Judge Killed; Congresswoman Giffords Shot

Six people were killed and nineteen were injured when a schizophrenic man opened fire at a “Congress on Your Corner” event

held by U. S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. Among the dead were a federal judge, a nine-year-old girl (born on September 11, 2001) who was brought by a friend to be shown the civic process, and a husband who saved his wife by pushing her down and covering her to shield her from the bullets.

Obama's speech was inspiring. Selected excerpts: "But what we can't do is use this tragedy as one more occasion to turn on one another. As we discuss these issues, let each of us do so with a good dose of humility.

"In Christina we see all of our children. So curious, so trusting, so energetic . . . so deserving of our love. And so deserving of our good example. If this tragedy prompts reflection and debate, as it should, let's make sure it's worthy of those we have lost. . . . The forces that divide us are not as strong as those that unite us. That's what I believe, in part because that's what a child like Christina Taylor Green believed. Imagine: here was a young girl who was just becoming aware of our democracy. . . . She saw public service as something exciting, something hopeful. She was off to meet her congresswoman, someone she was sure was good and important and might be a role model. She saw all this through the eyes of a child, undimmed by the cynicism or vitriol that we adults all too often just take for granted. I want us to live up to her expectations. I want our democracy to be as good as she imagined it. All of us—we should do everything we can to make sure this country lives up to our children's expectations."

Rep. Giffords is fighting for her life in the hospital, having narrowly escaped death as a bullet went through her brain. Her husband, an astronaut, has been at her side.

According to the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Rep. Giffords' bachelor's thesis was about Old Colony Mennonites. She lived in Chihuahua, Mexico, from 1993 to 1994.

—Sources: *PBS*, *Mennonite Weekly Review*, *CBS News*, *Wikipedia*, Video of Obama's speech "Together We Thrive"

Pagan Gods of Earth

"United Nations climate negotiators facing an uphill battle to advance their goal[s] . . . the woman steering the talks appealed to a Mayan goddess Monday. Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the U. N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, invoked the ancient jaguar goddess Ixchel in her opening statement to delegates gathered in Cancun, Mexico, noting that Ixchel was not only goddess of the moon, but also 'the goddess of reason, creativity and weaving. May she inspire you—because today, you are gathered in Cancun to weave together the elements of a solid response to climate change, using both reason and creativity as your tools.'"

—Excerpt from "Cancun talks start with a call to the gods" (<http://j.mp/Envirogods>) in *The Washington Post*

Joni and Friends Distribute 65K Wheelchairs

"*Joni and Friends*, a prominent ministry to the disabled community, distributed 65,000 wheelchairs to people who cannot afford one. The organization helps communities around the world understand God's heart for people with disabilities while providing physical relief through the wheelchair. 'In the developing world, a disability is often a death sentence,' said Tada. 'At the least, if someone can't walk, they are confined at home, can't go to school and can't work. A wheelchair costs more than a year's wages, so the disabled person and his or her family have no hope for a better life.' In some communities, disabled infants and children are abandoned or even killed because of the financial drain on the family or because of the cultural belief that a disability is a curse."

—Excerpt from *Joel News International* Vol. 760)

Joni Eareckson-Tada was paralyzed from the waist down in an accident as a teenager and has been a huge blessing

to thousands of people since, including writing the book *When God Weeps* (a book about dealing with pain). I've heard many stories of the blessings wrought by her ministry through close friends of mine who have a partially disabled son and who volunteer with *Joni and Friends*. It was also a blessing to visit their headquarters in Los Angeles a few years ago and to sense the spirit of servanthood and Christian compassion and love.

* * * * *

News Snippets

A 23-year-old girl, who was kidnapped as a 19-day-old infant, was reunited with her family in January after years of suspicions finally led her to investigate missing persons cases that matched her profile. She was kidnapped by a lady dressed as a nurse who just walked into the hospital nursery and took her.

—*NY Daily News*

Russia has waged a brutal war against Islamic Chechen separatists, which has fueled the rise of an equally brutal Islamic terrorist insurgency. A Chechen suicide bomber killed at least 35 and wounded more than 180 today (Jan. 24) at Moscow's Domodedovo International Airport. Previous major Chechen terrorist attacks have killed 307 (1999), 129 (2002), and 331 (2004).

—*BBC, Wikipedia*

The Australian city of Brisbane and surrounding area was devastated by floods causing \$31 billion (AUD) in damages. A number of sharks were seen swimming in the streets.

—*Wikipedia, NewsCore*

A Christian couple providing food for 60-120 homeless people each day were shut down by Houston city officials because they were not preparing the "food for public consumption" in a "certified kitchen with a certified food manager."

—*Houston Chronicle*

An abortion doctor in Philadelphia has been charged with the murder of seven babies (that's all the prosecutor's office can prove, but they know there were many more) whom he delivered alive and then killed with a scissors. These murders he committed outside of the law came to the prosecutor's attention after his malpractice killed a lady. This man's brutal practices had been brought to the attention of pro-choice regulators for years, but they chose to ignore them. His wife (a cosmetologist who also performed abortions) and employees have been charged as accessories to murder. I have omitted the most sickening details.

—*ABC News Philadelphia*

* * * * *

Quotes of the Month

Defendant: "We accept that the Bible is the holy living Word of God and we endeavor to follow it as far as we are able."

British Judge: "It is inevitable that such laws will from time to time cut across deeply held beliefs of individuals and sections of society for they reflect the social attitudes and morals prevailing at the time that they are made. These laws have come into being because of changes in social attitudes. The standards and principles governing our behavior which were unquestioningly accepted in one generation may not be so accepted in the next. It is a very clear example of how social attitudes have changed over the years for it is not so very long ago that these beliefs of the defendants would have been those accepted as normal by society at large. Now it is the other way around."

—From a court case in which a Christian couple that ran a bed and breakfast in the UK declined to provide a bedroom for a homosexual couple and were found guilty of violating Britain's Equality Act of 2007.

—Source: *AlbertMohler.com*

Feedback: hansmast@hansmast.com

Youth Respecting Parental Authority

by Davy Steinhauer

Two young men walked up a hill carrying burdens made of wood. Both were called to sacrifice themselves. Both of them needed to accept the will of their father. And both of these young men gave their lives willingly into their father's hands. The 1,800 years that separated the two young men did not change the nature or intensity of submitting their wills to their authorities. Thousands of years after the sacrificial lives of both Isaac and our Lord Jesus, we struggle in the battle of the human nature versus the authorities placed over us.

In a perfect world with perfect relationships, respect for authority would simply be an automatic action—an unconscious attitude. But because sin permeates our world, we live in a grossly imperfect environment. Our very nature is sinful, and our flesh wants to rebel against every authority in our lives. The only way to address this basic need of man, is to have our hearts washed in the blood of Christ. This is the only premise upon which we can develop a Biblical respect for authority. Authority is a broad term that includes God, parents, church leaders, and government officials. However, we will focus specifically on developing and maintaining respect for parents; the principles that help us to respect our parents are the same principles that will guide our respect to the other authorities in our life.

“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men”

(Titus 3:1, 2). These verses beautifully sketch a picture of a mature youth that is willing to sacrifice his own will to the will of his authorities. Every day we are confronted with respect-related dilemmas that demand a response. What will I decide? To not decide is to passively slide into indifferent rebellion. Respect is not a default attitude: it is a choice that we must deliberately make. How can a God-fearing youth develop a healthy respect for the authorities in his or her life?

First, a youth must seek to understand. *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isaiah 55:9). Young people must understand that all authorities are ordained of God, that God is in control, and that He wants what is best for us. Once we have comprehended that the authority structure over us has been carefully crafted by God's omniscience, it helps us see the larger picture of God's plan for our lives. Our parents are not products of random selection to whom we are obligated to begrudgingly obey. Not at all! Instead, God has carefully appointed authorities in our lives who will mold us into a Christ-like person whom He can use in His kingdom! Only after Jesus and Isaac committed their wills to God could they willingly lay their lives on their Fathers' altars. Understanding God's plan for authority in our lives is the beginning of respecting them.

Some people understand the place of authority perfectly, but they refuse to accept it. These sad souls go through life chafing under the very protection that

God has granted to them. We must accept that our parental authorities are not perfect. Parents have the same human nature everyone else has, and they are just as prone to failure. Often youth, in their idealistic ideology, hold their superiors to a higher standard than they themselves are willing to be held. The Bible distinctly denounces this critical attitude in Titus 3 when it says, “*Be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*” In other words, instead of being confrontational with the authorities in your life, be patient and understanding with them.

But to only accept parental authority is still not enough—you must also love them. “*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*” (Matthew 22:39). In our youth one of our closest “neighbors” is our parents. Christian love is not conditional. It does not judge the recipient before it is bestowed. The Bible calls us to love whether our neighbor is an upstanding Christian or whether he is living in the depths of sin. God is calling us to love them with the same love that He radiated to us while we “*were dead in trespasses and sins.*” Genuine love is not static. Love is the agent that moves respect from inner thoughts to trust-building actions.

Trust is a difficult concept for youth to grasp. We tend to think that trust means independence and freedom from parental oversight. This is a misconception. To understand trust, picture a mountain climber rappelling a sheer cliff. As he descends, he has absolute trust in his ropes and gear. Does that mean that he will never inspect his gear? You say, “Of course not!” And yet, in the same breath, we so often object to accountability, even when it is actually our authorities’ responsibility to help us become a better person. Thank them for their interest and invite them to honestly evaluate our lives.

Trust is built through communication. Young person, talk to your parents. Tell them your plans. Tell them when you will

get home from an activity. Ask their advice. Share your dreams and aspirations. Parents are your most valuable asset in filtering your noble aspirations from your immature impulses. Your godly parents care about you more than probably any other person on earth. Make use of their interest!

Maybe you are reading this, and you are thinking, “That’s all easy to say, but my parents don’t care. They don’t really deserve respect. Does this still apply to me?” Maybe you have tried to build trust over and over, but every time it is shattered. Is it ever okay not to trust? Is it okay to stop communicating and instead build a self-protective wall between you and your authorities? If you are struggling to accept and respect your authorities, read the accounts of David’s interactions with King Saul. King Saul was a bitter, jealous, wicked, manipulative, angry authority in David’s life. But David never lost his respect for Saul. Even in Saul’s most deplorable moments, David gave him respect. That principle must reign in our life: respect authorities based on who they are—not on how they live.

Instead of becoming bitter, David focused on building a relationship with God. In confidence, he could offer his trustworthy life as a sacrifice to even the most corrupt of authorities. He always gave his authorities another chance. What a beautiful example! Sometimes, this openness can open doors that we once thought were forever closed. When we do our part, we can begin to build a bridge that will lead us closer to our parents.

As both men plodded up the dusty path, they headed toward the most difficult test of their lives. But they pressed on with confidence. They had followed their Father’s will, and now they both felt their Father’s presence. They knew that they would be victorious in the end. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *The Pilgrim Witness*, December 2010.



Counseling From the Word

Helping People Deal With Change

by James Rudy Gray

Some personalities embrace change while others are fearful of even the slightest change. Change, however, is something that we encounter throughout our journey on earth.

It is inevitable and it is real. Change happens. The issue affecting most people who are bothered by change is not really the change itself but how to deal with change.

Counselors and other people helpers seem to agree that if we are going to effectively help people deal with life issues, we must help them in three fundamental areas: how they think, feel, and act. These are three things everybody does. We all have a tendency to rely more heavily on one of these. Our personal “firing order” may be to think first, to react with feelings, or to jump into action.

As a Christian who is a counselor and does Christian counseling, I am convinced that the order of these three—thinking, feeling, acting—is a key in helping people. Our thoughts influence our feeling and our behavior. When we change how we think, we can change our feelings and behaviors. But for some people even the idea of changing their thoughts is threatening. Their perception of change is distorted. They take security in the routine or predictable.

They like things to be stationary or familiar. Their outlook is colored by their feelings more than by their thoughts. Actually, they do realize that things have changed, because they often long for something in the past.

This is where genuine faith is so important. Faith is not always a golden key to health, wealth, and happiness. It is the best way to live. It does please God (Hebrews 11:6). We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). Faith is the channel through which impossible things can happen. Jesus said if we have the faith of a mustard seed we can see a mountain move. We can see things differently through faith and we can overcome obstacles and difficulties through faith. In 2 Corinthians 5:7 we are told that we “*walk by faith, not by sight.*” It is easy to walk by faith when no faith is required. It is easy to walk by sight and call it faith. But, it is only by really living with faith in Christ and His Word that we have the confidence and courage to effectively deal with change.

The media kept repeating the message after September 11, 2001: “The world as we know it has changed.” The world has always been changing. We have always been changing. We will continue to change, whether we accept it or not. The most comforting foundational truth we

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can help people understand is that God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So our faith in God is not just a resource for dealing with change but the source for dealing with change.

Everyone who is living is faced with changes throughout his or her life. The fact of these changes is not as important as how we interpret the changes. If our God is the Sovereign Lord, then no change is outside His ultimate control. If God is in control, we do not need to be! This is most likely the real problem underlying the fear of change: control. People who dislike change are usually people who need to feel that they are in control of their lives. A psychiatrist once noted, "The only sane people are those who know they are not in control." That does not mean we are not responsible for our actions or not accountable to God. It simply means we are not in control. God is.

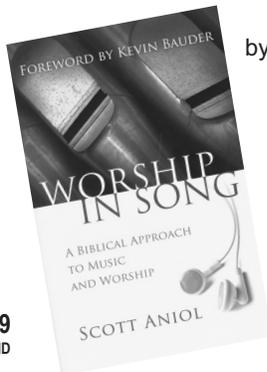
Our circumstances and our lives are changing. God does not change. By trusting in the perfect God who does not ever need to change, we can find security in the changing cycles of life.

People who come to us for counseling are often in a crisis. During a time of crisis counselees are more likely to make major lifestyle changes than at any other time. They may already be feeling insecure, fearful, and anxious. Change is not going to be the most difficult task they face. How to change will be the issue. If they can know that God does not change and we are always changing, they can find a foundation for hope. From that foundation, the principles of faith can provide the encouragement and the Holy Spirit can minister the motivation for not only personally changing but dealing with the changes of life. ■

—Reprinted from *Pulpit Helps* published by AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN.

Worship in Song

A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship



by Scott Aniol

281 pages

\$17.99
POSTPAID

While not from an Anabaptist perspective, this book is an excellent doctrinal and practical exposition of the Biblical principles of both personal and corporate worship, together with an in-depth examination of present-day music issues. Michael Harding gives the following review:

Worship in Song is one of the most insightful explanations of Biblical worship that I have ever read. Pastor Scott Aniol harmonizes the concepts of God's beauty, aesthetics, affection for God, accurate theology, and musical expertise unlike any other book on this subject. I enthusiastically recommend Worship in Song as a must read for pastors, church music directors, and all Christian musicians who sincerely desire to lead their congregations to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Available from: *Sword & Trumpet* • P.O. Box 575 • Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Fool-Proof Apologetics

A powerful way to defend the Christian faith

by Jason Lisle

The Apostle Peter was emphatic that every Christian needs to be ready to defend the faith (1 Peter 3:15). In fact, defending the faith is an essential component of evangelism. Yet Christians often find this command difficult and intimidating because some highly educated people have argued that scientific evidence refutes the claims of the Bible. How can we answer such people unless we know a lot of science?

It's understandable that many Christians feel inadequate to respond to the lofty rhetoric of the academic elite. But this need not be so. The Bible gives every one of us, regardless of age or formal education, the basic tools we need to defend the faith. You don't need an advanced degree in science or theology. Anyone can do it. We simply have to understand a few basic biblical principles.

The Ultimate Issue— Competing Worldviews

When we defend the Christian faith, we must avoid the temptation to get sidetracked on secondary issues, such as nuances of scientific arguments.¹ The goal is to quickly hone in on the heart of the matter—the debate is ultimately an issue of *competing worldviews*.

We all have a worldview (a way of thinking about life and the universe) that shapes our understanding of what we observe. But not all worldviews are equal. Non-Christian worldviews always have internal defects. Because they reject the Bible at their foundation, they end up being inconsistent, arbitrary, and ultimately irrational. With practice, anyone can learn to identify these flaws.

The Bible teaches that genuine knowledge begins with a reverential submission to God (Proverbs 1:7). So, to have a worldview that is consistently rational, we must

begin with God's Word as the foundation by which we evaluate the facts. Only God knows everything, so only He is in a position to tell us—on His own authority—what our starting point should be. Only the Bible provides a logical foundation for those things that are essential for knowledge.

The Requirements for Knowledge

In order for human beings to have genuine knowledge of any topic, certain things would have to be true, whether we recognize it consciously or not. For example, the human mind has to be capable of rational thought. The universe has to be orderly and comprehensible. Our sensations of the world around us have to be basically reliable.

The Christian worldview can make sense of all these things. The Christian understands that God made the human mind so that we could have the ability to think rationally. God made the universe and upholds it in a consistent, logical way. God created our senses so that we could accurately probe the world around us.²

Most people simply take these things for granted. They don't stop to consider how human beings are able to have knowledge of anything. Most people just blindly assume that our senses are reliable, that the mind is rational, and that the universe is orderly and understandable.

Few people think to ask, "Why should knowledge be possible?" The answer is not as obvious as it may seem. In fact, without God, we have no reason to expect an understandable universe.

So, although there is a place for discussing scientific details, it is good to remember that science itself is based on a Christian worldview. We must patiently get the unbeliever to realize that he couldn't even do science

if his evolutionary worldview were true.

If evolution were true, would there be any reason to think that the mind would be capable of rational analysis? If the universe were just the aftermath of a big bang, why would we expect it to be orderly or comprehensible? If the universe is just matter in motion, then how could there be abstract laws, such as mathematics and logic, which are required for rational thinking? If any alternative to Christianity were true, then there would be no foundation for any of the things necessary for knowledge.³

This isn't to say that non-Christians cannot know anything. Obviously they can. But this is possible only because they are being inconsistent—implicitly relying on biblical principles while simultaneously denying the Bible.

This is the important thing to keep in the back of your mind during any discussion about worldviews and Christianity. In the end, we know that Christianity is true because, if it were not, then we couldn't know anything at all. This can be a difficult concept since most people are not used to thinking through such foundational issues. But it is something that we must learn to explain if our defense of the faith is to be effective.

Don't Answer . . .

King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16), gave us the strategy to expose the defects in non-Christian worldviews in two verses of Proverbs 26. First, verse 4 states, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him."

To be clear, the Bible is not engaging in name-calling by using the word *fool*—nor should we (Matthew 5:22). Rather, the Bible uses this word to describe anyone who has rejected God's revelation (Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 14:1). By rejecting the biblical God, the unbeliever has given up the foundational truths necessary for knowledge. His position is irrational—"foolish" in the Hebrew meaning of the word.

When an unbeliever tries to set the terms

1 Peter 3:15— Four Keys to Being an Effective Apologist

1. ***"Sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart."*** Remember that all knowledge is in Christ (Colossians 2:3), and so our defense (apologetic) should be based unashamedly on the person of Christ as revealed in His Word. We can show that any system of thought, if it's not based ultimately on biblical revelation, is inherently irrational.
2. ***"Be ready always to give a defense."*** In obedience to our Lord, we should continually study the Bible and read about the common issues in apologetics so that we will be prepared. Thinking through the issues and studying the Scriptures is a lifelong process that will continually improve our defense of the faith.
3. ***"To everyone who asks a reason of the hope that is in you."*** Remember that our job is to give a good defense for those who ask. We should not be discouraged if the person is not persuaded, as long as we have given a good, biblical faithful reason for our faith. Conversion is the job of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).
4. ***"With gentleness and respect."*** Our defense should never be emotionally charged or derisive. Remember, even those who are in rebellion against God are made in His image and deserve respect.

of the conversation by saying things like, "You can't use the Bible in your argument," or "Miracles are not allowed as a legitimate explanation," he is embracing an illogical starting point for this thinking. It is inappropriate to agree to such terms.

According to the Bible, we should not "answer a fool according to his folly" or else we become like him. That is, we shouldn't embrace the unbeliever's starting point or else we too will end up just like him, holding a worldview in which knowledge doesn't make sense.

. . . Answer!

The next verse in Proverbs 26 states, "Answer a fool according to his folly,

lest he be wise in his own conceit.”

At first glance, this verse may sound as if it contradicts the previous one, but the last part of each verse makes it clear that the sense is different. Verse 5 indicates that we should show the “fool” that he isn’t as wise as he thinks he is by illustrating where his thinking leads. In other words, while we never embrace the unbeliever’s starting point (“don’t answer”), we can temporarily use his starting point (“answer”), for the sake of argument, to show that it leads to an absurd result.

For example, if evolution were true, we should have no reason to depend on our brain to know what is true because our brain is the result of chance mutations. This is an inconsistency.⁴ By reflecting back the absurd philosophy of the “fool,” as in a mirror, we show him that his view is not rational.

Examples of the “Don’t Answer, Answer” Strategy

The “don’t answer, answer” strategy is a powerful tool to use when defending the Christian faith. Consider those who say, “Christians are dishonest. They teach that God created the world only thousands of years ago, which is clearly false.” First, using the “don’t answer” side of the strategy, you’d reject the starting assumption of the critic and say something like this: “I don’t accept your claim that teaching creation is dishonest. We are equally convinced that evolution is untrue.”

Then you’d go to the “answer” part of the strategy and show that the critic’s position is inconsistent. “But for the sake of argument, even if we were lying, why would that be wrong according to your worldview? The idea that it’s wrong to lie is a biblical concept. Lying is wrong because it’s contrary to the nature of God. But in an evolutionary universe, on what basis could I say that it’s wrong to lie—particularly if it benefits my survival? I understand you agree with me that it’s wrong to lie. But my point is that such a belief makes sense only if the Bible is true.”

Consider another common complaint, “How can you believe the Bible in this age of science and technology? Science has proven that the Bible is not true.”

Using the biblical “don’t answer, answer”

strategy, you could reply: “Science has not disproved the Bible; on the contrary, science has confirmed the Bible in many areas.” You could give some examples at this point too.

Then you’d move to the “answer” part of the strategy: “But, for the sake of argument, how would science even be possible in the first place, unless the Bible’s claims about God were true?” You then patiently explain that the principles of science, such as the order and uniformity of nature and the ability of the mind to understand the universe, all ultimately come from the Bible.

Remembering that all knowledge is in Christ (Colossians 2:3), you can quickly get to the heart of the matter and expose the irrationality in any attack on Christianity. Using the “don’t answer, answer” strategy of Proverbs 26:4, 5, you can efficiently expose the inconsistency of each example of unbiblical reasoning (1 Corinthians 3:20).

Jesus tells us to build our house upon the rock—His teachings—not the shifting sands of human opinion (Matthew 7:24-27). By standing on the authority of the Bible, we can give a powerful and respectful defense of the faith. God can bless our efforts and will use our defense to draw many people to Himself. ■

ENDNOTES

1. It is easy to get caught up in nuances of scientific evidence. And while there is a place for this, we must remember the “big picture”—that science itself presupposes a Christian worldview.
2. Of course, our senses and mind do not always work perfectly due to the effects of sin.
3. Like evolution, other non-Christian religions fail to account for those things necessary for knowledge. Although a complete discussion is beyond the scope of this article, it turns out that only the Christian worldview makes genuine knowledge possible. Non-Christian conceptions of God, when carefully analyzed, turn out to be mere idols that cannot do what the Living God does (Proverbs 1:7).
4. In the evolutionary worldview, one might argue that the brain has been preserved because it has survival value. But that does not equate to rationality. For example, a blade of grass has properties that allow it to survive; but that does not mean that a blade of grass is an intelligent, rational being. In the evolutionary worldview, the thoughts of the mind are merely chemical reactions—essentially the equivalent of weeds growing. Our thoughts may have survival value, but this does not translate to “truth.”

—Reprinted with permission from *Answers*, April-June 2009.



Sermon of the Month



Each month we will feature a Biblical sermon in this column. We would like to emphasize expository preaching and ask our readers to submit good expository sermons for consideration. Please send typewritten copies by “snail mail” or E-mail to: Editor, Sword and Trumpet, Box 575, Harrisonburg, VA 22803; swandtrump@verizon.net.

A Farewell Sermon (Part 2)

by Jonathan Edwards

“As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.” – 2 Corinthians 1:14

SUBJECT: Ministers and people that are under their care must meet one another before Christ’s tribunal at the day of judgment.

Again, the mutual concerns of ministers and their people have a direct relation to the concerns of the day of judgment, as the business of ministers with their people is to promote the eternal salvation of the souls of men, and their escape from eternal damnation. The day of judgment is the day appointed for that end, openly to decide and settle men’s eternal state, to fix some in a state of eternal salvation, and to bring their salvation to its utmost consummation, and to fix others in a state of everlasting damnation and most perfect misery. The mutual concerns of ministers and people have a most direct relation to the day of judgment, as the very design of the work of the ministry is the people’s preparation for that day. Ministers are sent to warn them of the approach of that day, to forewarn them of the dreadful sentence then to be pronounced on the wicked, and declare to them the blessed sentence then to be pronounced on the righteous, and to use means with them that they may escape the wrath which is then to come on the ungodly, and obtain the reward then to be bestowed on the saints.

And as the mutual concerns of ministers and their people have so near and direct a relation to that day, it is especially fit that those concerns should there be settled and issued, and that in order to do this, ministers and their people should meet and appear together before the great Judge at that day.

Application

The improvement I would make of the subject is to lead the people here present, who have been under my pastoral care, to some reflections, and give them some advice suitable to our present circumstances, relating to what has been lately done in order to our being separated, but expecting to meet each other before the great tribunal at the day of judgment.

The deep and serious consideration of our future most solemn meeting, is certainly most suitable at such a time as this. There having so lately been that done, which, in all probability, will (as to the relation we have heretofore stood in) be followed with an everlasting separation.

How often have we met together in the

house of God in this relation! How often have I spoke to you, instructed, counseled, warned, directed, and fed you, and administered ordinances among you, as the people which were committed to my care, and of whose precious souls I had the charge! But in all probability this never will be again.

The Prophet Jeremiah, Chapter 25:3, puts the people in mind how long he had labored among them in the work of the ministry:

From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking.

I am not about to compare myself with the Prophet Jeremiah, but in this respect I can say, as he did that "I have spoken the Word of God to you, unto the three and twentieth year, rising early and speaking." It was three and twenty years, the 15th day of last February, since I have labored in the work of the ministry, in the relation of a pastor to this church and congregation. And though my strength has been weakness, having always labored under great infirmity of body, besides my insufficiency for so great a charge in other respects, yet I have not spared my feeble strength, but have exerted it for the good of your souls. I can appeal to you, as the apostle does to his hearers, Galatians 4:13, "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you." I have spent the prime of my life and strength in labors for your eternal welfare. You are my witnesses that what strength I have had, I have not neglected in idleness, nor laid out in prosecuting worldly schemes, and managing temporal affairs, for the advancement of my outward estate, and aggrandizing myself and family. But [I] have given myself to the work of the ministry, laboring in it night and day, rising early and applying myself to this great business to which Christ appointed me. I have found the work of the ministry among you to be a great work indeed, a work of exceed-

ing care, labor, and difficulty. Many have been the heavy burdens that I have borne in it, to which my strength has been very unequal. God called me to bear these burdens; and I bless His name that He has so supported me as to keep me from sinking under them, and that His power herein has been manifested in my weakness. So that although I have often been troubled on every side, yet I have not been distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed.

But now I have reason to think my work is finished which I had to do as your minister: you have publicly rejected me, and my opportunities cease.

How highly therefore does it now become us to consider of that time when we must meet one another before the chief Shepherd! When I must give an account of my stewardship, of the service I have done for, and the reception and treatment I have had among the people to whom He sent me. And you must give an account of your own conduct towards me, and the improvement you have made of these three and twenty years of my ministry. For then both you and I must appear together, and we both must give an account, in order to an infallible, righteous and eternal sentence to be passed upon by us, by Him who will judge us with respect to all that we have said or done in our meeting here, and all our conduct one towards another in the house of God and elsewhere. [He] will try our hearts, and manifest our thoughts, and the principles and frames of our minds. He will judge us with respect to all the controversies which have subsisted between us, with the strictest impartiality, and will examine our treatment of each other in those controversies.

There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid which shall not be known. All will be examined in the searching, penetrating light of God's omniscience and glory, and by Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Truth and right shall be made plainly to appear, being stripped of every veil. And all error, falsehood, unrighteous-

ness, and injury shall be laid open, stripped of every disguise. Every specious pretense, every cavil, and all false reasoning shall vanish in a moment, as not being able to bear the light of that day. And then our hearts will be turned inside out, and the secrets of them will be made more plainly to appear than our outward actions do now. Then it shall appear what the ends are which we have aimed at, what have been the governing principles which we have acted from, and what have been the dispositions we have exercised in our ecclesiastical disputes and contests. Then it will appear whether I acted uprightly, and from a truly conscientious, careful regard to my duty to my great Lord and Master, in some former ecclesiastical controversies, which have been attended with exceeding unhappy circumstances and consequences. It will appear whether there was any just cause for the resentment which was manifested on those occasions. And then our late grand controversy, concerning the qualifications necessary for admission to the privileges of members, in complete standing, in the visible church of Christ, will be examined and judged in all its parts and circumstances, and the whole set forth in a clear, certain, and perfect light.

Then it will appear whether the doctrine which I have preached and published concerning this matter be Christ's own doctrine, whether He will not own it as one of the precious truths which have proceeded from His own mouth, and vindicate and honor as such before the whole universe. Then it will appear what is meant by "the man that comes without the wedding garment"; for that is the day spoken of, Matthew 22:13, wherein such a one shall be "bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And then it will appear whether, in declaring this doctrine, and acting agreeable to it, and in my general conduct in the affair, I have been influenced from any regard to my own temporal interest, or honor, or desire to appear wiser than others, or have acted from any sinister, sec-

ular views whatsoever, and whether what I have done has not been from a careful, strict, and tender regard to the will of my Lord and Master, and because I dare not offend Him, being satisfied what His will was, after a long, diligent, impartial, and prayerful inquiry. Then it will be seen whether I had this constantly in view and prospect, to engage me to great solicitude not rashly to determine the question, that such a determination would not be for my temporal interest, but every way against it, bringing a long series of extreme difficulties, and plunging me into an abyss of trouble and sorrow. And then it will appear whether my people have done their duty to their pastor with respect to this matter; whether they have shown a right temper and spirit on this occasion; whether they have done me justice in hearing, attending to and considering what I had to say in evidence of what I believed and taught as part of the counsel of God; whether I have been treated with that impartiality, candor, and regard which the just Judge esteemed due; and whether, in the many steps which have been taken, and the many things that have been said and done in the course of this controversy, righteousness, and charity, and Christian decorum have been maintained; or, if otherwise, to how great a degree these things have been violated. Then every step of the conduct of each of us in this affair, from first to last, and the spirit we have exercised in all, shall be examined and manifested, and our own consciences shall speak plain and loud, and each of us shall be convinced, and the world shall know; and never shall there be any more mistake, misrepresentation, or misapprehension of the affair to eternity.

This controversy is now probably brought to an issue between you and me as to this world. It has issued in the event of the week before last, but it must have another decision at that great day, which certainly will come, when you and I shall meet together before the great judgment seat. Therefore I leave it to that time, and shall say no more about it at present.

But I would now proceed to address myself particularly to several sorts of persons.

1. To those who are *professors of godliness amongst us.*

I would now call you to a serious consideration of that great day wherein you must meet him who has heretofore been your pastor, before the Judge whose eyes are as a flame of fire.

I have endeavored, according to my best ability, to search the Word of God, with regard to the distinguishing notes of true piety, those by which persons might best discover their state, and most surely and clearly judge of themselves. And these rules and marks I have from time to time applied to you, in the preaching of the Word to the utmost of my skill, and in the most plain and search manner that I have been able, in order to the detecting [of] the deceived hypocrite, and establishing the hopes and comforts of the sincere. And yet it is to be feared, that after all that I have done, I now leave some of you in a deceived, deluded state. For it is not to be supposed that among several hundred professors, none are deceived.

Henceforward I am like to have no more opportunity to take the care and charge of your souls, to examine and search them. But still I entreat you to remember and consider the rules which I have often laid down to you during my ministry, with a solemn regard to the future day when you and I must meet together before our Judge, when the uses of examination you have heard from me must be rehearsed again before you, and those rules of trial must be tried, and it will appear whether they have been good or not. It will also appear whether you have impartially heard them, and tried yourselves by them. The Judge himself, who is infallible, will try both you and me. And after this none will be deceived concerning the state of their souls.

I have often put you in mind, that whatever your pretenses to experiences, discoveries, comforts, and joys have been, at that

day everyone will be judged according to his works, and then you will find it so. May you have a minister of greater knowledge of the Word of God, and better acquaintance with soul cases, and of greater skill in applying himself to souls, whose discourses may be more searching and convincing, that such of you as have held fast [to] deceit under my preaching, may have your eyes opened by his: that you may be undeceived before that great day.

What means and helps for instruction and self-examination you may hereafter have is uncertain. But one thing is certain: that the time is short—your opportunity for rectifying mistakes in so important a concern will soon come to an end. We live in a world of great changes. There is now a great change come to pass. You have withdrawn yourselves from my ministry, under which you have continued for so many years. But the time is coming, and will soon come, when you will pass out of time into eternity, and so will pass from under all means of grace whatsoever.

The greater part of you who are professors of godliness have (to use the phrase of the apostle) “acknowledged me, in part”: you have heretofore acknowledged me to be your spiritual father, the instrument of the greatest good to you that can be obtained by any of the children of men. Consider of that day when you and I shall meet before our Judge, when it shall be examined whether you have had from me the treatment which is due to spiritual children, and whether you have treated me as you ought to have treated a spiritual father.

As the relation of a natural parent brings great obligations on children in the sight of God, so much more, in many respects, does the relation of a spiritual father bring great obligations on such of whose conversation and eternal salvation they suppose God has made them the instruments, 1 Corinthians 4:15, “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”

2. To those in a *Christless, graceless* condition.

Now I am taking my leave of this people, I would apply myself to such among them as I leave in a Christless, graceless condition, and would call on such seriously to consider of that solemn day when they and I must meet before the Judge of the world.

My parting with you is, in some respects, in a peculiar manner a melancholy parting, inasmuch as I leave you in most melancholy circumstances, because I leave you in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, having the wrath of God abiding on you, and remaining under condemnation to everlasting misery and destruction. Seeing I must leave you, it would have been a comfortable and happy circumstance of our parting, if I had left you in Christ, safe and blessed in that sure refuge and glorious rest of the saints. But it is otherwise, I leave you far off, aliens and strangers, wretched subjects and captives of sin and Satan, and prisoners of vindictive justice: without Christ, and without God in the world.

Your consciences bear me witness that while I had opportunity, I have not ceased to warn you, and set before you your danger. I have studied to represent the misery and necessity of your circumstances in the clearest manner possible. I have tried all ways that I could think of tending to awaken your consciences, and make you sensible of the necessity of your improving your time, and being speedy in flying from the wrath to come, and thorough in the use of means for your escape and safety. I have diligently endeavored to find out and use the most powerful motives to persuade you to take care for your own welfare and salvation. I have not only endeavored to awaken you, that you might be moved with fear, but I have used my utmost endeavors to win you: I have sought out acceptable words, that if possible I might prevail upon you to forsake sin, and turn to God, and accept of Christ as your Saviour and Lord. I have spent my strength very much in these things. But yet, with regard to you whom I am addressing, I have not been successful, but have this day

reason to complain in those words, Jeremiah 6:29: "The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not plucked away." It is to be feared that all my labors, as to many of you, have served no other purpose but to harden you, and that the word which I have preached, instead of being a savor of life unto life, has been a savor of death unto death. Though I shall not have any account to give for the future of such as have openly and resolutely renounced my ministry, as of a trust committed to me, yet remember you must give account for yourselves, of your care of your own souls, and your improvement of all means past and future, through your whole lives. God only knows what will become of your poor perishing souls, what means you may hereafter enjoy, or what disadvantages and temptations you may be under. May God in His mercy grant that however all past means have been unsuccessful, you may have future means which may have a new effect, and that the Word of God, as it shall be hereafter dispensed to you, may prove as the fire and the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces. However, let me now at parting exhort and beseech you not wholly to forget the warnings you have had while under my ministry. When you and I shall meet at the day of judgment, then you will remember them. The sight of me, your former minister, on that occasion, will soon revive them in your memory; and that in a very affecting manner. O do not let that be the first time that they are so revived.

You and I are now parting one from another as to this world. Let us labor that we may not be parted after our meeting at the last day. If I have been your faithful pastor (which will that day appear whether I have or no), then I shall be acquitted, and shall ascend with Christ. O do your part that in such a case, you may not be forced eternally to part from me, and all that have been faithful in Christ Jesus. *This* is a sorrowful parting, but *that* would be a more sorrowful. *This*, you may perhaps bear without being much affected with it, if you are not glad of it, but such a parting in *that*

day will most deeply, sensibly, and dreadfully affect you.

3. I would address myself to those who are under some awakenings.

Blessed be God that there are some such, and that (although I have reason to fear I leave multitudes in this large congregation in a Christless state) yet I do not leave them all in total stupidity and carelessness about their souls. Some of you that I have reason to hope are under some awakenings, have acquainted me with your circumstances, which has a tendency to cause me, now I am leaving you, to take my leave with peculiar concern for you. What will be the issue of your present exercise of mind, I know not, but it will be known at that day, when you and I shall meet before the judgment seat of Christ. Therefore now be much in consideration of that day.

Now I am parting with this flock, I would once more press upon you the counsels I have heretofore given, to take heed of slightly so great a concern, to be thorough and in good earnest in the affair, and to beware of backsliding, to hold on and hold out to the end. And cry mightily to God, that these great changes which pass over this church and congregation do not prove your overthrow. There is great temptation in them, and the devil will undoubtedly seek to make his advantage of them, if possible to cause your present convictions and endeavors to be abortive. You had need to double your diligence, and watch and pray, lest you be overcome by temptation.

Whoever may hereafter stand related to you as your spiritual guide, my desire and prayer is that the great Shepherd of the sheep would have a special respect to you, and be your guide (for there is none teacheth like Him), and that He who is the infinite fountain of light, would "open your eyes, and turn you from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that you may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith that is in Christ"; that so in that great day, when I shall meet

you again before your Judge and mine, we may meet in joyful and glorious circumstances, never to be separated any more.

4. I would apply myself to the young people of the congregation.

Since I have been settled in the work of the ministry in this place, I have ever had a peculiar concern for the souls of the young people, and a desire that religion might flourish among them; and have especially exerted myself in order to it, because I knew the special opportunity they had beyond others, and that ordinarily those for whom God intended mercy, were brought to fear and love Him in their youth. And it has ever appeared to me a peculiarly amiable thing, to see young people walking in the ways of virtue and Christian piety, having their hearts purified and sweetened with a principle of divine love. How exceeding beautiful, and conducive to the adorning and happiness of the town, if the young people could be persuaded, when they meet together, to converse as Christians and as the children of God, avoiding impurity, levity and extravagance, keeping strictly to rules of virtue and conversing together of the things of God, and Christ, and Heaven! This is what I have longed for, and it has been exceeding grievous to me when I have heard of vice, vanity, and disorder among our youth. And so far as I know my own heart, it was from hence that I formerly led this church to some measures, for the suppressing vice among our young people, which gave so great offense, and by which I became so obnoxious. I have sought the good, and not the hurt of our young people. I have desired their truest honor and happiness, and not their reproach: knowing that true virtue and religion tended not only to the glory and felicity of young people in another world, but their greatest peace and prosperity, and highest dignity and honor in this world, and above all things to sweeten, and render pleasant and delightful, even the days of youth. But whether I have loved you, and sought your good more or less, now committing your souls to Him

who once committed the pastoral care of them to me—nothing remains, but only (as I am now taking my leave of you) earnestly to beseech you, from love to yourselves, if you have none to me, not to despise and forget the warnings and counsels I have so often given you. Remember the day when you and I must meet again before the great Judge of quick and dead, when it will appear whether the things I have taught you were true, whether the counsels I have given you were good, and whether I truly sought your welfare, and whether you have well improved my endeavors. I have, from time to time, earnestly warned you against *frolicking* (as it is called), and some other liberties commonly taken by young people in the land. And whatever some may say in justification of such liberties and customs, and may laugh at warnings against them, I now leave you my parting testimony against such things, not doubting but God will approve and confirm it in that day when we shall meet before Him.

5. I would apply myself to the *children of the congregation, the lambs of this flock, who have been so long under my care.*

I have just now said that I have had a peculiar concern for the young people, and in so saying I did not intend to exclude you. You are in youth, and in the most early youth. Therefore I have been sensible that if those that were young had a precious opportunity for their souls' good, you who are very young had, in many respects, a peculiarly precious opportunity. And accordingly I have not neglected you. I have endeavored to do the part of a faithful shepherd, in feeding the lambs as well as the sheep. Christ did once commit the care of your souls to me as your minister; and you know, dear children, how I have instructed you, and warned you from time to time. You know how I have often called you together for that end, and some of you, sometimes, have seemed to be affected with what I have said to you. But I am afraid it has had no saving effect as to many of you, but that you

remain still in an unconverted condition, without any real saving work wrought in your souls, convincing you thoroughly of your sin and misery, causing you to see the great evil of sin, and to mourn for it, and hate it above all things, and giving you a sense of the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing you with all your hearts to cleave to Him as your Saviour, weaning your hearts from the world, and causing you to love God above all, and to delight in holiness more than in all the pleasant things of this earth. And I must now leave you in a miserable condition, having no interest in Christ, and so under the awful displeasure and anger of God, and in danger of going down to the pit of eternal misery. Now I must bid you farewell. I must leave you in the hands of God. I can do no more for you than to pray for you. Only I desire you not to forget, but often think of the counsels and warnings I have given you, and the endeavors I have used, that your souls might be saved from everlasting destruction. Dear children, I leave you in an evil world, that is full of snares and temptations. God only knows what will become of you. This the Scripture has told us: that there are but few saved, and we have abundant confirmation of it from what we see. This we see, that children die as well as others. Multitudes die before they grow up, and of those that grow up, comparatively few ever give good evidence of saving conversion to God. I pray God to pity you, and take care of you, and provide for you the best means for the good of your souls, and that God Himself would undertake for you to be your heavenly Father, and the mighty Redeemer of your immortal souls. Do not neglect to pray for yourselves. Take heed you be not of the number of those who cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God. Constantly pray to God in secret, and often remember that great day when you must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and meet your minister there, who has so often counseled and warned you. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*.

EDITORIAL COMMENT:

Those who read the book reviewed here are urged to exercise appropriate discernment. Mrs. Murdoch is an Evangelical but not an Anabaptist. Her frame of reference is different from ours and she illustrates her points from her world, which sharply contrasts to our conservative settings. While these things are liabilities, the reader should not allow them to detract from the important positive lessons noted by our reviewer.



Book Review . . .

by Rosalind J. Byler

Raising a Christian Daughter in an MTV World

Author: Mary Ruth Murdoch
Publisher: P & R Publishing, 2000.
250 pp.

Raising a Christian Daughter in an MTV World, by Mary Ruth Murdoch, applies wisdom from the Scriptures to the challenges of bringing up daughters in a culture that has rejected God. As the mother of three daughters, Mrs. Murdoch is undoubtedly familiar with the difficulties of the project. With a Master's degree from Westminster Theological Seminary and a B.S. in family development, she is equipped to consider the subject from a Christian perspective while being aware of the problems acknowledged by secular authorities. Christian parents cannot depend upon isolation to protect our daughters from the influences of feminism and other ungodly mindsets. We must train them in wisdom so that they are able to be strong and influential instead of absorbing the world's attitudes and values. This book provides practical help for that training.

The challenge is presented in the first two chapters. What are the implications of the changes—physical, emotional, social, and intellectual—that girls face as they mature from children into adults? What are some of the untruths that our

culture is attempting to impress upon young girls? Mrs. Murdoch gives relevant Scriptures to apply; she also references the Westminster Shorter Catechism for help in explaining Christian principles in an easily memorized question-and-answer form.

The next section of the book covers developing the right foundation. Not only do you show the right way through your marriage and through your expectations, but you take time to discipline and instill right habits. And it will take time! Children need to hear the same principles repeatedly, and they also need practice applying them in different contexts. Encourage your daughter to regularly read and memorize the Scriptures. Pray with her and help her to apply God's commandments to ordinary, everyday situations. Stimulate character growth with biographies of missionaries and other heroes of the faith. Practice the fruit of the Spirit by example, instruction, and discipline.

In "The Way of Wisdom," the Book of Proverbs is used to illustrate the foolishness you can expect to see in children. Fools are naive, reckless, self-indulgent, and lacking in discretion and good judgment. Thinking they are invincible, they hurt themselves and do things they

later regret. In spite of all this, they think they know it all! Some childish folly is due to simple lack of experience and knowledge, but the greater part stems from the sinful nature, pride, and lack of faith in God. "Teach Her to Love God and Hate Sin" is the title of the next chapter, building on the assumption that wisdom must be learned over time. Teach your daughter to fear God. Show her the ugliness of sin and its consequences from real-life situations around you. Help her to develop strategies for avoiding opportunities to sin. Explain how the Scriptures, memorized, provide reminders of truth to her own heart as well as a defense against outside pressure. Help her to avoid bad companions and bad situations, being alert to discourage sinful actions from becoming habitual. Criticism, self-indulgence, disrespect, and complaining can become lifelong practices if not caught early.

Part Four of the book deals with who your daughter is. Feminism and psychology have attempted to raise young girls' self-esteem and "empower" them while ignoring what they need the most: to know God and to know themselves from God's perspective. Failure to recognize that they are designed in God's image and with a purpose often leads to despair and self-destructive behaviors. Several chapters in this section cover the good news (being made in God's image), the bad news (how sin has marred that image), and constructive ways to confront negative emotions. Realizing that she is a sinner is the first step in overcoming problems of guilt, depression, and dissatisfaction with herself. Serving others can change your daughter's attitude and help her discover her talents. Developing specific practical skills often helps in learning more general skills such as working with others, taking responsibility, and handling failure as well as success. A chapter is included on helping your daughter to be content with the body God has given her, emphasizing health and

character over appearance.

The last section of the book covers sexuality, dating, and marriage. We have no difficulty in finding Scriptural teaching on sexual purity; God's high standards are explained in detail in both the Old and New Testaments. In the wake of the damage caused by the "sexual revolution," society may seem to be friendlier to Christian values such as teenage abstinence. This by no means lessens the responsibility of parents to instruct from a Scriptural perspective! Godly self-control and morality result from Biblical self-understanding and the fear of the Lord. There are Scriptural principles to apply to dating, even though this was not a cultural practice in Bible times. Understanding marriage as God's design is especially important in a culture that mocks marriage and presents it as a second-class option. The book closes with a chapter on developing noble character by teaching two things: the character of God and the character of sin.

This book is well worth reading, and not only for parents of daughters! Mrs. Murdoch's knowledge of the Scriptures and practical applications were a challenge to me. As with any book, there are perspectives with which we would not entirely agree. While the chapter on marriage makes it clear that marriage is a lifelong covenant without the option of divorce, one of the study questions at the end suggests that there may be situations in which God permits it. Mrs. Murdoch gives ideas for structured, profitable activities that teach young girls discipline, teamwork, and useful skills; among those she includes team sports and karate. While I would not personally endorse all of her suggested or implied applications, I feel that the overall worldview of the book is Biblical and the encouragement given is to live in accordance with the Scriptures. ■

This book is available from Christian Book Distributors. ISBN: 0875523730

Song of the Month

Douglas A. Byler, Music Editor

“... singing with understanding!”

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”

by Wesley/Wesley

Lyrics: The lyrics of this hymn, written by Charles Wesley, are very similar in nature to the words that were published with the original version of this tune, “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today.” The latter is a translation of an old Latin text from the 14th century, and Wesley would likely have been familiar with its first English translation (published the year after he was born). In many modern printings of the hymn “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today,” the editors include a verse or two of Wesley’s (slightly) newer hymn in addition to the verses translated from the 14th century Latin. However, the converse is usually not true, and the hymn text printed here is entirely “Wesleyan” in origin. This was one of Wesley’s earliest hymns, and was written to be sung for the first service in the Wesleys’ new church building, affectionately known as “The Foundry.”¹

It is a little open to question whether or not this hymn was intended to be used with the “Easter Hymn” tune. One source suggests that the “Alleluia” at the end of every line was not originally Wesley’s intent, but added later by an editor to make the text fit this particular tune.² While the hymn text does “work” logically without the “Alleluia,” there is fairly good indication that the Wesleys themselves used this tune and the required “Alleluias” for this text. One of the main arguments for this viewpoint is that the first publication of this text/tune combination occurred in a little book called *A Collection of Hymns . . . as*

they are commonly sung at the Foundry.

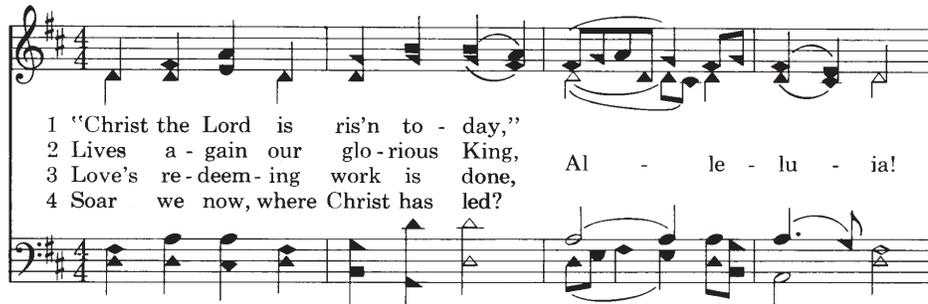
Whether or not the poet intended it, the word *Alleluia* does occur quite frequently in this hymn. Because of this, it is worth making special note of its meaning and significance in this context. The word originates in Biblical Hebrew as *Hallelujah*, and was not originally a single word, but a two-word phrase. The first word is roughly transliterated as “Hallelu,” and is a second person imperative command to “Praise,” particularly with singing or joyful shouting. The second word is transliterated as “Yah,” and is the shortened form of the written but unspoken Hebrew word for God (YHWH) from which we get “Yahweh” and “Jehovah.” So, a good English translation would be simply, “Praise Jehovah!” The term made it into the Greek translation of the Old Testament with the “H” sound still attached, and also appears four times in the New Testament book of Revelation. When the Bible was translated into Latin, the term lost the “H” and the spelling was adjusted to fit the Latin alphabet, as it appears in this hymn.

Music: When the Wesleys published this hymn, they modified the tune from the *Lyra Davidica*, calling it “Salisbury.” However, the Wesleys’ modification contained a few elements that put it out of the grasp of most congregations (namely, a sixteenth-note run and a high G in the soprano),³ and later editions “fixed” the tune to what we have today.

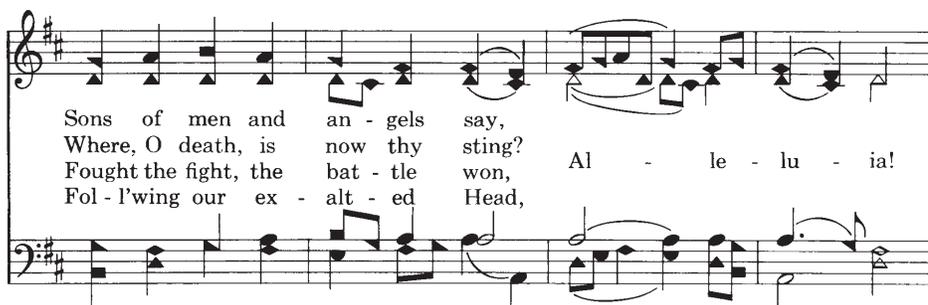
1. “The Foundry” was an old iron foundry that had been used by the British government to repair weaponry. Its use was abandoned after the building was damaged by a massive explosion, and the

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

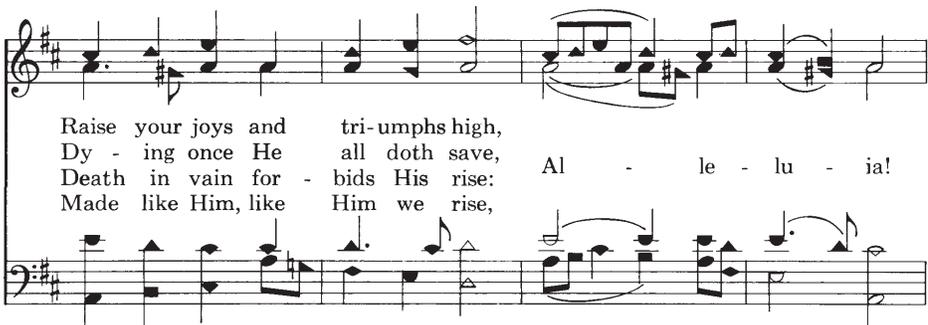
CHARLES WESLEY, 1739 EASTER HYMN 7.7.7.7. with Alleluias LYRA DAVIDICA, 1708



1 "Christ the Lord is ris'n to - day,"
2 Lives a - gain our glo - rious King,
3 Love's re - deem - ing work is done, Al - le - lu - ia!
4 Soar we now, where Christ has led?



Sons of men and an - gels say,
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Al - le - lu - ia!
Fought the fight, the bat - tle won,
Fol - l'wing our ex - alt - ed Head,

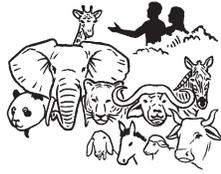


Raise your joys and tri - umphs high,
Dy - ing once He all doth save,
Death in vain for - bids His rise: Al - le - lu - ia!
Made like Him, like Him we rise,

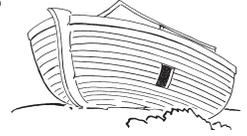


Sing ye heav'ns, and earth re - ply.
Where thy vic - to - ry, O grave?
Christ has o - pened par - a - dise! Al - le - lu - ia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies!

Wesleys acquired and remodeled the building to suit their purposes.
2. <http://www.suite101.com/content/charles-wesleys-easter-hymn-a18304>.
3. *The Musical Times*, Vol. 45, 1904 (accessed as a Google Book).



Beginning Issues



Kentucky-Fried Dino Anyone?

by John Mullett

In the scientific community it has long been posited that birds evolved from dinosaurs. Much has been made in recent years of the Velociraptor and Archaeopteryx fossil finds and the evidence they provide in the supposed evolution of dinosaurs to birds. However, scientists are far from being unified in their interpretations and each new “finding” generates considerable controversy.

Regardless of which variant of this idea one might subscribe to, there are a number of significant problems with the concept as a whole including skeletal differences, difference in lung structure and ectothermic vs. endothermic (cold-blooded vs. warm-blooded) design.

In recent years one of the more popular views has been that birds descended from theropod dinosaurs. However, a team of researchers at Oregon Sate University has published a report suggesting this is unlikely based on new findings in a study of the avian (bird) lung. I’ve included an excerpt from a press release dated June 9, 2009, because I want you to see it in their own words.

“It’s really kind of amazing that after centuries of studying birds and flight we still didn’t understand a basic aspect of bird biology,” said John Ruben, an OSU professor of zoology.

These studies were just published in The Journal of Morphology, and were funded by the National Science Foundation.

It’s been known for decades that the femur, or thigh bone in birds is largely fixed and makes birds into “knee runners,” unlike virtually all other land animals, the OSU experts say. What was just discovered, however, is that it’s this fixed position of bird bones and musculature that keeps their air-sac lung from collapsing when the bird inhales.

Warm-blooded birds need about 20 times more oxygen than cold-blooded reptiles, and have evolved a unique lung structure that allows for a high rate of gas exchange and high activity level. Their unusual thigh complex is what helps support the lung and prevent its collapse.

“This is fundamental to bird physiology,” said Devon Quick, an OSU instructor of zoology who completed this work as part of her doctoral studies. “It’s really strange that no one realized this before. The position of the thigh bone and muscles in birds is critical to their lung function, which in turn is what gives them enough lung capacity for flight.”

However, every other animal that has walked on land, the scientists said, has a moveable thigh bone that is involved in their motion—including humans,

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SWORD AND TRUMPET