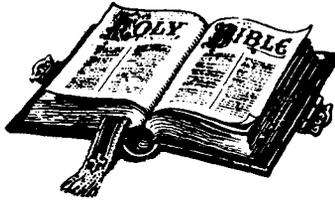


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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Number 1

WE MUST OBEY TRUTH

Truth is something that we cannot ignore and successfully escape. It is something we must search out — understand — obey — uphold. It is something that is worth losing all to find and yet, it is something that we have a tendency to let slip by as we busily engaged in the time consuming work of "making a living."

Jesus told Pilate that he came to the world to bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37). He had earlier identified "truth" as being the word of the Father (John 17:17). There are things that are "truth" in many areas, but the truth of which I speak is that regarding man's spiritual being, well-being and destiny. One of the tests of true discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ is one's knowledge and continuing in truth (John 8:31-32). Yet some men say that truth is unattainable and that there is no such thing as TRUTH. Could be we are trying to justify our refusal to search out truth and stand for it.

What is your attitude toward religious truth? How hard are you seeking to find it? How firmly do you stand in the defense of it? How earnestly do you oppose all that opposes truth? In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 Paul speaks of

those who do not believe the truth and who do not love it. He points out that God will thus send them a strong delusion and that they will be damned because of this! They didn't love it — They didn't believe it!

In Romans 2:8 Paul points out that God will punish those who do not obey truth. This same thing is taught in Galatians 2:14 and 5:7. Thus the importance of knowing truth and obeying the same cannot be over emphasized. God would have all men to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:1) and be saved. Souls are purified when men obey truth (1 Peter 1:22). We should clearly see the need to search out, understand, obey, and uphold God's word (TRUTH) in all things. Are you doing that??

— J. F. Dancer in

KNOW THE TRUTH, 3/9/72

The Writer of Hebrews Said:
"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

THE INSTRUCTOR

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Editorial . . .

DOES THE GOSPEL NEED DEFENDING?

Sometimes we hear someone say: **"The gospel of Jesus Christ does not need defending. It only needs to be preached."** Of course, those who make such a statement **never** give a passage of Scripture that **says** that nor a Scriptural principle that **proves** that the above statement is true. Usually the above statement is made by a person who does **not** believe in public discussions of God's Word where opposing views may be set forth by men who believe them to be the truth, and arguments are made by each man in an effort to prove that his view is true, and the other's view is false. Neither does such a person appreciate one who publicly defends the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures in an arrangement as previously suggested.

Many brethren in Christ have developed such an attitude as is suggested in the above statement. This attitude can be seen in the lack of interest shown by most brethren when such public discussions are arranged and conducted. Many do not attend and some even do what they can to discourage others from attending.

If **"the gospel of Christ does not defending"**, if **"it only needs to be preached"**, as some contend, then **NO ONE SHOULD EVER DEFEND IT!**

In fact, if Christians are not **authorized to defend** the gospel, it is **sinful** for them to do so.

Let us now consider the question: **"Does the gospel of Christ need defending?"** Our desires, preferences, likes and dislikes are not the standard to determine the answer to this question. **Truth** is the standard by which we must answer the question. **God's Word** is **truth** (cf. John 17:17), and truth is revealed in the Scriptures. Our appeal must be to the Scriptures. So, **what saith the Scriptures?**

1. **THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL.** In the Philippians 1:7 Paul mentioned the fact that the saints at Philippi were partakers of his grace in his (Paul's) bonds and **"in the defense and confirmation of the gospel."** In verse 17 (of Phil. 1) Paul said concerning those who preached Christ "of love", that they did so **"knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel"**. Paul was **set** for the defense of the gospel! He was both **willing and prepared to defend** the gospel! He was ready to verbally **defend** the gospel; not merely preach it, but to **defend** it! **QUESTION:** Would Paul have been **"set"** for the **defense** of the gospel if it did **not need defending!**

2. **THE APOSTLE PAUL DEFENDED THE GOSPEL.** Please read the following Scriptures and be impressed with Paul's efforts to defend the truth.

(1) Acts 17:17 — **"Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him."** NOTE: This was in Athens, Greece. **QUESTION:** Did Paul sin when he defended the gospel on this occasion? Would it have been better if Paul had not **disputed** with those people, but had just "preached the gospel?"

(2) Acts 19:8-10 — **"And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three**

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“GOD LED ME”

Ever heard that claim before? It is popular today to talk of the Lord leading one's every action. Whatever thoughts some have or business dealings they make, the Lord is given credit for causing it.

While this writer deeply believes in the providence of God and the ever present help He has promised (Heb. 13:5-6), it seems to me we should balance the scales a little by asserting that God is not responsible for every action or thought of Christians. If He were, God would be guilty of causing us to sin. (1 John 1:8-10). In fact, the backlash of such current claims will be an undermining of faith when tragedy occurs. “Why did God let this happen?” is frequently asked now by agnostics and atheists. But let the uninformed Christian begin to think of God as though He is the great Puppeteer who holds us at the end of strings and orders our every movement, and when trouble does come, he too will become bitter toward God and blame Him.

Law of nature (originally set in order by God) are the cause of much that is occurring today. A child born blind is not a direct punishment of God for sin (John 9:1-3), but may be the result of some birth malfunction or hereditary disorder. Job knew that his troubles were not due to sin. Even though his friends kept pointing an accusing finger. God had not directly caused any of Job's problems.

The point is that we must guard against making God in **our image!** It is possible to wish for something so much that we convince ourselves. “God wanted it that way,” when in fact He had no direct part at all in our decision. The prophet Jeremiah wrote against the religious leaders of his day who made wild claims about the Lord. They became so intolerable the Lord warned them not to use the expression, “**the burden of the Lord,**” i.e., “**this is the Lord's word.**” (Jer. 23:33-40). Though they said, “**I have dreamed,**” they prophesied lies (Jer. 23:25) and spoke a

DOES THE GOSPEL NEED DEFENDING?

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months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” NOTE: This was in Ephesus. Obviously Paul knew that the gospel needed **defending** and he defended it!

3. In Acts 18:28 we learn that APOLLOS “**MIGHTLY CONVINCED THE JEWS, AND THAT PUBLICLY, SHOWING BY THE SCRIPTURES THAT JESUS WAS CHRIST.**” The expression “**mightly convinced**” means “**powerfully refuted**” according to the NASV.

4. In Jude 3 we are exhorted to “**earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**”

5. In 1 Peter 3:15 Christians are told to “**be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you...**” A long time ago Solomon said: “**The heart of the righteous studieth to answer.**” (Prov. 15:28).

Yes, the gospel needs defending, but it takes more conviction, strength and courage than most people have to do so!
(CRS)

vision of their own heart and not the Lord's (Jer. 23:16). Their message was divised out of the imagination of their own mind, and consequently they were cursed for leading God's people astray.

When Christians today assert that God put every thought in their heart, they're one step away from the claims of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet.

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Sutton-Frost Debate Cancelled

The debate that was scheduled for the week of January 12, 1987 between **Carrol R. Sutton** and **Jack L. Frost** to be conducted at Berry, Alabama (or some other place of Mr. Frost's choosing has been **cancelled** by Mr. Frost until sometime in the spring. We will announce later the details concerning that discussion **when** (and **if**) Mr. Frost makes arrangements to provide a place and facilities for it. It seems rather doubtful to me that he will do so.

The other three **Sutton-Frost Debates** were conducted as announced that they would be in previous issues of **THE INSTRUCTOR**.

The discussion of the "mode" of baptism was rather unique in that Mr. Frost affirmed that **pouring and sprinkling is the ONLY Scriptural mode of water baptism**. Some of his arguments were really "far-fetched" in my judgment.

We trust that error was exposed and that truth prevailed and thus good was accomplished. We praise God for His truth and righteousness!

(CRS)

"GOD LED ME"

(Continued from page 3)

He had a convenient vision for everything he wanted to do — even to immoral polygamy! He evidently became convinced the Lord gave him his every desire!

What we need to do is give God thanks continually for the good (Phil. 4:6-7); and pray that His will be done in our lives (1 John 3:22; 5:14-15). But when our hearts desire something, search by the Bible whether or not we are within the realm of His will (Gal. 1:6-8; Psalms 119:104). If our desires are Scriptural, gratify them! But don't blame God as though He is in our image giving us thoughts we devise of our own imagination. God does not hold us by puppet strings. We are in His image — free moral agents.

— Robert Harkrider
in THE WAY, 2/24/77

— SENTENCE SERMONS —

Others may destroy your reputation, but only you can destroy your character.

* * * * *

Salvation is free, but it is not cheap.

* * * * *

The man who has to eat his own words never asks for another serving.

* * * * *

It is easier to say what you think than to tell what you know.

* * * * *

Sin will cause the cup of joy to spring a leak.

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