

THE

# HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray  
ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send  
forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

MAY 1995

No. 113

## SWEARING AND TAKING OATHS

During years of work with a large national bank, it was my lot to appear many times in court to present records and to testify. There was a time when one was asked to lay his hand upon the Bible and swear to tell the truth. For a number of years now, the Bible has been omitted from that procedure. One's hand is now raised, and he is simply asked to swear to tell the truth.

Instead of swearing, it was always my practice to affirm to tell the truth. Not once was my testimony discounted because of affirming. The basis for this approach, of course, was the desire to faithfully adhere to Scriptural instructions.

THE HARVESTER  
1120 Sun Hill Road  
Birmingham, AL 35215-4106

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Birmingham, AL  
PERMIT No. 4624

FORWARD  
& ADDRESS  
CORRECTION

Jesus spoke of this in His address to the Jews in the sermon on the mount, *"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil"* (Mt. 5:33-37).

James continued this principle in his letter to Christians, *"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation"* (James 5:12).

The very tenet of Christianity is truth. It is understood among us that we *"speak every man truth with his neighbour"* (Eph. 4:25). Neither swearing nor any other act of assurance on our part could be more binding than that of our own word. How very sad it is, though, that the image of Christianity has been so tarnished by centuries of digression that those who profess Christianity cannot be trusted. Living as we do among those who do not hold to our principles, we must yield to their lack of comprehension, except where to do so would violate the will of God.

### Consider Some Real Situations

The term "oath" is sometimes used in our present-day speech (as are many other words such as the word "bet") to mean other than what it might have originally. This does not suggest that we follow the custom of the world in such use, but it does suggest that we

should understand what they understand by such use. The term "oath of office" may be used in forms, documents, or vocal statements, even though we have affirmed rather than sworn, but this does not discredit the fact that WE have made a distinction. To those of the world an "oath of office" simply means going through a process necessary to entering whatever position might be under consideration. To them this is where one officially agrees to assume the responsibility. We can, therefore, take an "oath of office" (as they would term it) without swearing or taking an oath.

The question is posed as to whether a Christian's presence at a "swearing-in" would constitute an approval or endorsement of swearing. Consider the fact that we are there as an observer rather than as an arranger -- if we had arranged the event there would not be a question, for swearing and oath taking would not have been a part of the proceedings. We may not agree with or support expressions which may be used, but we can allow for the position being assumed. In the case of one being admitted to the Bar (an actual situation), it is not unscriptural for the son to be a lawyer. The son should follow the advice of his mother and refrain from swearing. He should affirm instead. If he does not, however, that does not make his chosen field unscriptural.

At a wedding where I may not approve of the partner chosen, I may not approve of their using a sectarian preacher to perform the ceremony in a sectarian building, and I may not approve of the use of instrumental music in the ceremony, if the marriage is otherwise in accord with Scripture, then I can be present. Should my presence, however, be taken as approval where the marriage is unscriptural, then that is another situation entirely.

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Lk. 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

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According to Paul, if we are to be completely free from entanglement with the world, *"then must ye needs go out of the world"* (1 Cor. 5:10). We should be cautious, however, not to become involved in affairs which will either cause our participation in that which we should not or which will hinder our influence for truth.

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What reward did Caleb promise to the man who attacked and captured the city of Kirjath-sepher?
2. According to Psalms 99, where should we worship God?
3. Who talked with Jesus Christ at the Transfiguration?
4. When the Jews did not accept the word of Paul that Jesus was Christ, to whom did he say he would go?

5. What did the city of Shiloh provide for the Benjamites?

### ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What king (Pharaoh) of Egypt killed Josiah?  
PHARAOH NECO (2 Ki. 23:29)

2. When did Jesus say He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God came? AT THE LAST SUPPER (Lk. 22:18)

3. Are the faces of those who look to the Lord ever covered with shame? NO (Psa. 34:5)

4. What are the only two settings in the Bible in which we find Salome? THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE GRAVE OF JESUS (Mark 15:40 & 16:1)

5. What was to happen to the Israelites who worshipped the sun, moon, or stars? THEY WERE TO BE STONED TO DEATH (Deut. 17:3-5)

### POINT TO PONDER

"One day I was sitting on the banks of a river. I took from the water a round stone and I broke it. Inside it was perfectly dry. The stone had been lying in the water for a very long time but the water had not penetrated it.

"Then I thought that the same thing happened to men in Europe. For centuries they have been surrounded by Christianity but Christianity has not penetrated, does not live within them." (Sandhu Singh of India).

How well could this analogy portray our congregation? Since congregations are made up of individuals, how accurately could it picture me?

HARRY COBB

## ALL OR NOTHING

When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment, He answered, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" (Matt. 22:37). This illustrates a most important principle found in the Scriptures: God demands our very best effort in ALL we do!

God does not want half-hearted people or "part-time" Christians. The Lord wrote to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans to this effect: "*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth*" (Rev. 3:15,16). God demands our ALL; otherwise, let it be nothing!

This principle is evidenced in our SERVICE to God. Christ said, "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matt. 6:24). Our service must be directed to God first of all and completely! One of the hardest things to do, yet one of the most essential of Christianity is to put Jesus Christ number one on our list. The Lord must be top priority in our lives, even above our family, friends, work, money, hobbies, etc. (Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26). God is our only master!

The thoughts of our MINDS must also be ALL the way for God or it may as well be nothing! "*A double minded man is unstable in all his ways*" (Jas. 1:8). When a man is thinking in two different directions, he cannot be trusted because he will not know which way to go. Similarly, we cannot afford to be wishy-washy or indecisive or torn between two differing opinions like the people in Elijah's day (1 Kings

18:21). We need to keep our minds totally on spiritual matters and virtuous things (Philp. 4:8). It's ALL or nothing!

What we SAY should likewise follow the "ALL or nothing" principle. The tongue is a small and powerful part of our body but it must be used wisely -- to bless God ALL of the time instead of cursing (Jas. 3:5-10). We should not be guilty of saying "nice" things on Sunday, then using "foul" language the rest of the week. As disciples of Christ, we must use the proper speech every single day. *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man"* (Col. 4:6). Remember: it has got to be ALL or nothing.

Finally, we must USE God's Word in one of two ways: ALL or nothing. We cannot be Pharisaical (hypocritical) in our approach to the Word of God and accept the part of the scriptures that we like and omit the *"weightier matters of the law"* (Matt. 23:23). We cannot preach faith in Christ and leave out the works of baptism for the remission of sins (Jas. 2:17; Acts 2:38). The Bible needs to be proclaimed properly and in its entirety. If it is not, then we may as well be preaching from a book of children's fairy tales! It's ALL or nothing.

The Lord God demands our very best: in our service to him, in our everyday thoughts and speech, and in our use of his Word. *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"* (Eccl. 9:10). Friends, there is no other way around it. It has to be ALL or nothing!

RAY

<p><i>IT'S UPHILL ONLY FOR THOSE WHO WANT LEVEL GROUND.</i></p>
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# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place &amp; Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
May 1 - 5	Chestnut Grove Church near Danville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 12 - 14 (F - Su)	Fayetteville Rd. Church Atlanta, GA 7:30pm EST	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
May 12 - 14	Barnes' Ridge Church Livingston, TN	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
May 22 - 27	Clover Hill Church Thompskinville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 28 - June 3	Jigger, LA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

## COST OF FOLLOWING GOD

*It cost Abraham the willingness to yield  
his only son.*

*It cost Esther the risk of her life.*

*It cost Daniel being cast into the den  
of lions.*

*It cost Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego  
being put in a fiery furnace.*

*It cost Stephen death by stoning.*

*It cost Peter a martyr's death.*

*It cost Jesus His life.*

**DOES IT COST YOU ANYTHING?**

-- Selected --