



# Bible Believers' Bulletin

Vol. 43 No. 4

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17)

April 2019

## The Sound of Silence

By Brian Donovan

One of the overlooked disciplines of the Christian walk is keeping a balance in all of our duties. When the apostle Paul likened the Christian life to an athlete trying to win a prize, he zeroed in on the necessity of being temperate (I Corinthians 9:25 **“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things...”**). A few verses later, Paul tells of keeping his body under control (verse 27), and in Philipians 4:5, and we are commanded to let our **“moderation be known unto all men”**. The child of God is to strive lawfully (II Timothy 2:5) as he seeks to please the Lord and receive his crown. The Christian soldier needs to find a balance of prayer, Bible reading, study, witnessing, raising a family, working, playing sports, resting, and everything else as he does, **“all to the glory of God”** (I Corinthians 10:31),

About three thousand years ago, King Solomon wrote about this truth in the book of Ecclesiastes. There we find that **“To every thing there is a sea-**

**son, and a time to every purpose”** (Ecclesiastes 3:1). The Lord blesses his children; not only with eternal life but with an enjoyable temporal life here on earth as he gives us **“richly all things to enjoy”** (I Timothy 6: 17). The problem is that our old man always wants to go overboard and only cares for his own desires. The flesh will turn rest into slothfulness, eating into gluttony, money into miserliness, and play into foolishness. Keeping a balance on these things becomes a real discipline. The devil knows this and is constantly putting distractions in front of your face in order to keep you from what matters. Facebook was invented to keep the user hooked for hours so that he can be programmed and then sold millions of “apps” that he “needs”. Satan has introduced a constant noise into the daily schedule, so as to keep the soul from being fed and pleasing God. This noise is so trivial that it is incredible that it actually works. The first president of Facebook, the billionaire Sean Parker, has recently admitted that Zuckerberg intentionally designed it to consume people. Studies are coming out that indicate people are spending an average of 40 minutes per day on Facebook, and another five hours on

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# Paul's Farewell Message

By Dr. Peter S. Ruckman

**"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God"** (Acts 20:24).

What you read in Acts 20, from verse 17 down to the end of the chapter, is Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders. He tells them in verse 25 that they would see his **"face no more."** He's taking a backward look and recounting his past history with the Christians in Ephesus. Although we are told in Philippians 3:13–14 to forget **"those things which are behind"** and to press forward, it does us good every once in a while to take a look back and assess how far we have come in our Christian life.

Of course, you don't want to dwell on the past and look too long at it. The baseball player "Satchel" Paige said, "Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you." But every once in a while, you need to review what you have done to see if it is what the Lord wanted you to do.

Every year a bunch of celebrities pass on. A lot of them were in the hey-day of their careers when I began to preach. Now their bodies occupy a hole in the ground or an urn on the mantel, and their souls are either in heaven or hell to stay. The old saying is that there are only two sure things in life: death and taxes. It doesn't matter what happens or who

is in office, someone is going to die and the government is going to get your money. The only thing I would add to that is that you can also be sure of *judgment*.

**"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"** (Heb. 9:27).

You can be more sure of those three things than you can the second coming of Christ. You say, "Why do you say that, Ruckman?" Because the Lord might come today or He might not. I'm looking for Him today, but He may not come today. But I guarantee you that somebody somewhere is going to shell out to the government and somebody somewhere is going to die and hit the judgment. The statistics are two people die every second, 105 every minute, 6,316 every hour, and 151,600 every day. By the time you finished reading that sentence, eighteen people went into eternity.

Some things remain the same from year to year. That's because human nature never changes, no matter what advances man makes in transportation, communication, and technology. Men still hate. They still love. They still become jealous. They are still covetous. They are still lazy. They are still stupid.

Man doesn't change. I am still talking to the same type of people to whom Noah preached before the flood: **"every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [is] only evil continually"** (Gen. 6:5 cf. Gen.

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8:21; Gal. 1:4). Your human nature and my human nature are just the same as the human nature in Cain. When you preach the Bible, you are always "contemporary" because the Bible speaks to human nature.

The egotistical stuffed-shirts in colleges and universities think that if they can travel faster and further that they have made "progress." They're crazy. *To where are they headed?* Suppose you were in a plane at 30,000 feet and the pilot comes on the intercom and says, "We're traveling at 500 knots. We don't know where we're headed, but we are making mighty good time." Why, sooner or later you'll run out of fuel and make mighty good time right into the ground. Just because you are traveling at break-neck speed doesn't mean you are heading to the right place.

Now as I look back at my Christian life and at my ministry, I'll tell you what I have tried to do. First, *I have tried to uphold the Bible as the final authority.*

Acts 20:32—"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

When Paul had to leave his converts, he turned them over to *God* and the *Book*. I thank God I have a Book as free from error as I have a Saviour who is free from sin. I have never elevated *any* authority over the

authority of that Book. I have never even hinted that "*the*" Greek or "*the*" Hebrew was the final authority. I never led any student of mine to believe my *school* was the final authority. And I certainly have never led anyone in my entire life to believe that *I* was the final authority. If anybody believes I am the final authority, he is just kidding himself and anyone who takes him seriously, because I have never taught that or even suggested that. Whenever our graduates leave here, they leave with the final authority in their hands—a King James Authorized Version of the Holy Bible. They don't have to report back to me or the school about anything.

Before I got saved, I had all kinds of things in my hand. I had Plato and Marx and Aristotle and Schopenhauer and Hegel and Nietzsche and God knows what. Then one day I found out I was a sinner going to hell and my hands were empty. I asked God to put something in my hand that could help me, and He put that blessed Book in my hand.

Ever since then, someone has always been trying to take it away from me. "The ASV is better; the RSV is better; the NASV is better; the NIV is better; the Living Bible, the NKJV, the NRSV, the NLT, Good News, the ESV"—all that junk! If you can put something in my hands better than that King James Bible, I'll take it, but I've checked out all the other junk. *They're not better.*

Someone says, "Ruckman, you

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just use that King James Bible because you don't know any better." That's right—I don't know ANY BETTER. Don't give me some emasculated form of the Book where the virgin birth has been mutilated in Luke 2:33 and Acts 4:27, 30. Don't give me some perversion of the scriptures that attacks the Trinity in 1 John 5:7 and the incarnation in 1 Timothy 3:16 and the blood atonement in Colossians 1:14. Don't give me anything that's had 64,000 of God's words cut out of it as neatly as Jehudi cut up the book of Jeremiah (Jer. 36). I want the *truth*, brother (John 17:17), the *whole* truth, and *nothing* but the truth. That's not in those new versions; there's something missing.

Second, *I have tried to impress Christians with the need to witness.* The Christian needs what is known as "Acts 20:20" vision.

**"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house."**

A Christian should not only witness for the Lord Jesus by his presence in church and by singing His praises, he should speak up for the Saviour in the hospital, at school, in the nursing home, on the job, with the neighbor, out on the streets, etc.

A lot of God's people never witness. Most who don't are *afraid* to, and the rest are just plain *lazy*. I have witnessed to people while I was painting a baptistry; I've witnessed to

people driving a bus; I've witnessed to people in airplanes. Be a witness.

Someday you will wish you had opened your mouth for the Lord Jesus Christ. Right now it doesn't mean a great deal to you. You're busy with the job, with the family, with your own recreation, with paying the bills, with shopping, etc. But one day you will see everything in that Bible come to pass. One day you will see people you knew and encountered stand before God; you will see them cast into hell because you didn't tell them. How will you feel about witnessing then? The problem is, it won't matter then, because it is too late. The time to witness is *now*.

I believe unsaved people go to hell and they *burn*. If I didn't believe that, I wouldn't preach; there wouldn't be any point to it. When a man preaches like I preach, he doesn't make a lot of friends. The more you talk about people burning in hell, the more enemies you make. The society in which you live can't stand to be told they're *wrong*. You are living in a generation of people that are so proud and stuck on themselves that when you tell them they're *no good*, they start yelling, "Dictator! Demagogue!"

You had better witness to them anyway. You had better tell them their own righteousness will wind them up in hell, no matter how many enemies you make. You will live to see the day when the Lord will honor your witness. You need to pray for them; you need to get upset about

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them; you need to worry about them; you need to shed some tears over them.

Next, *I have tried to get Christians to support missionaries and not programs.* I want you to be interested in the *missionaries*; not just the missionary program of the church or the missionary offering. I want you to know the missionaries by name and pray for them individually; not just some nebulous "bless all the missionaries."

If my church doesn't have much as far as nice building and furnishings, it's because we put the money into *men and their families* going out and preaching the gospel. I am not going to sit around in some rich, plush dump while there are laborers on the field who have needs with which we can help.

Melville Cox was a great Methodist missionary to Liberia. He said, "Let a thousand fall before Africa be given up." A famous missionary to India named Alexander Duff returned from the field to Scotland. He was up in years and ailing, but he spoke to the University of Scotland and made a great appeal for missionaries to come and take his place there in India. When no one responded to the invitation, he said, "Then I'll go back myself." Someone said, "You're too sick; you'll die there." "Then," he said, "I'll go lay down at the Ganges River before the people and show them there is a missionary who loves them enough to die for them."

Another thing I have done is *to try to warn folks of coming events.* Paul warned the Ephesian elders that wolves were coming to enter their flocks and tear them up and that false teachers were going to come out of those elders' own congregations to split their churches (Acts 20:29–30).

Like Paul, my outlook on what's coming up has usually been *negative.* Of course, I haven't always been able to call the shots as far as *time* goes. The "**times**" and "**seasons**" are in the Father's power (Acts 1:7). Admittedly, I may be off by a few years, but you can't be wrong when you prophesy negatively about man. Sooner or later, he will fulfill what you say; it's only a matter of time, given his depravity.

I have never professed to be a "prophet." You take someone like Edgar Cayce or Jeane Dixon; all someone like that will give you is humanistic slop. The stuff such fakirs put out is so general that it could mean anything. Nearly all of what is "prophesied" *never* comes to pass. They *might* hit it right by sheer guesswork, like a busted clock being right twice a day. Any news commentator could do what Jeane Dixon did, and probably with more accuracy. But there are some things about which I don't hesitate to "prophesy."

There will be *no peace* in the Middle East.

There will be *no peace* in Asia.

There will be *no peace* in America.

Why do I say that? Because that

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Book says, **"There is NO PEACE, saith the LORD, unto the wicked"** (Isa. 48:22 cf. Isa. 57:21).

The Scofield note on *Kosmos* ("the present world-system") under Revelation 13:8 says, "This world-system is imposing and powerful with armies and fleets; is often outwardly religious, scientific, cultured, and elegant; but, seething with national and commercial rivalries and ambitions, is upheld in any real crisis by ARMED FORCE . . ." I believe that. I believe: "In case of rain, the war will be held in the auditorium." One of the "fundamentals" of human nature is *continual war*. You have *three more world wars* coming up in the future (Rev. 6, 19, 20).

Now when it comes to the Christian life, Christian warfare ought to be second nature. You are commanded to **"Fight the good fight"** (1 Tim. 6:12); you are to **"endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"** (2 Tim. 2:3). You ought to be like Field Marshal Ney at the Battle of Waterloo. When the English caught up with him, he was on his fourth horse; three of them had been shot out from under him. He had saber slashes all over his boots where the foot soldiers had been trying to cut him off his horse. He had one eye out and powder burns all over his uniform where musket fire had gone off within two feet of him. He was riding around, brandishing his saber, yelling, "Come see how a field marshal of France dies!" If you have

to die on the battlefield, brother, at least go down fighting.

Another thing I have done is to *try to put science and scholarship in the right light*. The "right light" is usually that of a jackass braying in the field. Where science and scholarship contradict the word of God, that is the "right light" in which to view them.

If you read the Bible like I have and believe the Bible like I do, your "dander" would be up every time you pick up a morning newspaper or watch a newscast. The word of God is attacked on a constant, regular basis. All this talk about "equal rights" and "equal time"—why, Bible believers *never* have "equal time" and *never* have "equal rights."

Every few years, some article will be put out on "new light" on the Bible and "new discoveries." Every Christmas and Easter, the magazines and TV shows will come out with "new evidence" about Jesus Christ. All that slop is to cast doubt on that Book and your Saviour. There isn't one thing put out by those charlatans that I couldn't tell you without looking up one thing they looked up. That stuff is the same old stale garbage the liberals and infidels have been putting out for centuries. A Christian will answer it, and the scholars will let it lie until everyone has forgotten the answer. Then they will drag it out again to deceive a few thousand more gullible suckers.

Listen, people, there is no "archaeological discovery" or linguistic

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discovery or scientific discovery that can help you interpret one line of that Book. That's because **"no prophecy of the scripture is of any PRIVATE interpretation"** (2 Pet. 1:20). You will get more out of going to the Author (the Holy Ghost—2 Pet. 1:21) and asking Him what it means, and by comparing what He wrote with itself (1 Cor. 2:13), than you will from any "archaeological discovery" or any Hebrew or Greek lexicon or any science textbook. You won't learn the Bible in light of "new historical evidence." That's because **"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"** (1 Cor. 2:14).

Now, brethren, you can read all the books you want to read; it's a free country. You can study anything you want to study; it's a free country. Any "light" you can get on the Bible from another book, you are entitled to get. But don't tell me that the Book is to be interpreted "in the light" of anything that *contradicts* it. I agree with Billy Sunday: "When the Bible says one thing and scholarship says another, *scholarship can go plumb to the devil.*"

Next, *I have tried to make heaven more real to God's people.* When all is said and done, only the Lord can do that, but I have come up with every destructive, abusive thing I can about this world to make the child of God disgusted with it. I don't want you feeling at home *here.*

That Bible says, **"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"** (Col. 3:2).

I understand how you feel. There are some beautiful things on this earth. I always took fall meetings up at Carl Lackey's in North Carolina, instead of in the spring, because fall was when the leaves turned colors. But one thing that always impressed me about Lackey's church was that they were always singing about heaven.

After preaching all over this country, if I had to put my finger on one thing wrong with most of the churches in which I've been, it's that the folks weren't heavenly minded. I'm not talking about spiritual kooks who are so "heavenly minded that they are no earthly good." I'm saying that to most Christians, heaven isn't real, and it ought to be. When the time comes for you to go, the *less* this *world* is real to you and the *more* heaven is real to you, the *easier* it will be for you to go. If you ever see me wasting away, I want you to pray for me that God will make Himself so real to me that I don't know where I am.

That's what I want, brother: I want *God.* Jack Hyles had his students doing a "pep rally" for him one time to make it to fifty years at First Baptist of Hammond. Not me, brother. My "cheer" would be: "We want God! We want God!"

There was a martyr back in the Roman days named Pomponius Algerius. He was put in a prison in

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Lyons, France that had a terrible stench. He was allowed to write letters to his family and friends, and he would sign them: "From the delectable orchard of the Leonine prison."

Richard Wurmbrand spent three-and-a-half years in solitary confinement in a Communist prison camp. He said he would hear a prisoner start screaming or banging his head on the wall; then he would hear the guards coming down the hall to put the fellow in a straight jack because he had gone mad in solitary all by himself. Then one night the guards came to his cell: he was the one screaming. He said the only reason he didn't go mad permanently was because every night, after the guards had made their last rounds, he would dance to the Lord in that small cell to celebrate the fact that he was counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ (see Acts 5:41). When that no longer worked, he preached messages to the Lord to keep from losing his mind. You take people like Richard Wurmbrand and Haralan Popov, heaven has to be real to them.

When the bottom falls out, folks, look up. Don't wallow in sorrow and self-pity. Rejoice that heaven is your home and do something to help others get there or look toward there.

Finally, *I have tried to exalt Jesus Christ as the only Saviour* (Acts 20:24). You can listen to anything I have preached over sixty-plus years of ministry, and you will never hear

me put any emphasis on works in connection with salvation. I wouldn't even imply you had to walk the aisle of the church to be saved. I'd like to see any sinner do that, but the fact of the matter is, a person can be saved in the pew, back in the restroom, out in the parking lot, or in the car on the way home. I heard of one fellow saved in his bathroom at home, using the toilet seat as an altar. I had a fellow kneel down in the gutter one time in front of me and get saved. There are all kinds of places where you can trust Christ.

The Seven-day Adventists and the Campbellites talk about keeping the commandments to get saved and stay saved. *You'll go to hell keeping the commandments.* Saul of Tarsus kept more commandments than you've ever read. That bird was a Pharisee of the Pharisees and could truly say that when it came to **"the righteousness which is in the law"** that he was **"blameless"** (Phil. 3:5–6). *He was headed for hell without Christ.* So are you with less works than he had. You will be saved **"by grace . . . through faith"** *without works*, or you won't be saved (Eph. 2:8–9).

Are you depending on the *sacraments* to save you? You'll go to hell.

Are you depending on *baptism* to save you? You'll split hell wide open.

Are you depending on your *church* to save you? You'll end up in the same lake of fire where your priest and your pope are.

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If Jesus Christ and that Book said salvation was by trusting Him and receiving Him, why don't you do it? What do you want for a nickel? I don't understand why folks will believe some man and yet not believe God. Listen, I might lie to you. I might not even mean to, but I might tell you you're saved when you're not. Why would you believe me and yet not believe what that Book says?

**"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever . . . And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you"** (1 Pet. 1:23, 25).

If I told you that I was going to be at church Sunday night and draw you a chalk talk, some of you would be dumb enough to believe me. I might get killed on the way to church in a car wreck, and I wouldn't be here. I might get so sick I couldn't make it. The Lord might come back before the service. But if I say I'll be there, you'd expect me to be there.

Well, if God says all you have to do to make it to heaven is to trust His Son, why don't some of you believe that? If trusting Christ isn't enough to save me, then I'll see you in hell, because I have no "Plan B." I believe what God said, and I want you to also.

That Book is **"more sure"** than if God Almighty Himself spoke audibly to you and told you you were saved (2 Pet. 1:17-19). I have learned

that the older you get, the more you forget. I don't have to worry about something I heard in the past; I have the written word of God, that doesn't change, with me *right now*. That's why the Devil has put out 323 different versions since 1880. He wants to mess with what you are counting on for your salvation.

*I'm not letting anyone mess with mine*, brother. Back in 1949, Hugh Pyle hauled out a King James Bible to me in the record room of WEAR in downtown Pensacola. He asked me, "Do you believe this Book is the word of God?" God had been working me over for the last several months with a King James Bible I had stolen from a flophouse. I said, "Yeah, that's it." I haven't budged one inch since then. I've got the same Book I trusted way back then.

There is only one way of salvation, and it is through the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did for you on Calvary. Back in the old days, in one of those one-room school houses where the teacher taught you "reading and 'ritin' and 'rithmetic" "to the tune of a hickory stick," some poor boy had done something to get "caned" (a whipping with a hickory cane). He had an old coat draped over his body, and the teacher took it off him to whip him. That boy was so poor, he had no shirt on underneath that coat. All he had was a pair of old pants held up by suspenders; he didn't even have any underwear on. An older boy saw that and knew

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their mobile devices! This noise is all about YOU, and it is so childish and trivial, it is a shame to see so many Christians (and even preachers) wasting time with all that noise,

Solomon continued in chapter three of Ecclesiastes, writing that there is a time to weep, and a time to laugh (verse 4), a time to get, and a time to lose (verse 6), and a time to keep silence, and a time to speak (verse 7). With the present set up of technologi-

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that kid wouldn't make it through the whipping, so he volunteered to take it for the younger boy. The schoolmaster allowed it, but the rest of the day, that younger boy had to sit by that older kid and listen to him sniffle from that whipping. It just tore that young kid up inside.

That's what Jesus Christ did for you: He took the "beating" you had coming to you. And you ought to be ashamed of yourself for turning your nose up at a sacrifice like that.

**"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"** (1 Pet. 3:18).

cal noise and distraction, it is a hard thing for the Christian to find a time to keep silence. Men are actually afraid of silence to the point that they keep a background noise of talk radio on in the car, a television on in the home, or the constant noise of the Internet and YouTube and video games. It appears that the generation coming up is as afraid of silence as a cockroach is afraid of the light. Noise is substituted for actually doing something, and this world puts forth a great noise that the Bible calls **"tumults"** (Psalm 83:1-2; Psalm 74:22-23). The nations **"make a noise like the noise of seas...like the rushing of mighty waters"** (Isaiah 17:12). These verses show that all the noise and tumults come from the Lord's enemies, and it is the devil himself who knows that silence allows men the luxury to think. The child of God should take stock of his life and see if there is any time of silence on a daily basis.

The political leaders are nothing but noise (Jeremiah 46:17 **"Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise"**) as they give their phony speeches to people who enjoy being lied to. Senators and Representatives, both Republicans and Democrats, tell the people what they want to hear, and there is as much substance to their noise as blowing a noisemaker on New Year's Eve. Talk radio is on the same level, and the rhetoric is one more noisemaking substitute for a Christian to justify the lack of action in his daily walk. The value of silence in the Christian's walk with the

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Lord is overlooked and even feared.

The importance of silence to the Lord is reflected in the fact that when the Lord Jesus Christ was sent to this earth, He spent thirty of his thirty-three-and one-half years in silence. From the birth of Christ to the age of thirty, Luke only records one event from this period, and that is of Jesus at the temple at age twelve, while Matthew, Mark, and John do not even mention that. No sermons, no miracles of healing... , total silence as he **“increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”** (Luke 2:52). That means the Lord Jesus spent ten times as much time in silence as he did in his public ministry. Thirty years spent in silent preparation for a three and one half year ministry. The **“rose of Sharon”** (Song of Solomon 2:1) opened his petals and blossomed for a very short time in public, as compared to his silent, private life. This example alone shows how important and powerful silence can be in the life of the believer. This importance is not even considered today as Satan keeps this world in deafening noise with all kinds of information the Christian does not need to know. The apostle Paul wrote, **“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification”** (I Corinthians 14:10). Every single voice that is vying for your attention to pull you away from your silence with your Saviour has a significance to it. The “news” is not new, nor is it anything you need to know. You need to know

about the temperature and weather in Calcutta, or lake effect snow in Buffalo, as much as you need a hemorrhoid. All of these voices are drowning out some valuable silence that you need in your life. Silence allows a man to think. Instead, Christians listen to someone else telling them about what to think. Talk radio puts things into your head that you shouldn't even be considering. The scriptures should be controlling the thoughts of every child of God, and they should be **“whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise”** (Philippians 4:8). It's hard to equate a story of some woman killing her kids, or some illegal immigrant raping, stealing and selling drugs, or anything out of the mouths of Hannity, “Limburger” and company, etc., with the list of what the saved should be thinking about found in Philippians 4:8.

The preacher is commanded to **“give attendance to reading”** (I Timothy 4:13), and that requires silence. The lack of silent preparation (which includes prayer) before preaching a sermon is probably the major reason that a typical congregation leaves with little to nothing about which to think. Since the preachers are consumed with the noise of politics, talk radio, the internet, the tweets, and the rest of the nonsense, they can only feed the sheep with the trash that they are

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taking into their own souls. Silence has a sound, and that sound scares people today. It is the sound of God's voice. As the prophet Samuel said many years ago, "**stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God**" (1 Samuel 9:27). Silence is not a suspension of worship...it is the beginning of it. "**Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah**" (Psalm 4:4). Stop the noise and "**let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak...**" (James 1:19). Silence brings about a chance for the child of God to discern the hand and voice of God. That voice is the King James Bible, the sound of silence. That sound of silence can bring the believer into a life of faith as nothing on the internet can. Jesus hung on the cross of Calvary and asked, "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" (Matthew 27:46), and the silence of the darkness of that day drew him into obedient faith, as he quoted Isaiah 50:7, saying, "**For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.**" That faith came when heaven gave him dead silence without a nod of approval. The man Jesus could only trust the word of God, that he was in the perfect will of God and would be vindicated at the last. As he suffered the eternal silence of a sinner in hell, Jesus made the substitutionary payment in our place. The damned in hell who rejected that payment, now cry out

in torments and receive eternal silence in reply. That silence echoes still in the soul of Herod, and since he chose to have his men of war mock and strip the holy Christ Jesus, he now receives the recompense of his error.

Silence can bring about the blessings of conviction and repentance. David found this blessing in silence and recorded it in Psalm 32:3-5, "**When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.**" The longer the silence, the deeper the conviction and even words are not in order at this point. "**I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred**" (Psalm 39:2). The old man of flesh wants to quickly say or do something as soon as conviction begins, lest it works something he does not want to face. Facing up to your sin requires a silence where even tears or confession are not in order as yet. Running from the silence of conviction will prevent the results that the Lord wants to bring into your life.

Silence can also bring the blessing of fellowship with the Lord. Often, in his short three-and-one-half year ministry, the Lord Jesus would retire and withdraw to a place of silence. He

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# The Sound of Silence

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tried to show his disciples its value as he said unto them, **“Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat”** (Mark 6:31). That **“coming and going”** is a great description of the American life of distraction today, and it is NOT of God. Jesus ministered constantly, and his way of being led of his Father was to get away into silence. **“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone”** (Matthew 14:23).

The silence of heaven will one day soon mark his return. In the book of Revelation, separate accounts of the tribulation period are given in the forms of seals, trumpets, and vials. At the opening of the seventh seal, John writes that **“there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour”** (Revelation 8:1). The praises of angels, seraphim, cherubim, the 24 elders, and millions of saved souls, all come to a silent halt as the Lamb stands up from his throne to return. For thirty minutes, nothing can be said, and all look into his eyes. He is rising to take over the kingdoms of this world (Revelation 11:15) and make them his. He is rising to end the dirty politics, the hospital stays, the insane asylums, and the wickedness of six thousand years of sinners attempting to run him out of his own creation. After keeping quiet for all those years, the Lamb rises,

puts on his battle robes, and mounts his steed... and heaven gives silence! It is the day his Father has waited for and will perform with zeal (Isaiah 9:7). It is a day that Pope Bergoglio, Obama, Trump, the Kennedy's, and the Bushes care nothing about. While the world is completely distracted by all of the tumults of the noises that they have created, **“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness...”** (Psalm 50:3-6). **“For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry”** (Hebrews 10:37).

One of the best things you can do as a Christian is to shut off the noise and be silent. Admit that you have allowed someone else to do your thinking for you. Shut off the internet, the talk radio clowns, the TV, and especially your stupid iPhone. See if you can drive down the road without some Roman Catholic radio host forcing you to think about what he wants you to think. Find the importance of silence, the sound of silence, and the results of silence. Allow the Lord Jesus to become your thought life and allow the scripture to establish your thoughts (Proverbs 16:3), and be silent a while.

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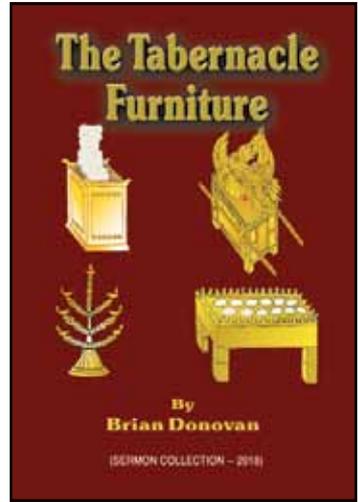
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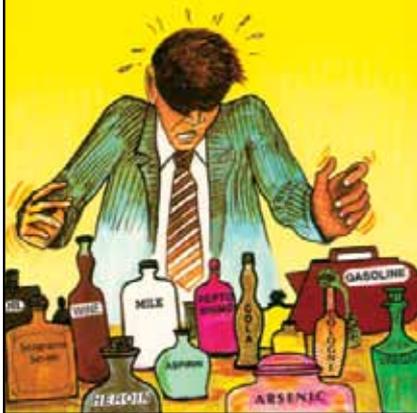
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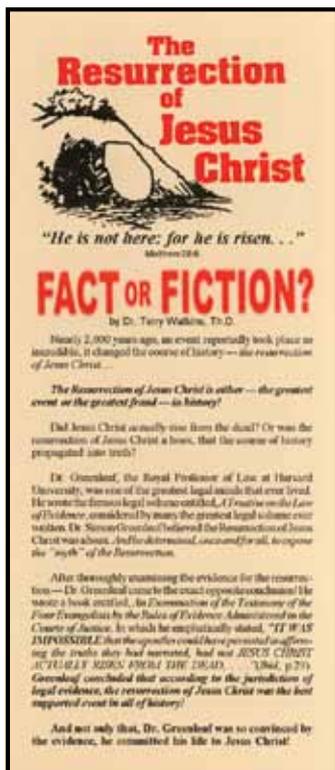
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### July 12-14

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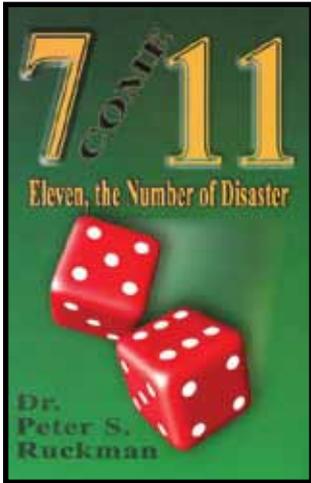
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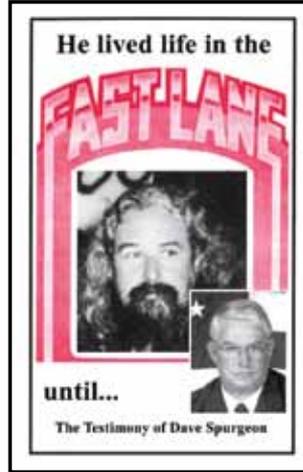




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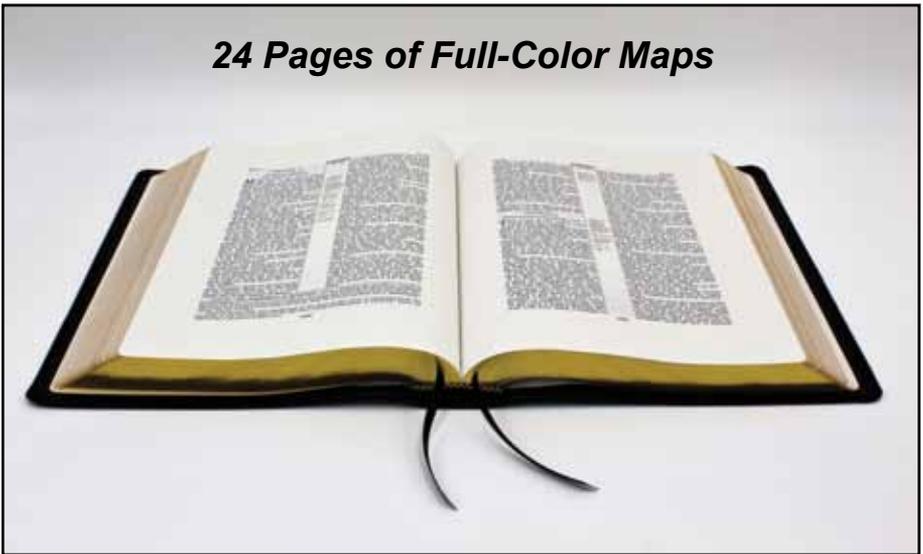
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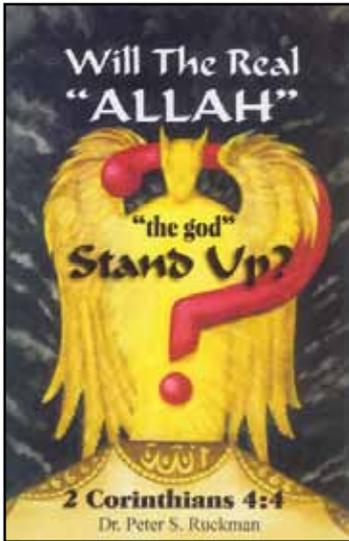
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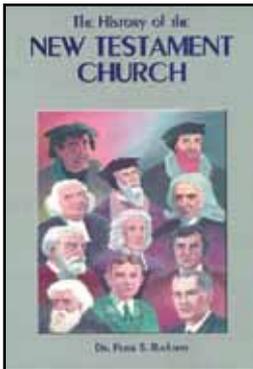
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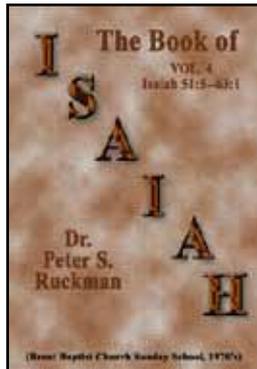
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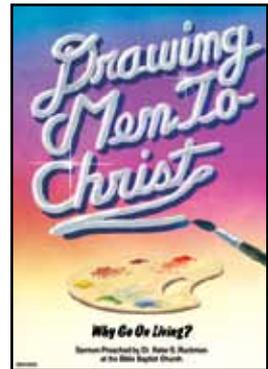
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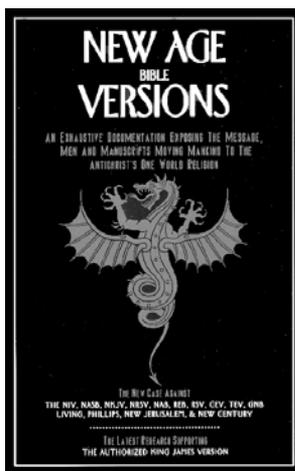
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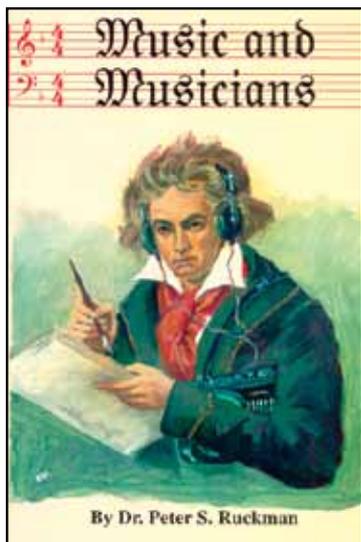
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# Victory Over Hopelessness

By Robert Militello

According to government statistics, over 47,000 Americans decided to take their lives last year. Due to the stigma surrounding suicide, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) believes the figure is under-reported. The figures have gone up steadily in every state since 1999, except for Nevada. Dr. William Dietz, disease-prevention expert at George Washington University, a private research institution in D.C., stated, "I really believe that people are increasingly hopeless." Are you surprised, Christian? Mental health experts are alarmed, but not everyone who takes their life has a mental problem. There is something else going on that science will never be able to diagnose correctly. It is a sickness of soul, and its symptoms are rarely visible. Only a Bible believer understands this.

Clearly, the cost of living without Christ upon the minds and hearts of every lost soul is increasing. These poor blinded souls, **"having no hope, and without God in the world"** (Eph. 2:12), are looking to escape from situations beyond their ability to manage. Life has become so much more complicated today in our technological society. This world is moving too fast for countless millions. The noise is successfully drowning out our Lord's call to all: **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matt. 11:28).

Christians also are allowing themselves to be caught up with the vanities of this world, and their ability to

hear from God continues to diminish. Every letter sent to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 ends with: **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"** (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22). When you hear about born-again saints taking their lives, you know you are living in the **"perilous times"** Paul wrote of in 2 Timothy 3:1-7. I suspect the situation is worse than most believe.

Apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ, mankind has no hope upon which to find purpose in life. So often you hear it said at funerals that the deceased lived a full life. What exactly does a full life entail if it led to a Christless eternity?

**"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"** (Mark 8:36).

At Calvary, God gave all men an opportunity to escape hopelessness. An empty tomb nearby was God telling man, "You can escape the fear of death." That fear is the spawning ground of all hopelessness. At its heart, atheism is a hope that death ends it all and there will be no accounting to anyone. An empty tomb made that hope vain, along with countless other satanic lies.

**"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins"** (1 Cor. 15:17).

Our hope is **"a lively hope"** according to 1 Peter 1:3. Religion offers a dead hope that the Devil uses to comfort millions, but which instantly

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# Victory Over Hopelessness

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vanishes once the soul leaves the body.

One of the most frequently used phrases in social discourse is: "Let's hope for the best." A Bible believer ought not to feel comfortable saying that. Knowledge of the word of God will have an effect on how you communicate with others. It's wrong for us to hold onto expressions that tend to patronize, like: "It depends on how you look at it" or "Everything will work out." Really? Not unless you are a Bible believer (Rom. 8:28).

Read the Gospels carefully. It is clear that our Lord did not waste words. He was decidedly selective as to whom He offered hope. He thought God's thoughts and His word alone correctly defines words such as *love, faith, peace, wisdom, sacrifice*, etc. Apart from faith in Christ, a hopeful attitude in life is like a plane losing its wings while taking off. Your human desire to fly above your troubles ends in flames. Jesus alone saves from hell. His empty tomb is akin to a man walking away from a crash site where all died. Christians have an insurance policy paid for by their Saviour. It says no grave on this earth can hold them. That's a sure hope and not a wish, like, "I hope all ends well."

Without doubt, the one unalterable difference between all religions and faith in Christ's blood atonement is vain hope vs. absolute certainty. **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that**

**ye have eternal life"** (1 John 5:13).

The man who rested his head on the Lord's chest and who saw the Lord die on a Roman cross, wrote those words. John wrote what I, as a lost Catholic, needed most certainly. No pope has ever given any Catholic more than a vague, wishful hope that a soul leaving a dead body would immediately fly to heaven. Paul knew where he was going, and as a Catholic, I thought you had to be super spiritual to believe you would go to glory at death. Catholicism is not, and never was, capable of giving a sinner any assurance of seeing Jesus, because it denies that salvation is a free gift. If it did believe what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8–9, it would lose its power to keep millions in a spiritual prison house of fear, ignorance, and superstition. Catholicism breeds hopelessness. Religion presents itself as a comforter, especially to those suffering and dying. It usurps the office of the Holy Spirit. Even the "saintly" Mother Teresa did not know where she was going at death and admitted this openly. Satan's chief blind guide on this earth is the pope. His job is to assure no one of eternal bliss. His priests all believe that it is presumptuous to expect to go to heaven at death. Ask any one of them to explain why you can't have the certainty that John expressed in 1 John 5:13. You'll get an education in religious quackery and biblical ignorance.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, over

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# Victory Over Hopelessness

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forty million Americans suffer significantly with anxiety. The research shows that anxiety disorders develop from a complex set of risk factors; including genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events. To understand the different manifestations and proper treatment of anxiety, categories are assigned. These are GAD (General Anxiety Disorder), OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder), PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), and SP (Specific Phobias). Regrettably, the National Institute of Mental Health fails to recognize the chief of all disorders—US (Unconfessed Sin). A bad conscience can't be treated with a pill. Effective therapy for all manifestations of depression, anxiety, and hopelessness begins with a visit to Calvary. It is at the cross where men first see light. But Jesus said that **“men loved darkness rather than light”** (John 3:19), so the hopelessness now rampant in our society should come as no surprise, amen?

Hope appears 130 times in the King James text. Interestingly, it does not appear in the Torah, the five books of Moses. There is no hope under the law. Take pity on the poor, lost Jew. He has no hope and knows no Comforter such as we have. First John 3:3 is the last time hope appears, and it is in the context of the redemption and subsequent glorification of the Christian's body.

**“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even**

**as he is pure.”**

How many saints went through life on earth with deformities, blindness, or as deaf-and-dumb mutes? They rejoice in the hope God's word gives them. How about those who lived with debilitating diseases all their years, and what about those shut away in leper colonies? You think they may know something about the power of hope found in God's word only? I think so! The Bible God put in our hands is decidedly more precious to those who have suffered through no fault of their own. Our Lord's sudden coming to call away His bride will produce shouts of joy never heard before from those who never knew what it was to be healthy or whole. A brand new, sinless, and perfectly functioning body is something worth shouting over. Living and then dying without Jesus Christ is something you could not wish upon your worst enemy. It's the ultimate tragedy.

Resurrection Sunday is a shouting day if ever there was one, amen? An empty tomb makes every real born-again believer an optimist because of a future worth waiting for. Man needs hope, so God provided a lamb to make payment for sin and fill that hope. Religion ignores or denies that payment and thus creates a friendly atmosphere for human pessimism, negativity, anxiety, fear, and hopelessness. Psychiatrists have never been as busy as they are today. Many of them, though loathe to admit this, spend much of their time trying to talk

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# Victory Over Hopelessness

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patients out of suicide. Their well-meaning efforts to convince those in their care that life is worth living often fall short. Suicide is a door that leads out of a mind in turmoil and torment into a place of eternal torment and hopelessness. The Devil packages it as an escape, an end to suffering the brokenness this life so often produces. Often, when loved ones, friends, and acquaintances of those who took their lives hear the news, they are in disbelief. How many times have you heard it said, "He/she had everything to live for!"? People who have attained success in their fields have to work extra hard to hide their unhappiness. Vanity and pride combine to keep them from disclosing their emptiness within. Regular visits to a therapist are no substitute for what only the empty tomb of a Jewish Rabbi can give. Money can't buy peace of mind, and our society is now learning that lesson the hard way; very sad!

We have in the word of God a book that clearly depicts the vanity and hopelessness of life being lived apart from God's purpose. **"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun"** (Eccl. 2:11).

How's that for a positive outlook on life? Solomon can't hide his frustrations. Here's the wisest man, apart from Jesus Christ, baring his soul.

**"Therefore I hated life, because**

**the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit"** (Eccl. 2:17).

Adam and Eve's rebellion against God made it certain that all their offspring would experience a void in their spirits and that the effort to fill that void without yielding to God's cure would result in personal disaster. America now has more psychiatrists, psychologists, and lawyers specializing in divorce per capita than any other nation on earth. Are we a healthy society enjoying the material things that we surround ourselves with? What do you think? The church of God in these last days mirrors the society around it.

**"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest now that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"** (Rev. 3:17).

Megachurch pastors always seem to be busy in trying to manufacture joy and happiness among their flocks. You constantly hear them exclaim how excited they are about this new book or singing group or building program or discipleship class. What is behind their compulsion to talk Christians into a happy frame of mind? When you do not have real fellowship with the Holy Spirit because you will not preach negative truth to your flock, you seek for a way to disguise your miserable condition (Rev. 3:17). All the things you claim to be excited

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# Victory Over Hopelessness

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over cannot and will not produce real joy. That joy is reserved for those who put God's word first and not their ministries.

Unhappiness and hopelessness are not the same, thank God. All saints have hope, even those who are in a miserable state. If a Christian would confess daily and receive with thanksgiving all the things God allows to come upon him (1 Thess. 5:18), happiness and contentment would not be so elusive. The word *happy* shows up 28 times in the King James text. Leah is the first to describe herself as happy. The Lord saw that Jacob had no favor toward her (Gen. 29:31), so the Lord made her happy with children. She was the mother of Judah. God alone can make a woman truly happy. The best of men fail. Women were the first to see the empty tomb, and their sadness was turned to gladness.

What father does not want to see his children happy? It appears that the Lord has a special kind of happiness for those who follow Him. **"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye"** (1 Pet. 4:14). Christians in America miss out on this dispensation of joy because they prefer preachers and churches where Christ without the cross is constantly held up to view. That verse in 1 Peter is the last time the word *happy* appears, and it is in the context of suffering for the Lord. Think about that a while.

**"By the rivers of Babylon, there**

**we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion"** (Psa. 137:1).

A nation that turns its back on God's word will turn to comedians and entertainers to mollify the sadness God gives it.

**"How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?"** (Psa. 137:4).

If any nation knows something about sadness, it's the Jews. They have excelled in the field of comedy. Millions of Gentiles roared with laughter at the antics of Charlie Chaplin. In vaudeville, motion pictures (silent and talkies), radio, nightclubs, television, and now YouTube, the Jew displays his God-given talent for making folks laugh. Nevertheless, often a quick joke hides a heavy heart. Famous comedians who have committed suicide were found to have suffered from acute bouts of depression. Oh, the darkness that permeates the Christless soul! Who can know it?

Following the death of Robin Williams in 2014, ABC News interviewed Deborah Serani, author of *Living With Depression*. She stated that for most comedians, humor is a "counterphobic" response to the darkness and sadness they feel. Their intelligence, she said, helps them put a funny spin on their despair. "Being funny is not the same thing as being happy," according to Dr. Kaminski, professor of psychiatry at Columbia University School of Medicine.

Our world, with all its achievements in medical science, will never

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# Victory Over Hopelessness

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get to the root of the problem of depression despair, and hopelessness. Billions will be spent on research, and no remedy will be found. Humanity has been broken by sin; it is a spiritual disease. There is a place where that illness can be treated, and it is not a therapist's couch. Calvary is where treatment begins, and an empty grave is where it ends. No one should die in despair. What are the rich megachurches doing with their huge collections on Sunday? Are they sending missionaries to foreign fields or planning to buy more property and build state-of-the-art "worship centers"?

God has made every man thirsty for something that this world cannot provide. He offered a supernatural water to a Samaritan woman at a well almost 2,000 years ago. **"The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw"** (John 4:15). Scripture closes with a last invitation to drink. **"And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"** (Rev. 22:17).

What is the allure that this world has that causes once faithful Christians to return to it? **"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world"** (2 Tim. 4:10). Did Demas find some kind of happiness in the world apart from serving the Lord Jesus Christ? Obviously, there are children of God who are not satisfied with the life offered them by

the Lord. The taste for this world still lingers, and when that taste directs their steps, they fall, with many never able to recover.

There is a peace that a Christian can access which the world knows nothing of: a peace that passes all understanding because it remains effective, in spite of turmoil, discouragement, and sorrow. Sadly, some believers never grab hold of this peace when they need it most and go on to take their own lives. I have known some that decided life was too much to bear, even with Jesus. That's hard to understand for a believer who enjoys fellowship with the Lord, but let us not be quick to judge in these matters. Trouble can overwhelm you, and some of the sweetest and most tenderhearted saints can break in a time of deep distress. Christians, like the lost, will often pretend everything is OK, when it is not. They can sing "It Is Well With My Soul," although that is not the case at all. Not all of God's children are able to slip out of depressive mood swings and start singing again. What is now apparent to most is that our way of life, for many reasons, has contributed to an alarming rise in mental illness and depression.

When I left New York City government employment, the agency with the fastest growing budget was the Department of Mental Health Services. After studies were taken, sociologists discovered that a large percentage of New Yorkers lived in loneliness and fear, even in multiple-

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# Victory Over Hopelessness

Continued from 27

dwelling buildings. Folks, who for the most part, stayed in their apartments, watched TV all day, and heard nothing but horror stories on the local news programs, lost the desire to live. There is a hopelessness out there in all our major cities that politicians are loathe to discuss. Government—local, national, and federal—does not have a solution. Eventually, we may see government do what is done in prisons and jails. Drugs will be made more available for “medical” reasons, and marijuana will be legalized in all fifty states. We need to keep asking the Lord to come for us—do you do it each day?

Resurrection Sunday makes life worthwhile. It certified the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as a grave robber. Jesus manifested His power over death when He raised Lazarus, a four-day-old corpse. Paul challenged King Agrippa: **“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?”** (Acts 26:8). Jews believed in a resurrection of the dead, but Gentiles thought of it as lunacy. Paul had to explain to the Corinthians how God would exchange their terrestrial bodies for celestial ones (1 Cor. 15:40). If you didn’t read of such a thing in God’s word, you wouldn’t know it was possible. How does a flesh-and-blood body get a makeover that never needs a touch up now and then? Do you wonder what kind of body you will spend eternity in?

**“But God giveth it a body as**

**it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body”** (1 Cor. 15:38).

**“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”** (1 Cor. 15:55).

Do you know that most Catholics like so-called “holy pictures”? They have pictures of Jesus, Mary, saints, Calvary, the Last Supper, and others in their houses and apartments. These are thought of as “aids to worship.” After being born again by the grace of God, the only thing I thought could be put on a wall was Scripture. Nevertheless, if I did consider hanging a “holy picture” on my wall, it would contain no one’s likeness at all. I wouldn’t mind looking at an empty cave with a large stone beside it with these words written beneath: **“Be not affrighted”** (Mark 16:6). The grave which the Devil has used to terrify man since Abel was laid low by his brother, has been “defanged” by the Lord Jesus Christ. What a Saviour!

All bodies must, in time, decay. Sin pays its wages and death comes. That’s our inheritance from Adam and Eve. In that sense, we are all hopeless. Exercise, a proper diet, and clean living will only take you so far. Our heart, which is nothing more than a pump, must eventually fail. If it weren’t for the promise of God (Tit. 2:13), what would we have to look forward to? **“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, . . . think on these things”** (Phil. 4:8). How about an empty tomb? Have a glorious Resurrection Sunday!

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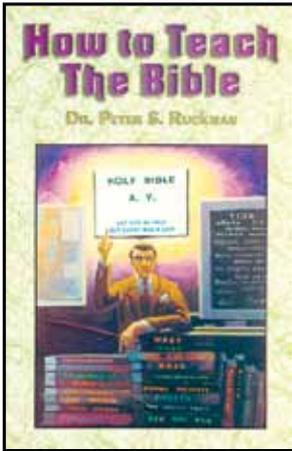
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## THE CREED OF THE ALEXANDRIAN CULT

1. There is **no final authority** but God.
2. Since God is a Spirit, there is **no final authority** that can be seen, heard, read, felt, or handled.
3. Since all books are material, there is **no book on this earth that is the final and absolute authority** on what is right and what is wrong, what constitutes truth and what constitutes error.
4. There **WAS** a series of writings one time which, **IF** they had all been put into a **BOOK** as soon as they were written the first time, **WOULD HAVE** constituted an infallible and final authority by which to judge truth and error.
5. However, this series of writings was lost, and the God who inspired them was **unable to preserve their content** through Bible-believing Christians at Antioch (Syria), where the first Bible teachers were (Acts 13:1), and where the first missionary trip originated (Acts 13:1-52), and where the word "*Christian*" originated (Acts 11:26).
6. So God chose to **ALMOST** preserve them through Gnostics and philosophers from Alexandria, Egypt, even though God called His Son **OUT** of Egypt (Matthew 2), Jacob **OUT** of Egypt (Genesis 49), Israel **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 15), and Joseph's bones **OUT** of Egypt (Exodus 13).
7. So there are two streams of Bibles. The most accurate—though, of course, there is **no final, absolute authority** for determining truth and error; it is a matter of "preference"—are the Egyptian translations from Alexandria, Egypt, which are "almost the originals," although not quite.
8. The most **inaccurate translations** were those that brought about the German Reformation (Luther, Zwingli, Boehler, Zinzendorf, Spener, et al.) and the worldwide missionary movement of the English-speaking people: the Bible that Sunday, Torrey, Moody, Finney, Spurgeon, Whitefield, Wesley, and Chapman used.
9. But we can "tolerate" these if those who believe in them will "tolerate" US. After all, since there is **NO ABSOLUTE AND FINAL AUTHORITY** that anyone can read, teach, preach, or handle, the whole thing is a matter of "PREFERENCE." You may prefer what you prefer, and we will prefer what we prefer. Let us live in peace, and if we cannot agree on anything or everything, let us all agree on one thing: **THERE IS NO FINAL, ABSOLUTE, WRITTEN AUTHORITY OF GOD ANYWHERE ON THIS EARTH.**

This is the Creed of the Alexandrian Cult.



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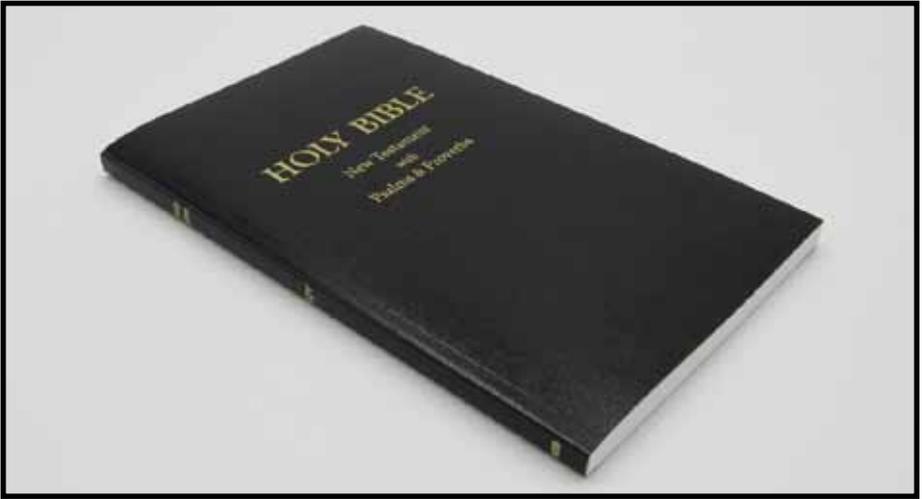
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