

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Thinking of Quitting?

By Bill Hall

No doubt, someone will read this article who is discouraged, weary of struggling, disappointed in his brethren, facing severe obstacles in his service to the Lord, and is in danger of quitting. But I would make this appeal: "Before you quit, look anew at the incentives the Lord holds before you; look again at heaven."

Heaven means victory—victory in the strife with Satan and his allies. The battle is sometimes hard; the foe is formidable. Our own strength seems so small. We become discouraged. But lift our eyes! On our side is the Lord, the One who has already won the battle (**Genesis 3:15**). With His aid we can be victorious. We can be "more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (**Romans 8:37**).

Heaven means beauty—unsurpassed beauty—a street of gold, walls of jasper, a foundation of precious stones, gates of pearl, a crystal clear river flowing from the throne of God.

Heaven means home—Happiness is not found in our material surroundings, but in being with those we love. We experience homesickness, but our homesickness is not for a house or anything material, but for wife and children, for loved ones. Similarly, we speak of the beauty of heaven, and truly its beauty enhances our anticipation, but surely the greatest joy will be found in being with our Lord, the One "whom having not seen [we] love," and with our God, with the Spirit, with the angels, and with the re-deemed of all ages. This will be our eternal homecoming.

Heaven means happiness—There will be nothing there to mar our happiness. There will be no more tears, no more sickness, no more

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heartache, no more death, "nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Heaven means holiness—Never again will we hear the name of our Lord taken in vain. There will be no more adultery, filth, guilt, murder, crime. Truth will abound. There will be no more lying, deceit, flattery, hypocrisy. Women will no longer have to fear those who would abuse and desecrate them. Love will be pure and unfeigned. The Lord assures us, "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (**Revelation 21:27**)

Heaven means eternity—This blessed state shall never end. "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun" (Joseph Scriven).

You can quit if you so choose, for God will not force anyone to serve Him. But, remember, the day you quit is the day you forfeit all hope of eternal happiness and choose in its place eternal damnation. And eternity is a long time.

Two Men React to Teaching on Morals

By Bill Hall

Two men listen to lessons on practical Christian living, but their attitudes differ greatly.

The first man views all such teaching as arbitrary "church" rules. Warnings concerning dancing, mixed swimming, general immodesty, divorce for every cause, drinking, etc. are all looked upon as "Church of Christ" standards, traditions being sustained by the old-timers of the church who are out of touch with more up-to-date thinking on morals.

The second man is brought to understand that all such teaching is an outgrowth of genuine respect for the Bible; that warnings concerning the evils mentioned above are based on such scriptures as **Matthew 5:27, 28; Gal. 5:19-21; I Tim. 2:9; Matt. 19:9; and Rom. 13:12-14**; that they, therefore, are not arbitrary church rules, but are indeed a true picture of God's will for His people.

The first man hates this teaching. Of course he does! Doesn't he have just as much moral perception as another? Why should he allow some other man to decide what's right or what's wrong for him? He'll do what he pleases. Nobody will bind his thinking on him.

The second man, recognizing that the standards under consideration are God's and not man's, gladly complies. Jesus Christ is his Lord and King. He will live whatever life his Lord wants him to live. He will make every sacrifice his Lord wants him to make. His conformity grows out of a desire to please God, not man.

The first man may take the form of a teenager rebelling against parental authority; or the form of a man "raised in the church," whose church loyalty is beginning to wane; or the form of a new convert who is having difficulty defining modesty, decency, and lasciviousness in practical terms. The fault may lie within the person himself. He may be wanting to break away from all restrictions, thus refusing to view objectively Bible principles behind the teaching he is rejecting. Or the fault in some cases may lie in those who teach. They may be guilty of "establishing" their points along these lines through pulpit beating and foot stomping, rather than through sound reasoning from the scriptures; of unconsciously seeking for "church" loyalty or "preacher" loyalty rather than loyalty to the Lord. Either way, we are concerned for our first man's soul, for he is wrong in his thinking.

Let no one misunderstand. We strongly oppose every evil mentioned above. But the truth is--no man is obligated to bow to anything we teach because we teach it; but, on the other hand, he is obligated to live by every principle that is truly established upon the word of God. It is the duty of every teacher, then, to warn of these evils, not on the basis of his own authority, but on the basis of God's authority. It is the duty of every hearer to consider them in the light of scripture. Greater God-consciousness--on the part of both teacher and hearer--is the need.

Thanksgiving?

By Steve Niemeier

All of the preparations, all of the hype, all of the traveling, all of the anticipation of seeing friends and family, all of the looking forward to the long Thanksgiving Day weekend – is about over even though the holiday period is just starting.

With all of these things going on and the encouragement to start shopping for the next holiday did you remember to stop and be thankful? Colossians 2:6-7 states that we should be overflowing with thanksgiving or gratitude. Unfortunately we get confused and forget that the real reason for us to be thankful as it is not just for the physical blessings we can see – but for the wonderful spiritual blessing of Jesus Christ and all those spiritual things we can't see - such as heaven!