



"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1

June 17, 2011

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Feature Article: Jesus Who? –

T. A. McMahon

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his

subtly, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.
2 Corinthians 11:1-4

And [Jesus] saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? **Mark 8:29**

“Brother, I’m not interested in any of your divisive doctrinal talk. All I care about is knowing that a person loves Jesus. If someone tells me that, no matter what church he goes to, he’s my brother in Christ!”

It didn’t seem like the right time or place to get into an argument with this individual. Nevertheless, I felt compelled at least to get a question in before the conversation ended. “When you talk with someone who tells you he loves Jesus, do you ever ask that person, ‘Jesus who?’”

After quick thought the elderly gentleman let me know that he would never ask such a question. “It wouldn’t be loving.”

Whenever I visit friends in Pennsylvania, there is a man whom I make it a point to see. He is a joy to be with, one of the friendliest men I know. Though a committed Muslim, he regards himself as an ecumenist. He’s proud of the fact that he shares some of the beliefs of both Jews and Christians. Occasionally he attends a Presbyterian church with my friends and truly enjoys the experience and their fellowship. Once in a restaurant he was expressing to me and our Christian friends his love for Jesus. He ended his proclamation with these words: “If I could tear away my flesh so that all of you could see deep into my heart, you would know how much I love Jesus.” The emotions that filled his every word were stunning; it’s uncommon to hear such a devout declaration, even in Christian circles.

Getting back to my boysenberry pie, I felt good about my friend’s expression of love when a nagging thought hit me: *Jesus who?* A brief mental skirmish took place over whether or not to ask such a question. My words, however, came out before my mind had settled the issue. “Tell me about the Jesus you love.”

My Muslim friend didn’t hesitate: “He’s the same one you love.”

Before I got “doctrinal” with my friend, I thought I should try to show him why it was important to make sure we were talking about the same Jesus. I used his neighbor, who is a great friend to both of us, as an example. He and I really love the guy. After agreeing on our mutual feelings, I began to give a description of our common friend’s physical attributes: “He’s 5’6”; he’s completely bald; he weighs 320 pounds; he wears a ring in his left nostril.” Actually, I didn’t get quite that far before objections were made. “Wait a minute... he’s easily over 6’4”, I wish I had all his hair, and he’s the thinnest man I know!” My friend added that it was obvious that we weren’t talking about the same person.

“Does it matter?” I asked.

He gave me an incredulous look. “Of course it does! I don’t have a neighbor fitting your description. You may know someone *else* like that, but it’s not *my* good friend and neighbor.”

I pointed out that if I truly believed the description I'd just given, then we couldn't possibly be friends with the same person. He agreed.

What followed was my description of the Jesus I knew. "He was crucified and died on the cross for my sins. Did the Jesus you know do that?"

"No, Allah took him to heaven before the crucifixion. Judas died on the cross."

"The Jesus I know is God himself, who became a man. Is that your Jesus?"

He shook his head. "No, Allah alone is God. Jesus was a great prophet, but just a man."

The discussion went on to many other characteristics the Bible ascribes to Jesus. In almost every case, my Muslim friend had a different perspective. Though he remained convinced that he held the correct view, the fact that our contradictory convictions couldn't be reconciled seemed to dampen his zeal for proclaiming his love for Jesus.

Some may see my questioning as unloving - as proof of the divisiveness of arguing over doctrines. I see it as trying to clear the way for my friend to have a genuine relationship with the only true Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ—not someone he or other men have wittingly or unwittingly imagined or devised. Quite simply, doctrines are teachings. They are either true or false. A true doctrine cannot be divisive in a harmful way; that characteristic applies only to false teachings.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine* which ye have learned; and avoid them" (**Rom 16:17; also Rom 2:8-9**). Jesus, who is the Truth, can only be known in *truth* and by those who seek the truth (**Jn 14:6; 18:37; 2 Thes 2:13; Dt 4:29**). Christ himself caused *division* (**Mt 10:35; Jn 7:35; 9:16; 10:19**), division between truth and error (**Lk 12:51**).

"Jesus who?" is a pivotal question for every believer in Christ. We should first of all ask it of ourselves, testing our own beliefs about Jesus (**2 Cor 13:5; 1 Thes 5:21**). Misunderstandings about Him inevitably become obstructions in our relationship with Him. The question also may be vital in our fellowshiping with those who claim to be Christians.

On a brief airline flight recently, a friend of mine was concerned enough to ask the person next to him some crucial questions about his relationship with Jesus. Although the young man professed to have been a Christian for four years or so and participated in a Christian fellowship for professional athletes, he didn't really know Jesus nor did he understand the gospel of salvation. My friend led him to the Lord before the plane landed.

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Thank God For William Tyndale –

Tyndale wrote, "The Scribes and Pharisees had thrust up the sword of the word of God into a sheath of glosses....Now, O God, draw this sharp sword from the scabbard. Strike, wound, cut asunder the soul and flesh, so that man...may be in peace with thee to all eternity!"

The [Roman Catholic] Bishop of London was bitter, complaining that the word of God in the common language of the people would “infect and contaminate” them....He preached against the translation...the King having decreed that the version must be destroyed by fire, and that all those who kept or read it must be punished....In 1527 the Archbishop...set up a fund, to which the bishops contributed, to buy as many copies as possible and then destroy them by fire....The profits of the merchants, the printers and booksellers now soared, which in turn led to the printing of more and more copies. By this means England was flooded with the New Testament in English....One of the reasons why Rome had managed to hold Europe in the grip of superstition through the long Dark Ages, was that the common people could not read the Scriptures for themselves. They had to rely on the priests to tell them what the Latin Bible said, even though many priests could not read the Latin. ...Tyndale...gave the people of England the opportunity to read the New Testament for themselves...[and they] seized the opportunity... with both hands.

David Gay, *Battle for the Church: 1517-1644*, pp. 35-37

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Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes –

If they'd had a social gospel in the days of the prodigal son, somebody would have given him a bed and a sandwich and he never would have gone home. – **Vance Havner**.

Isn't it interesting how a **Nation of Sheep Breeds (and feeds!) a Government of Wolves!** – **Unknown (or too afraid to be identified?)**.

“Everything human is faulty” – **T.T. Shields**.

“In heaven there will be no crown wearers who were not cross bearers here below.” – **C. H. Spurgeon**.

“There is no having influence over the great men or the little men of this age except by being firm in your principles and decided in what you do. If you yield an inch you are beaten; but if you will not yield – no, not the splitting of a hair – they will respect you.” – **C. H. Spurgeon**.

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Blinded Minds –

(The love of the spectacular among charismatics is unabated. It has spawned many religious business empires around the world. The claims that gullible men and women (and children!) can be taught how to heal the sick and raise the dead cannot bear close inspection. Honesty in advertising would require them to describe their courses as “Training The Gullible In Greed And Deception.” - Ed.)

Hundreds attend faith healing schools In Australia

Josh Robertson

From: [The Courier-Mail](#) - May 28, 2011 12:00AM

MAN OF VISION: US evangelist Bill Johnson says he has seen angel feathers and gold dust fall from a church ceiling *Source: The Courier-Mail.*

A WAVE of “supernatural” schools that claim to teach people how to heal the sick and even raise the dead are netting tens of thousands of dollars for fundamentalist Christian church coffers.

Hundreds of people across southeast Queensland flock to the courses every week, paying up to \$720 to learn “faith healing” practices that allegedly trigger miraculous recoveries from broken bones, infertility and even cancer.

The Holyfire Ministry Training School at Park Ridge (*see full story below*), which offers a subject called Healing the Sick & Raising the Dead, recommends taking children on “treasure hunts” public outings to practise healing on strangers. “Children are great to have on Treasure Hunts. They are less threatening,” its material states.

And one of Australia’s largest churches, the [Nexus Church](#) on Brisbane’s northside, offers “training in the Supernatural for kids aged 9-12 years”.

The courses are linked to [Bethel Church](#), a Californian evangelical group that is targeting Australia with its “School of Supernatural Ministry” brand.

Queensland is proving fertile ground for Bethel, with flood-ravaged communities in the Brisbane Valley among those embracing its teachings.

Healing the sick class

Kingdom of Life preacher Marty Mitchell conducts “Healing the Sick & Raising the Dead” class at Park Ridge Baptist Church

Fernvale Community Church pastor Greg Muller said: “We have people from not only our own area but people travelling from Ipswich and as far as Toowoomba to come to it.”

The Courier-Mail understands that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is examining whether the Bethel-based courses breach consumer laws with misleading claims about their uses and benefits.

An ACCC spokesman said he could not comment on specific cases but said they treat health cases seriously because sick, vulnerable consumers looking for answers to their health problems are “more exposed to being exploited”.

Bethel Church, which has been criticised by US scholars for touting “miracles” that can’t be verified, sells its DVD curricula to client churches for about \$US7000. Its controversial head preacher Bill Johnson whose August visit to Australia follows last month’s sold-out appearance at

Nexus Church has claimed to see “angel feathers, gold dust and diamonds” fall from Bethel’s ceiling.

Material from Holyfire Ministry Training School, obtained by *The Courier-Mail*, gives explicit instructions on how to approach and heal sick strangers on the street. “Command the pain to leave, bones to be set, back to be realigned, tumor (sic) to shrink, etc,” it states.

A spokesman for Westlife Church at Springfield, which also offers the course, said: “The church has never taught that people can perform miracles, only that we can ask God for His intervention.” But course operator Destiny4Life International Ministries states in its online flyer that students “will learn to . . . heal the sick”. Nexus Church at Everton Park, which draws 1800 people a week, charges up to \$360 for its Brisbane School of Supernatural Ministry courses. The church declined to comment. Almost 50 people are paying up to \$300 each for a course run by Mr Muller. He said they did not “give guarantees” that people would learn to perform miracle healings because “everybody’s walk with God is different”. “(But) certainly, we’ve seen miracles take place,” he said. Mr Muller said he had seen a young boy born without nasal passages suddenly have them appear. “It’s just a miracle. There’s no medical explanation . . . it’s just a short prayer and God does it,” he said.

The Bethel Church in California did not respond to a request for comment.

True believers, but no miracles for sore knee

THURSDAY night class at the Park Ridge Baptist Church, titled “Healing the Sick and Raising the Dead”, begins with good news. Dean, a church member out on a “treasure hunt”, has texted pastor Marty Mitchell to say a young woman has just “given testimony” to a miraculous healing of her injured knee. A prayer is offered for one of the students who suffers from an identical affliction. Laura, a sweet-natured woman in her 40s who needs crutches to walk, has studied at the Holy Fire Ministry Training School for two years. Mr Mitchell, with laptop at the pulpit, has his voice amplified with a wireless microphone despite addressing a group of only six (including me). “Do you feel anything happening in your body, Laura, any change?” he says. “No,” she says. “There’s no pain. I’ve had a lot of clicking in my right knee.” The pastor commands a “recreative miracle” in Laura’s right knee cartilage. “We’re gonna do a miracle in her knee,” he says. “No more clicking, in Jesus’s name. Let the all in presence go through that, bringing lubrication and freedom of movement, Lord.” Laura chimes in: “If she can do it for her, she can do it for me and anyone else who needs it.”

Class continues. The pastor leads the group through John’s epistles with a fine-toothed comb.

Later, Dean returns with tales of how often “treasure hunts” trigger miraculous healings. A visiting Bethel Church minister performed them with surprising speed and nonchalance, he says. Class ends. “Can you hand me my crutches?” Laura says.

The miracles flow freely at Park Ridge, it seems. But sadly, not for Laura tonight.

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Cartoons For Wise Men –

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Saved by Singing Good Music –

It was Christmas Eve 1875 and Ira Sankey was traveling on a Delaware River steamboat when he was recognized by some of the passengers. His picture had been in the newspaper because he was the song leader for evangelist D.L. Moody. They asked him to sing one of his own hymns, but Sankey demurred, saying that he preferred to sing William B. Bradbury's hymn, "Savior Like a Shepherd Lead Us." As he sang, one of the stanzas began, "We are Thine; do Thou befriend us. Be the Guardian of our way."

When he finished, a man stepped from the shadows and asked, "Did you ever serve in the Union Army?"

"Yes," Mr. Sankey answered, "in the spring of 1860."

"Can you remember if you were doing picket duty on a bright, moonlit night in 1862?"

"Yes," Mr. Sankey answered, very much surprised.

"So did I, but I was serving in the Confederate army. When I saw you standing at your post, I thought to myself, 'That fellow will never get away alive.' I raised my musket and took aim. I was standing in the shadow, completely concealed, while the full light of the moon was falling upon you. At that instant, just as a moment ago, you raised your eyes to heaven and began to sing...'Let him sing his song to the end,' I said to myself, 'I can shoot him afterwards. He's my victim at all events, and my bullet cannot miss him.' But the song you sang then was the song you sang just now. I heard the words perfectly: 'We are Thine; do Thou befriend us. Be the Guardian of our way.' Those words stirred up many memories. I began to think of my childhood and my God-fearing mother. She had many times sung that song to me. When you finished your song, it was impossible for me to take aim again. I thought, 'The Lord who is able to save that man from certain death must surely be great and mighty.' And my arm of its own accord dropped limp at my side." - selected

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Deacon True Sez –

Standin' in the middle of the road is dangerous. You can get run over from both directions.

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Can a Christian be “Spellbound”? –

The following question was recently received by the Editor of the Herald of Hope magazine, John R. Ecob.

Question: I was given a book to read, “Unbroken Curses” (The Hidden Source of Trouble in the Christian life) by Rebecca Brown. It teaches that we inherit curses which have been placed on our parents or Grandparents and quotes the Scripture that “*the iniquity of the fathers*” comes upon the children to “*the third and fourth generation*”. Do the sins of previous generations impacting on us?

Answer: This is a false teaching and has no foundation in Scripture. These people like to quote half a verse in support of their false teaching. Here is the FULL verse.

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation OF THEM THAT HATE ME, and shewing MERCY unto thousands of THEM THAT LOVE ME and keep my commandments” (Deut.5:9-10).

The same verse is given in Exodus 20:5-6 and the passage teaches that the consequences of parents’ sin is passed to their children IF their children do not turn to the Lord. There is nothing about a curse in the verse.

The concept of punishment because of a curse placed on our forebears begs the question, Who placed the curse? It also presumes that we can be in bondage to some curse pronounced upon someone else by Satan’s agents when the Bible says: “*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*” (John8:36).

No Christian can ever place a curse on another person therefore if a curse was placed on one of our forebears then it was by a spiritist medium, devil worshipper, or witchdoctor. It is the practice of witchdoctors to cast spells but Satan can have no power over a Christian without Divine consent and only then for our good. Christ broke Satan’s power at the cross and “*having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*” (Col.2:15).

The teaching that a curse placed on my Grandfather might be passed to me, and that I am bound by it, denies the victory of Christ over Satan at the cross and magnifies the demonic practice of casting spells. It is an attempt to bring Christians into fear of evil spirits. All Christians have trouble in their life at some time or other. “*Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward*” (Job 5:7).

There is no doubt that the children of the ungodly suffer the consequences of their parents sins because “*none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself*” (Rom.14:7).

Take the case of Mr Eternity, Arthur Stace. He came from an awful family involved in robbery, drunkenness, prostitution etc etc. Yet when he turned to the Lord his life was transformed and he became a “*new creature in Christ*”. He married and was a most godly and evangelistic Christian.

He attended Burton Street Baptist Tabernacle, and faithfully served the Lord till he was promoted to glory. Had he continued in his sin then the example of his evil parents would have been perpetuated in him. It ONLY APPLIES TO THOSE WHO HATE GOD! Rebecca Brown is wrong. Derek Prince, a Charismatic teacher, also holds the same view.

The Bible says that *“if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY, BEHOLD ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW.”* 2Cor.5:17.

Christ has dealt with our sins completely on the cross. He removes them as far as the east is from the west, never to be recalled. Neither does He blame any man for the sins of others.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. THE SON SHALL NOT BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHER, NEITHER SHALL THE FATHER BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE SON: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, THEY SHALL NOT BE MENTIONED UNTO HIM: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live (Ezek.18:20-22).

So it is clear our own sins are not remembered by God and every man has to answer for his OWN sin. The main issue is, What is our personal relationship with God? The consequences of my parents sins are cancelled out and I become an object of God’s mercy when I turn to the Lord and am saved by His grace.

It is a matter of concern that some who claim to have been converted from witchcraft continue to talk of evil omens and of signs that are part of the dark world of Satan worship. If they are truly saved that should all have passed away.

by John R. Ecob.

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The Church Demolition Game: 16 Easy Rules –

Any number can play! The more the better!

1. The game begins by two team leaders taking up offenses and not letting them go. After all, nothing is more important than you getting the respect you deserve. If you cannot find two leaders, you can play a modified game with just one. Anyone who will not join your team can be considered to be on the other team.
2. Team leaders begin recruiting teams by inviting others to take up their offenses as if they are their own. (The formation of large, loyal teams is essential to the demolition process.)
3. Listen to one side of problems that don’t involve you without rebuking or stopping your gossiping brother or sister. (Gossip is the most powerful tool in the demolition toolbox and it should not be hindered, though you may wish to call it, “seeking counsel,” or “making a prayer

request.”) The team with the best gossipers always wins, so *never refuse to hear a bad report about anyone!*

4. Act and think as if you know all sides of an issue. Avoid confusion caused by trying to understand another person’s perspective, as this may lead to a breakdown of team loyalty.
5. Spread your team’s side of the story as convincingly as possible, even if a little exaggeration, slant, character assassination or jumping to conclusions is necessary.
6. Continue building a good team for your side, keep them motivated, and *urge them to take action* against the other team. Put the other team on the defensive as often as possible, as it makes them look bad and wins recruits for your team.
7. Gather evidence for your side and keep a good record of it. Out of context evidence is allowed, if necessary, for your team’s cause. If you don’t remember past offenses well, gather with members of your team to review them and refresh your memories.
8. Avoid proper process for grievances when possible, but when it is unavoidable, declare the effort a failure before it begins by pointing out the incompetence and/or corruption of your elders and/or the hardness of heart of the other team. Remember that following proper procedures can stop the demolition process, so be sure to thwart all efforts in this regard by encouraging disrespect for the authority and character of your leaders.
9. Assume the worst possible motives for your opponents and your elders, and be sure to pass those assumptions along to team members and potential team members. Imagining conspiracies and wicked coalitions plotted in secret adds drama to the game and builds team loyalty.
10. Never acknowledge that anyone on your team has done anything wrong. Assume everyone on the other team is wrong in all respects. Setting up different standards of behavior for your team than for the other team is often necessary to accomplish this.
11. Assume that you are the best person to solve problems that do not directly involve you. Assume your elders are the worst persons to solve them. (If anyone claims you are being a busybody, explain that you are simply meeting your obligations to hold others accountable.)
12. Shamelessly declare that you know all about certain problems without acknowledging that in order to know them, you must have listened to gossip. (This is very helpful in making others on your team comfortable with the team building process.)
13. Demand that your elders answer your concerns about matters that do not involve you. Assume that if they have not reported to you, then the elders must not care and must not be doing anything about the problems. Demand that you be included in the problem-solving process so that you can decide whether your elders are doing it well enough. (Again, we can call this “accountability.”)
14. Work for the removal of any elders that do not adequately meet your demands or who make any slight indication that they have any sympathy with the other team. The stated reason for the removal need not have anything to do with the demolition game; any reason will do. Look for weaknesses to exploit, after all, all elders have them.

15. Describe the consequences of this problem in the most hyperbolic language possible and assure all those who will listen that this problem will destroy the church unless your demands regarding it are met. (If necessary, threats of church splits, lawsuits, formal charges, excommunication, etc., can be made to weaken the resolve of the other team.)

16. If anyone on the other team repents of anything, declare the repentance to be imperfect, and therefore not worthy of acceptance. If you are pressured into repentance yourself, repent of small things only loosely related to the game, so you can continue playing. Avoid true and complete repentance and forgiveness at all costs, as it immediately brings the demolition game to a halt!

N.B.: When the game is played well, there is often no clear winner.

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Links In The Media Chain –

What would happen if Israel and Iran have a nuclear war?

http://www.upi.com/International_Security/Emerging_Threats/Analysis/2007/11/21/walkers_world_a_mideast_nuclear_war/9884/

Before and after photos of the parts of Japan hit by the tsunami -

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/before-and-after-japan-rebuilds-after-tsunami/story-e6freuy9-1226075088641>

Sgt. Reckless, the US Marines hero, a horse - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIo3ZfA9da0>

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Poems That Preach –

This is the Age -

This is the age of the half read page,
The quick hash and the mad dash,
The bright night with the nerves tight,
The plane hop and the brief stop,
The lamp tan in the short span,
The big shot in a good spot,
The brain strain and the heart pain,
And the cat naps till the spring snaps,
And the fun's done.

TV or not TV

The most important thing we've learned,
So far as children are concerned,
Is never, never, never let
Them near your television set.
Better yet just don't install
The idiotic thing at all.

In almost every house we been
We've seen them gaping at the screen.
They loll and slop and lounge about,
And stare until their eyes pop out.
Last week we saw, at someones place,
A dozen eyeballs on the floor.
They sit and stare and stare and sit,
Until they're hypnotized by it.
Until they're absolutly drunk,
With all that shocking, ghastly junk.

Oh yes, we know it keeps them still,
They don't climb out the window sill.
They never fight or kick or punch.
They leave you free to cook the lunch
And wash the dishes in the sink,
But did you ever stop to think,
To wonder just exactly what
This does to your beloved tot.

It rots the senses in the head.
It kills imagination dead.
It clogs and clutters up the mind.
It makes a child so dull and blind.
He can no longer understand
A fantasy, a fairyland.

His brain becomes as soft as cheese.
His powers of thinking rust and freeze.
He cannot think, he only sees.
Alright, you'll cry, alright, you'll say.
But if we take the set away,
What shall we do to entertain

Our darling children? Please explain.
We'll answer this by asking you
What used the darling once to do?
How used they keep themselves contented
Before this monster was invented?

Have you forgotten, don't you know?
We'll say it very loud and slow.
THEY USED TO READ! THEY'D READ AND READ,
AND THEN PROCEED TO READ SOME MORE.

Great Scott! Gadzooks!!
One half their lives was reading books,
The nursery shelves held books galore.
Books cluttered up the nursery floor,
And in the the bedroom by the bed ,
More books were waiting to be read.

The younger ones had Beatrix Potter,
With Mr. Toad, the dirty rotter.
And Squirrel Napkin, Pigling Bland,
And Mrs. Figgywinkle, and
Just how the camel got his hump,
And how the monkey lost his rump,
And Mr. Toad and, bless my soul,
There was Mr. Rat and Mr. Mole.

Oh books what books they used to know,
Those children living long ago.
So please, oh, please, we beg, we pray,
Go throw your T.V. set away.
And in its place you can install,
A lovely bookshelf on the wall.
Then fill the shelves with lots of books
Ignoring all the dirty looks,
The screams, the yells, the bites, the kicks,
And children hitting you with sticks.

Fear not, because we promise you

That in about a week or two
Of having nothing else to do,
They'll now begin to feel the need
Of having something good to read.
And once they start, Oh boy! Oh boy!
You watch the slowly growing joy
That fills their hearts; they'll grow so keen,
They'll wonder what they'd ever seen
In that ridiculous machine,
That nauseating, foul, unclean,
Repulsive, television screen.
And later each and every kid,
Will love you more for what you did.

Roald Dahl

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Therapy For The Funny Bone –

I dialed a number and got the following recording:

“I am not available right now, but Thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life.

Please leave a message after the Beep. If I do not return your call, You are one of the changes.”

I was testing the children in my Sunday school class to see if they understood the concept of getting to Heaven.

I asked them, “If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into Heaven?”

“NO!” the children answered.

“If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into Heaven?”

Again, the answer was, “NO!”

By now I was starting to smile. Hey, this was fun! “Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children, and loved my wife, would that get me into Heaven?” I asked them again.

Again, they all answered, “NO!”

I was just bursting with pride for them. “Well,” I continued, “then how can I get into Heaven?”

A five-year-old boy shouted out, “YOU Gotta Be DEAD!!!!”

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Dinosaurs and Mammals Buried Together –

Several years ago I stumbled across an article that described a fossilised mammal in China that had a little dinosaur inside its stomach. (see <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article411591.ece>) As a creationist, I had no difficulty understanding it, since Genesis 1:24 - 27 describes the creation of all the land animals and man on the 6th day of the creation week. But for evolutionary scientists, it creates a major difficulty. Darwin's theory teaches that the dinosaurs died off before mammals evolved.

Last week I received the June issue of Creation magazine and read an article titled “The so called Age of Dinosaurs” by Calvin Smith.

He wrote, “Many still think that mammals and dinosaurs, for example, never coexisted, or if they did it was only for a short period when only small shrew-like mammals were present.

However, the facts show otherwise. Gradually, more and more evidence is being discovered that is consistent with what we know from the Bible, namely that dinosaurs and other creatures all lived and died at the same time.

To the surprise of many, ducks, squirrels, platypus, beaver- and badger-like creatures have all been found in dinosaur era rock layers along with bees, cockroaches, frogs, and pine trees. Most people don't picture a T-rex walking along with a duck flying overhead, but that's what the so-called 'dino-era' fossils would prove.”

Calvin Smith quotes Dr. Donald Burge, (curator of vertebrate paleontology, College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum) in an interview with Dr. Carl Werner, “We find mammals in almost all of our (dinosaur dig) sites. These were not noticed years ago... . We have about 20,000 pounds of bentonite clay that has mammal fossils that we are trying to give away to some researcher. It's not that they are not important, it's just that you only live once and I specialized in something other than mammals. I specialize in reptiles and dinosaurs.”

Dr. Carl Werner comments, that “there are already over 432 mammal species ...identified in 'dinosaur rock' including nearly 100 complete mammal skeletons.”

To read the complete article, go to creation.com

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Eddy-Torial –

by Buddy Smith

Sleuthing For Miracles –

I have a confession to make. I am not only a bibliophile (a lover of books) but I am an amateur philologist (a lover of words.) Nothing stirs the Sherlock in me like the scent of an unfamiliar word. For instance, I never knew the origins of the word “miracle” until today. I just discovered that it is a vagabond Latin word that William Tyndale selected (some 28 times in his New Testament) to translate the Greek words for “sign” and “power.”

Somewhere, I expect, there may be someone who still retains a spark of curiosity about words and their origins. To that person, this Eddy-Torial is addressed.

Fellow sleuth, if you will hurry to this address

(<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=miracle&searchmode=none>) and knock at the door, you will apprehend the word you seek.

Here is his description: [miracle](#) mid-12c., from O.Fr. *miracle*, from L. *miraculum* “object of wonder” (in Church L., “marvelous event caused by God”), from *mirari* “to wonder at,” from *mirus* “wonderful,” from **smeiros*, from PIE *(s)*mei-* “to smile, be astonished” (cf. Skt. *smerah* “smiling,” Gk. *meidan* “to smile,” O.C.S. *smejo* “to laugh;” see [smile](#)). Replaced O.E. *wundortacen*, *wundorweorc*. The Greek words rendered as *miracle* in the English bibles were *semeion* “sign,” *teras* “wonder,” and *dynamis* “power,” in Vulgate translated respectively as *signum*, *prodigium*, and *virtus*.

Now tell me, dear Watson, did you observe that the word “miracle” sums up wonderfully the content of the Greek words (semeion for sign, teras for wonder, and dunamis for power)? And did you perceive that a miracle, in its etymology, is that which God does, which man sees, which causes men to wonder and to marvel, and to smile with astonishment, or even to laugh joyously? Did you see it, dear Watson? And if you read Tyndale’s New Testament you will find that the beloved Tyndale was the first of our English Bible translators to use the word, “miracle”. Here, have a read of the first three verses of the third of John in Tyndale’s translation,

*“Ther was a man of the pharises named Nicodemus a ruler amonge ye Iewes. The same cam to Iesus by nyght and sayde vnto him: Rabbi we knowe that thou arte a teacher whiche arte come from God. For no man coulde do suche **miracles** as thou doest except God were with him. Iesus answered and sayde vnto him: Verely verely I saye vnto the: except a man be boren a newe he cannot se the kyngdom of God.”*

Jesus’ Miracles are Jewels of Gold -

Nicodemus’ curiosity took voice when he said to the Lord Jesus in John 3:2 (KJV), “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

“These miracles that thou doest...” Nicodemus was nobody’s fool. He had seen the Devil’s court jesters cut their capers, and do their tricks. He saw through their card tricks and sleights of hand. But

“these miracles that thou doest”, well, they were signs, they were wondrous works of power that *“no man could do except God be with him.”* The miracles of Jesus were, to Nicodemus, jewels of gold in a world of cheap imitations. They were masterpieces of God’s workmanship, unique in a marketplace filled with fools gold. **“THESE miracles which THOU doest!”** Nicodemus’ insights into the miracles of Christ perfectly illustrate what a miracle is. It is a work of power that is so obviously from God that it provokes men to marvel in wondrous astonishment with joyous laughter! Nicodemus saw the miracles and sought the sovereign Lord whose signs spoke so strongly of God’s presence. You want to know what a miracle is? Go listen to the words of Nicodemus, **“THESE Miracles that THOU doest!”** And then listen to the wonder in his voice.

The Need For Balance in Looking for Miracles -

We must keep our balance in this wobbly generation on the subject of miracles. God can and does do miraculous works of power, and is not limited by the crippled theology of any denom(abom)ination. BUT nowhere on earth are miracles being done today that compare with the works of Christ. There are no **“THESE miracles”** like Nicodemus saw. Be honest, there just aren’t. The jewels of gold that Nicodemus spoke of are simply withdrawn from circulation. Do you object? Then take me to those like Lazarus, who have been dead and decomposing for three days, and then raised from the dead.

Wiser men have commented that even in the Bible miracles were relatively rare. Moses and Aaron, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Daniel, our Lord and His apostles saw God temporarily set aside His own natural laws at times as signs to men. Half a dozen short periods of time in 4000 years. Maybe 400 years total out of 4000, that’s ten percent of history that has seen miracles. So be it. Let’s be wise enough not to rewrite history nor to complain against God’s management of His universe. Remember that it has always been an evil and adulterous generation that **SEEKS** after signs!

So the golden jewels of Jesus’ miracles are very rare. Oh, to be as wise as Nicodemus and see that the cheap tricks of duck feathers floating down from the ceiling, and fake gold dust, and cooking oil on the hands of sham-evangelists are **NOT** miracles of God. They are conjuring tricks performed by the Devil’s court jesters hoping to cash in on the reputation of the Son of God. They have no credibility. We should pay them no heed.

Where Has All The Gold Gone? -

What does it mean, this absence of the miracles of Christ? Is there no gold left in God’s treasure house? Has the GFC depleted the coffers of God’s infinite supply of blessing? Not at all. I have found it, not in jewels, but in the fabric of life. It is in the warp and woof of every believer’s circumstance. As it was in the wilderness when God’s artisans prepared the priests’ garments, just so God hammers out His golden power and signs and wonders into thin sheets, cuts them into fine threads and cunningly weaves them into the seconds and secrets and sorrows of this very day. Go and read the words of Moses, *“ And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut *it into* wires, to work *it* in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, *with* cunning work.”* **Exodus 39:3.**

We call it divine providence, but I wonder if we lose something by our glib choice of the term? Have we lost our sense of wonder over the daily miracles we enjoy? God’s golden jewels, his miracles are beaten thin and woven into my every turn. That phone call from a beloved pastor friend, the granddaughter who sat in my study today and asked to be baptised, the email asking for

the names of pastors to pray for, the sweetness of fellowship with my brother in Christ who just lost his wife, the answer to prayer for the young man suffering with leukemia, a week of blessed fellowship with our son, a brother's deep insight into the state of our churches, another brother's boldness for Christ costing him dearly, the rejection we feel from another, a study with one of our young men tonight, and our time of prayer together, a brother in the church doing plumbing work at church today, a deep and thoughtful conversation with a daughter, a son in law that filled the pulpit for another pastor on Sunday, supper with two of our grandsons tonight, a sweet visit with a senior saint in her home this morning, a swift recovery from a sudden illness on Saturday night when there was no one else to preach on Sunday, a successful surgery for a brother's wayward daughter, and a precious time of fellowship with my sweetheart as we explored the meaning of the name of the Lord being our high tower.. Such cunning work, what glorious embroidery, that you should garnish my homespun with your gold! My life may be burlap, but you ought to see the threads of gold woven all through it!

Oh Father, I feel that you have lavished upon the weakest of all your servants all the gold in Heaven!

You have so beautifully woven your miracles into the cloak of the last ten days that surely you have blest no one else in all your kingdom!

And you know, Lord, how weak is my eyesight!

I have only glimpsed an occasional thread in all this tapestry!

How much more did I miss?

What more do you have in store for your children?

* * * * *

Forgive me, Lord, for ever fearing the evil schemes of wicked men. Even they are threads of thy weaving.

Though the sight of my eyes fail, teach my heart to see the golden threads, woven even into my sackcloth.

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