

# THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

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## Forest Hill

### Church of Christ

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#### Minister:

Barry M. Grider

### VISIT US SOON!

#### Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.  
Morning Worship... 10:30 A.M.  
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study .....7:00 P.M.

### HOME OF

### MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

#### Missions Supported:

Iglesia de Cristo Memphis  
Kakinada, India  
Manila, Philippines  
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In Search of the Lord's Way

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## PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

### (Part Four)

Barry M. Grider

#### *The Christian Life (3:1-4:6)*

Many Bible passages give practical guidelines showing how one is to live the Christian life (Rom. 6,12; 1 Cor. 13; *et cetera*). Truly, Colossians 3 is one of those passages. What kind of life is the Christian life?

First, the Christian life is a converted life (v.1). What does it mean to be risen with Christ? The resurrection is a fundamental fact of Christianity (Rom. 1:4; 1Cor. 15:3-6). How then can individuals be risen with Christ? "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). Baptism is more than just going through a ritualistic act. Something happens when one is baptized. Baptism connects the sinner with the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4). When one is baptized, he dies (Gal. 2:20). One dies that he might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

When one is baptized *properly* he has been converted. It may be asked: "What is meant by the word 'properly'?" Colossians 2:12 shows that a heart operation takes place when one is baptized. One has his heart changed. Therefore, it is vital for one to understand the purpose of baptism. A person cannot *believe wrong* and be *baptized right* (Acts 3:19; cf. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:17). When one arises from the waters of baptism, he has arisen with Christ, and therefore, is converted to Him. The new convert seeks things which are above because Christ lives above. Such a one is motivated, because of his new relation to Christ, to be faithfully present in every assembly of the saints, to give sacrificially, to be concerned not just for the physical needs of others, but for their eternal welfare as well. Such a one is converted.

Second, the one who is converted will seek to change the way he thinks and the way he lives. The word "affection" (v. 2) speaks of the mind. The child of God is to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5). While every person is different from every other, the world can be divided into two basic categories—those who think on things above and those who think on things below. If one is risen with Christ, he is to be changed (Rom. 12:1-2). The first thing one chooses in the morning is his mind-set. Some may complain, others opt to have a good attitude. If one's disposition is to act like the world—he must change! One may need to change his attitude and/or speech (v.8). Changing from being dishonest to being truthful and honest may be necessary, too (v.9). Since a changed life is essential, one must be particularly concerned about daily repentance.

Third, the one who is converted and changed will be consecrated (v.3). One belonging to Christ has a change of focus. Instead of focusing on what everybody else is doing, in all things he will seek to imitate Christ. Singleness of purpose needs to be seen in every area of life (vv.17,23). (continued on page 4)

## HAVE WE FAITH?

Rick Brumback

It seems that the term “faith” goes hand in hand with religion. Church leaders exhort members to “have faith.” But often an explanation of what that means is lacking. Surely an understanding of a term so often used in the Bible text is necessary! The Biblical term “faith” actually has several meanings, although they express similar thoughts. Faith may mean confidence/assurance, fidelity, and the system of Christian teachings and beliefs. When we speak of contending earnestly for the faith (Jude 3) we are speaking of the Christian system. When we speak of having faith in God, we mean confidence or assurance about some issue of His identity, conduct, etc. (Heb. 11:6).

Unfortunately, some have mistakenly asserted that faith and reason are mutually exclusive, and the former is something akin to a guess or blind groping for belief. In his book **Faith and Reason** (1968), R.G. Collingwood said, “Faith is a habit of mind which accepts without criticizing, pronounces without proving, and acts without arguing. It knows nothing of analysis and classification, hypothesis and induction and syllogism; for the machinery of thought it has not use. Nor does it inquire into causes and effects, forces and their combinations, bodies and their interactions; in a mechanical world it is not at home. Yet somewhere it has a home, and thought of a kind it certainly is; and however it came into human nature, whether by the disposition of an all-wise providence or by the survival of the fittest, it is a habit of mind that exists in men and finds its proper expression in their religion.” (e.g., faith is a blind leap-in-the-dark).

This idea of a bifurcation between faith and reason was championed by the nineteenth-century philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. He “brought to full tide the notion that reason will always lead to pessimism. That is, one must try to find optimistic answers in regard to meaning and values on an ‘upper level’ outside of reason. Through a ‘leap of faith’ one must try to find meaning without reason. So optimism will always be in the area of non-reason.” (**How Should We Then Live?**, Francis Schaeffer, 1976). This type of “reasoning” is firmly entrenched in much of the religious community today. “Faith” becomes a hopeful guess with which clear thinking is not associated, nor are questions asked. It is unfortunate that such a view has become an institutional element in Christendom. A professor was once asked if Elijah had truly lived. The professor replied that he did not know for certain and did not truly care; the Church had decided that Elijah accounts were good to use, so it did not matter if they were real or not—he would preach them either way. These views, however, would inspire little confidence in the Bible or the God Who gave it. Must one resort to such mere wishing? Is there nothing concrete upon which we can base our beliefs and life decisions?

Consider that Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the *evidence* of things not seen. This is like evidence in a judicial case. Hebrews 11:3 says that by faith we *understand*, not hope. John wrote that his Gospel account was written so that we may know that Jesus is the Son of God and we might have life through his name (John 20:30,31). Paul said that we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). This does not say we walk by blind, uninformed hope, as Kierkegaard or later figures would suggest. It says that we walk by the “*evidence of things not seen*,” not by sight. This is akin to the jury that relies on the testimony and evidence, not having witnessed the act in question personally. Clark Pinnock states that the facts behind religion are the same cognitive information used in law, medicine, science, etc. As a result, we can have confidence in the historical truths of Christianity and the elements of the future to which they point. Note that the Bible says faith comes by hearing the words of truth (evidence) (Rom. 10:17). In addition, God Himself called for his people to come and reason with Him (Isa. 1:18). Jesus told Thomas that he believed the resurrection because he saw Jesus resurrected, but blessed are those who do not see the empirical, sensory evidence yet still believe.

Yes, Christians are to have faith in God, they are to live faithful lives, and they are to contend for the faith. But all this is based upon the truths of God’s nature and his dealings with humanity throughout the ages. Our lives are to be founded upon the reality of the person Jesus, and his work; we are not called to simply cross our fingers and hope! “*But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,*” (Heb. 11:6).

(Brother Brumback preaches for the Southwest church of Christ, Austin, Texas)

The Christian is focused at home (vv.18-21). Wives, because of their respect for the Lord, submit to their husbands. Husbands love their wives even as Christ loved the church. Children obey their parents because they know that to do so they are pleasing to the Lord. Fathers are not to provoke their children, in order that they might rear them in the Lord. Homes should be consecrated to Christ.

The Christian is focused on his relationships to others (vv.12-13). He is focused at work (vv. 22-23). In every area of life, when one is truly converted he understands that he is set apart to honor God.

Fourth, the Christian life is a life of contentment (v.4). The source of his joy is not on earth, but in heaven. That hope sustains him day after day, week after week. The faithful Christian has peace, the likes of which the world does not know (v.15). Why do some get depressed? They concentrate only on earthly things. Yet, the life committed to the Lord will not be forgotten (v. 24).

### CONCLUSION

In his epistle to the Colossians, Paul’s love for his brethren is obvious to the attentive Bible student. His desire to see them maintain their faith in the all sufficient Christ is clearly seen. His courage to confront heretical teaching is a reminder that lovers of truth have that same responsibility. The apostle encourages all Christians by reminding his readers that they can enjoy their new life in Christ, that they have certain responsibilities as the child of God, that they are to remain ever faithful to their Lord—as the peace of God and the hope of heaven dwells in their hearts.

#### Endnotes

- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.,230.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., 231.
- <sup>6</sup> Jerry Moffitt, “Introduction to Colossians” *The Book of Colossians*, ed. Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren (Lebanon, TN: Sain Publications, 1986), 9.
- <sup>7</sup> G.G. Findley, “Colossians,” *Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 20:4.
- <sup>8</sup> <http://www.bible.org/docs/nt/books/col/col-intr.htm>
- <sup>9</sup> Findley, 4.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> David Lipscomb and J.W. Shepherd, “A Commentary of the New Testament Epistles,” *Gospel Advocate Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1989), 4:244.
- <sup>12</sup> <http://www.bible.org/docs/nt/books/col/col-intr.htm>
- <sup>13</sup> Thiessen, 232.
- <sup>14</sup> Findley, 1.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary – Colossians* (New York: Abingdon Press, n.d.), 510.

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