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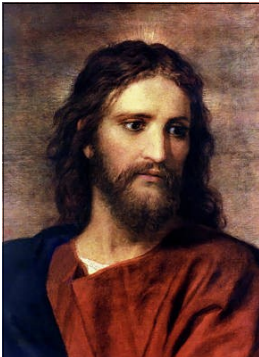
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God's Glorious Attributes He is ALL in ALL

Part 16

By Rayola Kelley

Years ago, I read a book concerning the weakness of the church. The author contended that the church was weak because it presented a weak Jesus. His emphasis from the Bible was the declaration that Jesus must be all in all (*Colossian 3:11*). Have you ever looked up the word "all" in the Strong's Concordance? It is clear as you go down the lists of Scriptures that entail God's work and what we have in Christ that it is not "just enough," but it is complete in every way possible.



As believers we know that because of who Jesus is there is no limitation as to His character and what He can do. In Him all treasures are hidden, and as revealed later in this article we shall see how He is the complete revelation of the mystery (*Colossians 2-3*). We are told this about Him in *Romans 11:36*, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." The Apostle Paul also confirms this in *1 Corinthians 8:6*, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Think about these Scriptures for a moment. It is because of the Father that ALL things exist and it is because of Jesus, ALL things have been brought forth and made possible. The Apostle Paul summarized it this way in *Ephesians 3:9*, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." The apostle

explains this mystery in *1 Timothy 3:16*, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Jesus is our Creator and as Creator His goal is to reconcile ALL things to Himself and not only did He bring ALL things forth, but He knows how to fill ALL things with the reality of Himself, and it will be for this reason that there will not be any excuse on judgment day for someone to not believe the truth about the Godhead (*John 1:1-3; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16-20*). In Jesus, we have redemption that is complete, and it is through Him we have and possess eternal, abundant life, and it is ALL according to His will. In fact, we are told that our desire should be to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (*Colossians 1:9*). It is also because of Him that ALL things of life and substance have been made available to us (*Ephesians 1:11*). The sole reason for this is so that He will be glorified in and through our lives.

What comes with Jesus being our all in all? The Apostle Paul stated in *Romans 15:13-14*, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another." It is God who works all in all when it comes to the operations of the body of Christ (*1 Corinthians 12:6*). He is the God of all comfort, working within us the compassion to comfort others, and it is in Him all promises exist (*2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 20*). Paul understood that all things come from God, and as Christians we can benefit from that which is sustaining to our spirits and souls. It is the Lord alone who can fill us with ALL joy and peace, causing us to abound in ALL hope, goodness, and knowledge through the abiding power of the Spirit in our lives.

However, problems arise when it comes to Jesus' dual nature. It is not unusual that most of us accept the fact that believers are spiritually bound together by one Spirit into one union; therefore, each one is considered as being One Body, One Church, and One Bride, and we are told that Jesus is the head over ALL things to the Church, which includes principality and power. The Church is His Body that He fills with His life (*Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 2:19*). Even though we have the Word and the examples of Jesus as God Incarnate, some will go the way of unbelief because they can't see their way to simply believe what the Word says about Jesus.

It is true that our perception of Jesus in His humanity can limit our view of His deity. We love certain ideas of the compassionate, loving and caring Jesus, but we have a hard time accepting that this caring, Man Jesus is also the Almighty who in the end can prove to be a consuming fire in judgment (*Hebrews 12:29*). It was the Apostle John who recorded in *Revelation 1:8* these words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

1 Corinthians 15:25-27 speaks about Jesus putting ALL enemies under His feet including death. It then goes on to say in *15:28*, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." We know this is probably in reference to the time when all will acknowledge Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father (*Philippians 2:9-11*).

It was in *Revelation 1* that Jesus revealed Himself as Judge of ALL, who possesses the keys of hell and death, which was also confirmed in *John 5:22*. This revelation caused John to fall at His feet as if dead (*Revelation 1:13-18 refer to Jude 14-15*). Here was a man who was one of the three who witnessed Jesus' glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. He

laid his head on Jesus' chest the night the Lord was betrayed, and it was during that great ordeal on the cross that the Lord committed His mother, Mary, to John, and John to Mary (Matthew 17:1-9; John 13:23; 19:25-27).

Keep in mind, the book of Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus Christ (*Revelation 1:1*). This revelation was given to John when he was on the island of Patmos. He was an older man who had experienced various persecutions for his faith in Christ. Here was a man who was mature in his faith, who had written a Gospel and three epistles and when he saw Jesus as Judge, he still fell at His feet as if he was dead.

I think one of the problems we must be aware of in our Christian walk is we can become too familiar with Jesus. We settle for Him in the box of theology, instead of pursuing a greater revelation of Him. We swoon over Him as Savior, but refuse to submit to Him as Lord (*Luke 6:46-49*). We love talking about His love, but we are reluctant to talk about the disciplined life He is calling us to that requires us to disown our self-life and pick up a personal cross. We talk about Him coming as a servant, but refuse to talk about Him coming back as King of kings, Lord of lords and Judge over all (*Luke 9:23-26*).

It is clear, for the most part, that some have erected a Jesus they can control intellectually, emotionally relate to in a sentimental way, and be comfortable with when there is a mixture of spirit and the world is present. However, the Jesus I have been learning about for the past 40 years has broken into pieces all my theological boxes concerning Him, causing my sentimental concepts to flee in light of His reality, and making me more uncomfortable with unholy mixtures and lifeless, perverted doctrines. In fact, I have become aware that man's controllable, theological presentation of Jesus either makes Him lifeless or strips Him of His divine glory.

The truth is there is no compromise or shades of grey when it comes to who Christ is and His teachings. His examples are clear, His admonitions still ring through the ages as warnings, His offer of eternal life has never changed while His warnings of hell and damnation are also still echoing through the ages. He continues to

call out to the "Adam's" of the world who hide behind fig leaves of excuses to simply conceal their stiff-necked, rebellious ways and hard hearts. He warns the "Cain's" that sin lies at the door, and tells the fleeing "Hagar's" with the "Ishmael's" of the age, that He still sees them in their plight (*Genesis 3:9; 4:6-7; 16:7-12*).

We are told in *Matthew 28:18* that all power had been given to Jesus in heaven and earth to carry out His ministry as Savior, the Messiah, Lord, King, Priest, and Judge. *James 1:17* tells us that ALL good gifts come from the Father, while *Romans 3:22* points out that righteousness is available to ALL who will believe through Jesus.

The question is what does it mean for Jesus to be ALL in ALL? We are told that Jesus is in ALL as far His work in each believer's life to bring forth His reflection in them (*Colossians 3:11*). In other words, He is involved with every aspect of heaven, involved in all the events of this world and is intricately directing the circumstances of our lives. It is for this reason we are to seek Jesus in all matters, look for Him in all situations, and trust Him with all the events that touch our lives.

We must learn to walk in confidence of the completeness of our life and call on the Lord. The word, "in" in Scripture has to do with inclusive. In other words, there is nothing that can be added to or taken away because it is what it is and will always be so. This word points to quality of something. The word, "all" is about quantity. It points to having as much as possible which would include everything. In the end, what you have will end up being the sum total of what is available and once it is brought together, it will equal what you could and can possess. The word "all" speaks of completion, while the word "in" declares there is nothing that can be added or taken away for the matter stands as is.

It seems that Christians are looking for "more" of something but not for the "all" of a matter. We want more experiences, but how many of us want ALL that the Lord has for us. *Ephesians 4:9-10* states what the Lord's intention is, "(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above

all heavens, that he might fill all things.)" He fills the heavens with glory, filled hell with the reality of His existence, and earth with the knowledge of Him. Clearly, the key about having it ALL lies in us possessing Christ in greater measure. After all, we are brought from glory to glory when it comes to Christ (*2 Corinthians 3:17-18*). "Glory" points to distinction.

However, since we are earth-bound, we calculate how something will complete us or make us happy in this life based on our ideas or notions. We often stop with ourselves, settling for less and failing to secure the ALL in our spiritual lives. The problem with wanting more of something from this life is that we end up settling for less. Simply seeking for the "more" from an earthly aspect causes us to miss the completeness or excellence of the ALL that will only come from heaven. To have the ALL of the matter often requires us to push through that which is inferior, which has become the norm for us in this present age. We end up settling for less because we think the inferior is our lot in life and we need to accept it.

Sadly, our calculations are often based on our "wants" and not our needs. *Philippians 4:19* says, "*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*" Many of us live like spiritual paupers because we evaluate the essence of life according to this present world and not the next. As a result, we fail to realize our real blessings are spiritual and what we need to be rich in is faith (*Ephesians 1:3; James 2:5*). The Apostle Paul put it this way in *2 Corinthians 8:9*, "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*" Notice the word, "might." Being rich in Christ comes down to possessing Him. It is for this reason the Apostle Paul was ready to count ALL things (of this present world) but loss for the sake of becoming identified with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection in order to ever press towards the mark of the prize of his high calling (*Philippians 3:7-14*).

What will it mean for us to obtain all spiritual blessings and be rich in faith? *Romans 8:38-29* gives us this promise, "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called*

according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." How many of us love this Scripture? We quote the first part of it, "And we know that ALL things work together for good." It is after the word "good" that we stop and never advance to the conditions of standing in confidence that everything that is happening in our life is to work together for our good. However, there is a condition and a reason for such an exercise. The reason is, so that in the end, we will end up reaching our potential of reflecting the glory of Christ in a dark world to attract lost people to Jesus; but note the condition has to do with us loving the Lord.

Mark 12:29-31 reminds us what it means to love the Lord, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." Notice how we are told to love the Lord God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. In other words, love the Lord with everything in us. To possess such love implies there will be no half-heartedness in commitment towards the Lord. Keep in mind, He deserves our whole heart in devotion and our whole life in service, and it is for this reason Paul instructed believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice in Romans 12:1.

We cannot properly love others unless we love the Lord. In godly love, we must deny ourselves any right to love on our terms and begin to prefer the Lord over ourselves, allowing the Holy Spirit to shed that love abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5). Ephesians 3:19-20 states, "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." God is love, and it is only as we are out of the way that God's love can fill us up and begin to flow through us to others in a powerful way (1 John 4:8). It will be a love that knows how to properly honor those around us.

To live in light of ALL the Lord has for us, we must live in expectation, trusting what the Word declares about Him. When the desperate father came to Jesus about the destruction demons had on his son and admitted he believed deliverance was for everyone but him, Jesus made this statement, "If thou cast believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23) ALL things are possible to God and ALL things are possible to us if we walk by faith towards the Lord and in line to His will. The faith walk is not about the key or means to control God; rather, it is the means in which people can choose to trust the ways and works of God on their behalf whether it makes sense or not, knowing ALL of His dealings are perfect and right.

We need to remember that in Christ, in spite of all of our afflictions in this life, all things have been made new and we have a new life and identity that identifies us to the next world to come. We need to stand fast in the Lord, so we can also hold fast to that which is good (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 3:7-9, 5:21).

As you can see, I am only touching the surface of what it means for Christ to be ALL in ALL. We will be spending eternity learning what the ALL entails, but meanwhile we need to avoid living like spiritual paupers in the midst of what seems like an anemic church, sick societies, corrupt governments, and as victims of this present world. We need to remember we are simply passing through as strangers and sojourners because we are citizens of another country, serving as that kingdom's ambassadors in this world (2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Peter 2:11). Through each stage or challenge in our life we need to keep in mind He is our ALL in ALL and He is involved in all matters of heaven, earth, and our personal walk.

My ability and success to walk, stand, wait, and run the course comes down to the Lord becoming my ALL in ALL. I can walk because He is ALMIGHTY. I can stand because He is COMPLETELY trustworthy. I can wait because He is ALL sufficient to meet my needs. I can run because He is my ever-ABIDING strength and I have the promise to stand on this Scripture during such times, "I can do ALL things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13). (Emphasis added.) †

POWERFUL WORDS OF A. W. TOZER

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." - Romans 10:8

Faith is the least self-regarding of the virtues. It is by its very nature scarcely conscious of its own existence. Like the eye which sees everything in front of it and never sees itself, faith is occupied with the Object upon which it rests and pays no attention to itself at all. While we are looking at God we do not see ourselves—blessed riddance. The man who has struggled to purify himself and has had nothing but repeated failures will experience real relief when he stops tinkering with his soul and looks away to the perfect One. While he looks at Christ, the very things he has so long been trying to do will be getting done within him. It will be God working in him to will and to do.

Faith is not in itself a meritorious act; the merit is in the One toward Whom it is directed. Faith is a redirecting of our sight, a getting out of the focus of our own vision and getting God into focus. Sin has twisted our vision inward and made it self-regarding. Unbelief has put self where God should be, and is perilously close to the sin of Lucifer who said, "I will set my throne above the throne of God." Faith looks out instead of in and the whole life falls into line.

All of this may seem too simple. But we have no apology to make. To those who would seek to climb into heaven after help or descend into hell, God says, "The word is nigh thee, even the word of faith" (Romans 10:8). The Word induces us to lift up our eyes unto the Lord and the blessed work of faith begins.

Our Lord made it very plain that spiritual truth cannot be understood until the heart has made a full committal to it. "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17). The willing and the doing (or at least the willingness to do) come before the knowing. Truth is a strict master and demands obedience before it will unveil its riches to the seeking soul.

ELEPHANTS IN THE CHURCH

Part Two

By Jeannette Haley

*"And fear not them which kill the body,
but are not able to kill the soul:
but rather fear him which is able to
destroy both soul and body in hell."
— Matthew 10:28*

In Part One of this series we looked at one of the "elephants" in the church today that is greatly ignored and which nobody wants to talk about. The name of that "elephant" is Sin, and Sin has a friend named Hell. Postmodern preachers don't want to talk about hell for fear of people leaving their church never to return, and when people leave, they take their money with them. Besides, the twin subjects of sin and hell are definitely not politically correct, nor are they "positive," and to most "modern thinkers" these subjects are unnecessary because, as everybody knows, they are outdated and archaic.

Mega church pastor, Joel Osteen, explained why he doesn't preach on hell. *"[People] already feel guilty enough. They're not doing what they should, raising their kids—we can all find reasons. So I want them to come to Lakewood or our meetings and be lifted up, to say, 'You know what? I may not be perfect, but I'm moving forward. I'm doing better.' And I think that motivates you to do better." What a telling statement! Obviously, Osteen doesn't believe in the literal hell Jesus talked about, but instead he assumes that mainstream Christianity's belief in hell is for the purpose of "doing better" which neatly defines his so-called "Christianity" as a "do-better," works-based religion, which is a cult. His cavalier attitude also dismisses the need for the redemption found only in Christ, His work of salvation on the cross, the triumph of His resurrection, and the reality of His second coming for a church that is "without spot or wrinkle," that only His blood could cleanse and present pure to our holy God.*

As a point of interest, according to pollster George Barna: "76 percent of Americans believe in heaven, and 71 percent believe in hell. Only 32 percent believe that hell is 'an actual place of torment and suffering.' 40 percent believe it is 'a state of eternal separation from God's presence.' 64 percent believe that they will go to heaven and only 0.005 percent believe that they

will be sent to the flames." That makes the subject of hell basically irrelevant to the "Christian" mindset of today.

While none of us wants to haul ourselves to church every Sunday morning to hear weekly sermons on hellfire and brimstone, the subjects of sin and hell are vital, basic biblical doctrines. If it wasn't important our Lord and His disciples wouldn't have talked about it. However, as much as we might wish it would just fade away into the mists of the past, it's just as real and as relevant today as it has ever been because Jesus said, *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4.* Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3. Every Word of God is truth whether mankind likes it or not. Our Lord said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" Matthew 24:35.*

Great error and serious consequences occur when the church ignores any basic biblical doctrine while at the same time elaborating on other essential doctrines. For example, by diminishing the clear warnings in Scripture concerning hell and eternal torment while repeatedly emphasizing God's love, people begin to remake God into a being that resembles themselves. E. A. Johnston, in one of his sermons, stated, "Listen friends, the church in America killed off the doctrine of hell when they changed their view of Almighty God from a God of justice to just a God of love. That's why you don't hear many sermons on hell these days. I challenge you to visit any major city in this nation and visit a number of different churches there in different denominations within that city over a period of time and come back and tell me how many sermons you heard on hell. I bet you won't hear one. The main problem with the church in America today is that her view of God is too small. We've shrunken God down to our size or smaller. We've put him on our level. Why, we wouldn't send anybody to hell, that's too extreme and because we believe God thinks and acts like we do, why, surely he wouldn't send anybody to hell either. Why, that's not politically correct. God is on our level today because we put him there, at least that's how many view him."

Since the subject of sin and hell is no longer in its proper place in the

true Gospel message, the way has been paved for counterfeit "Christian" leaders to redefine the Gospel to fit the cultural tastes of "modern man." Instead of proclaiming the Good News to lost, hell-bound sinners, the Gospel has been given a whole new set of "clothes" that fit in nicely with the fashionable heady and high-minded pseudo Christianity of today. All dressed up to appeal to the prideful sensitivities of the deluded, this "new Gospel" only offers what itching ears want to hear, and, of course, people (both inside and outside of "churches") certainly do not want to hear about hell, be taught what the Bible says about hell, or take the subject of hell seriously. It causes one to wonder if Jesus Himself were to come and stand up in one of the many "emergent," "seeker-friendly" mega churches around the world today and preach on hell if He would be tolerated for more than one minute. I don't think so! Tragically, the "Good News" has lost its appeal because the "bad news" is not so "bad" anymore. All you have to do to feel good about yourself is to "try to do better" (whatever that is), and love yourself. It used to be that lost, hell-bound sinners knew they were lost, and once they were "found" by the Savior of their soul, and their burden of sin washed away by the blood of the Lamb, they were filled with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory" as they praised and worshipped the One who had set them free and cleansed them from sin's ugly stains.

"Modern man" (which every generation naturally sees themselves as being) is still "fallen man" and as such carries within the Adamic nature, the "old man" who is self-centered, self-loving, self-absorbed, self-exalting, and just plain selfish. Few seem to recognize that anything of the "self" (or the flesh) that is not born again of the Spirit of God and regenerated (made into a new man after Christ) is an enemy of God and is in total rebellion. Worship of God and God alone is replaced with idolization of the god of self, and one's "felt needs." Furthermore, the truth is that each generation of rebellious "modern man" merely redefines or refines the ugliness and stench of sin, rebellion and unbelief. Humans are masters of camouflage, adept at playing games, creative at justification, and crafty liars. In fact, we're all

so naturally good at it that it's easy to deceive our own selves if we fail to guard our hearts. Even a person who is truly born again and who loves the Lord, if he or she gives in to the flesh instead of submitting to, and walking in the Spirit, can end up giving way to fleshly desires, and one of those desires is to ignore the subject of hell, and pursue a "spirituality" that makes one feel good. And that is exactly the premise the post-modern, seeker-friendly, emergent churches are built upon instead of the foundation of Christ.

The bait is very cleverly based on the half-truth of a "concern for the lost" and the "unchurched." Here's how it works according to a blog by Steven Kozar: "The 'attractional' church model is so common that it's practically the norm; most Christians have assumed that it is the only valid way to 'do church' nowadays, or they don't even know that other legitimate options exist. What is it? Simply put, this model of church starts with the idea that "normal" church is unattractive and can't bring in new people, so exciting new ideas must be implemented in order to get people in the door. Once people show up for the attractive and entertaining aspects, they'll eventually hear a gospel message and they'll 'accept Jesus in their hearts' (or something to that effect).

"This philosophy makes a number of assertions and assumptions right from the start: The needs and sensibilities of the unbeliever should determine the strategy of the church. All of the churches in history (up till now) were doing it wrong: too old-fashioned, too boring, too stiff, too negative, too much doctrine, too ritualistic, etc. People would be glad to go to church, but it's just too 'churchy.' All we need to do is tone down all the religious stuff, make it fun and 'relevant' and people will show up. A church should focus on meeting people's needs through life skills, 'success,' 'psychological therapy' and 'leadership training,' and it should help its members become 'purpose-driven' people who can 'accomplish their destiny.' A church doesn't need to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins anymore; or if it does, it must radically alter the language to appease unbelievers. Numerical growth is proof of God's blessing; lack of numerical growth is proof that God is not involved. In order to build the church,

God needs 'vision-casting' pastors, and these pastors must then command their followers to do the work required by the 'vision' that God gave them."

"Robert Schuller (1926-2015) is probably the man most responsible for establishing the Attractional, Seeker-Friendly, Purpose-Driven church model; although a case could be made that Henry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969) really laid the foundation. Schuller removed many of the 'negative' aspects of Christianity like Christ dying on the cross to atone for our sin, hell, God's anger and God's wrath; and replaced it with the Positive Thinking philosophy he borrowed directly from his mentor, Norman Vincent Peale (1898-1993).

"At a very fundamental level, Schuller believed that because modern people didn't care about their eternal salvation anymore, the church should reach them by appealing to the things that did matter to them; things like their self-esteem and their earthly success and happiness. 'The church must develop a theology for mission. I don't think it's done that. I accept John 3:16 as a good one if people have a fear of hell. Maybe they have, but I find a lot of secular people haven't. At what point can I find a button to push so that I can reach them? I think their desire for self-esteem is that button.' — Robert Schuller interviewed in Christianity Today, Aug. 10, 1984

"I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and hence counterproductive to the evangelistic enterprise than the unchristian, uncouth strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition.' — Robert Schuller 'Dr. Schuller Comments,' (letter to the editor), Christianity Today, October 5, 1984, pp. 12-13." It may be of interest to note, and keep in mind, that the foundation for this flourishing "tree" of evil modernism appears to have been laid by Harry Emerson Fosdick (May 24, 1878 – October 5, 1969). Fosdick was an American pastor who became a central figure in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy within American Protestantism in the 1920s and 1930s and was one of the most prominent liberal ministers of the early 20th century. Fosdick was an advocate of theistic evolution. He defended the

teaching of evolution in schools and rejected creationism. He was involved in a dispute with the creationist William Jennings Bryan and In 1918 he was called to First Presbyterian Church, and on May 21, 1922, he delivered his famous sermon *Shall the Fundamentalists Win?*, in which he defended the modernist position. In that sermon he presented the Bible as a record of the unfolding of God's will, not as the literal "Word of God". He saw the history of Christianity as one of development, progress, and gradual change. Fundamentalists regarded this as rank apostasy, and the battle-lines were drawn. He was also an active anti-Zionist.

I hate to bore you with more details, but I believe it's important for those of us in the Body of Christ today to know our enemy— know who, when, where, and how that Satan has been (and is) using to bring about his centuries-long desire to rule the world through the antichrist. Research into these plans, plots and ploys gives us a great perspective and understanding of how the enemy works, thus sharpening our discernment so that we can stand for the truth. (It should likewise stir us up to be vigilant to guard against voting for the political agents of Satan who never cease in their attempts to overthrow our Republic and enslave us all to the dictates of an antichrist leadership.)

Having said that, here is more information for you to consider in light of the "falling away" of the church that we see all around us today. (2 Thessalonians 2:2, 3.) "The national convention of the General Assembly of the old Presbyterian Church in the USA in 1923 charged Fosdick's local presbytery in New York to conduct an investigation into Fosdick's views. A commission began an investigation, as required. His defense was conducted by a lay elder, John Foster Dulles (1888–1959, future Secretary of State under President Dwight D. Eisenhower in the 1950s), whose father was a well-known liberal Presbyterian seminary professor. Fosdick escaped probable censure at a formal trial by the 1924 General Assembly by resigning from the First Presbyterian Church (historic "Old First") pulpit in 1924. He was immediately called as pastor of a new type of Baptist church ministry at Park Avenue Baptist Church, whose most famous member was the industrialist, financier and

philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr.. Rockefeller then funded the famed ecumenical Riverside Church (later a member of the American Baptist Churches and United Church of Christ denominations) in Manhattan's north-western Morningside Heights area overlooking the Hudson River and nearby Columbia University, where Fosdick became pastor as soon as the doors opened in October 1930. [Emphasis mine.]

This prompted a *Time* magazine cover story on October 6, 1930 in which *Time* said that Fosdick: "...proposes to give this educated community a place of greatest beauty for worship. He also proposes to serve the social needs of the somewhat lonely metropolitane. Hence on a vast scale he has built all the accessories of a community church—gymnasium, assembly room for theatricals, dining rooms, etc. ... In ten stories of the 22-story belltower are classrooms for the religious and social training of the young..." [Underlining mine.] Wow. And here I thought all this stuff going on in the churches today of taking the Lord's money for gymnasiums, theater settings, entertainment props, and so forth, was something new. This unbiblical, ungodly, and worldly, man-centered garbage began before I was even born! And, that includes the associations to humanism, psychology, and socialism, which inevitably paves the way to atheistic communism.

Now here is a little more information for you on the definition of Liberal Christianity, according to Wikipedia, "Liberal Christianity, also known as liberal theology, covers diverse philosophically and biblically informed religious movements and ideas within Christianity from the late 18th century onward. *Liberal* does not refer to progressive Christianity or to political liberalism but to the philosophical and religious thought that developed and grew as a consequence of the Enlightenment." Again, according to Wikipedia, "The Age of Enlightenment (also known as the Age of Reason or simply the Enlightenment) was an intellectual and philosophical movement that dominated the world of ideas in Europe during the 18th century, the 'Century of Philosophy.'"

There is so much more that can be discovered of the historical root system of this evil "tree" that has spread over the earth with its poison-

ous fruit of unbelief, mockery, distortion, elimination, reinterpretation and rejection of the Word of God and the faith "*once delivered unto the saints*" *Jude* 3. The Apostle John warned, "*For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*" *2 John* 7-9.

If we could "dig" down through time along the root system of this "evil tree" that seeks to undermine, reinterpret, dilute, diminish, desecrate, and destroy the clear teachings of God's Word, (and the true Church) our tunnel would bring us clear back to the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and the battle against Gnosticism, which, by the way, is alive and well today, but that is another subject. For those interested in an in-depth study of the real story of the church itself that is not recorded in either secular or church history books may I recommend the invaluable book *The Pilgrim Church* by missionary E. H. Broadbent (1861-1945). His missionary work from 1900 into the 1920s took him to Austria, Belgium, Egypt, Germany, Poland, Russia, Turkey, the Baltic states, North and South America, and Uzbekistan. He spoke fluent French and German and could speak some Russian. Be forewarned, this book is not for "armchair" easy reading, and it does require the reader to put on his or her "thinking cap." (Which is good for all of us from time to time!)

Back to our "elephant" named Hell. For a professing "Christian" to deny that hell is real is an admission that he or she is not "*abiding in the doctrine of Christ*" for Jesus spoke and taught a great deal about hell, mentioning it about 16 times, It is significant to note that hell and the judgment of God are referred to over 180 times in the New Testament alone (hell, judgment, torment, fire, destruction, wrath, punishment, etc.). J. C. Ryle said, "I believe the time is come when it is a positive duty to speak plainly about the reality and eternity of hell...The watchman who keeps silence, when he sees a fire, is guilty of gross neglect...and the minister who

keeps back hell from his people in his sermons is neither a faithful nor a charitable man...He is the kindest friend who tells me the whole extent of my danger."

Why is it imperative for the true church to teach on hell? Consider the following: 1) Failure to preach and teach on hell is a failure to preach the whole counsel of God. Paul said in *Acts* 20:27, "*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*" Picking and choosing which Scriptures to believe (or teach) and which ones to not believe (or teach) is another way of "taking away from the Word of God." It is disobedience born out of a haughty spirit and a high opinion of self, which is sin. Jesus warned, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." *Matthew* 10:28.

2) To diminish the reality and relevance of hell is to diminish the holiness of God, for in His holiness he cannot even look upon sin. "*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*" *Habakkuk* 1:13a. Those who disbelieve what the Word of God plainly states are calling Him a liar. In fact, we either have to believe all of the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, or none of the Bible. Who is going to determine just which parts of the Bible we are to believe? (Although some people—with the help of Jesuits—are doing just that with their so-called modern "versions" and they will suffer grave consequences for doing so.) (For the shocking truth of the erosion of God's Word by the Jesuits and dishonest linguists is recorded in the well-documented book, *Why They Changed The Bible* by David W. Daniels, available from www.Chick.com.)

3) Failure to teach on hell gives people a false sense of security and erases reasons to be motivated to obey Christ and share Him with others. It also opens the door for foolish jesting and silliness which God warns against, and such disbelief discourages people to be of a sober mind. "*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer*" *1 Peter* 4:7. "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*" *1 Peter* 5:8.

4) The true Gospel will not be

preached without warning others of the reality of hell for every unrepentant sinner. It's against the backdrop of hell that people come to the realization that they need to be cleansed and saved from their sins. The good news is that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. How can people truly rejoice in the good news if they don't understand the bad news? Iain Murray says, "No one was converted without knowing that he needed to be." If there is no hell, then sin is no "big deal" either, and since Universalism is on the rise with its belief that we'll all end up in heaven anyway, why worry?. What a satanic lie that is! If there's a heaven, then there's a hell!

5) Those who refuse to preach or teach on hell lack love for others, and are disobedient to Jesus who gave us the great commission to go into all the world and preach the Gospel and make disciples. In *Ezekiel 3:17-21* God gives a sober warning that if we do not warn sinners, then their blood is on our hands.

6) How can people, who have never truly repented because they do not believe in hell, truly obey the First Commandment to "*Love the LORD thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*" if they have never been washed in the blood of the Lamb and known the great joy of being set free from the terrible burden of sin; set free from the despair of separation from God, and eternal life; and set free from the fear of eternity in hell? Jesus said, "*Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little*" *Luke 7:47*.

7) Failure to teach on the reality of hell (and heaven) has greatly contributed to the "death culture" we are now living in. How so? Consider this, people no longer fear a place of total separation from God where their souls will suffer eternal torment. Flirting with dark forces, experimenting with demonic influences, an obsession with satanism, witchcraft, skulls and everything else morbid and macabre is the manifestation of gross unbelief in all that the Bible teaches. People commit suicide to end the different forms of mental, emotional and/or physical misery and suffering they are experiencing in this life; however, if they knew that hell is real, would they be so anxious to murder themselves and possibly end up there?

Oh! What has happened to the church triumphant? The answer is clear—she has left her first love and gone to sleep in the arms of the world. There she lounges on couches of fabricated lies, lulled to sleep by the fantasies she longs to hear. Her rich silver-tongued lovers are adored by the world and the worldly church, and who can wake her? The Sword, the Bible, that most priceless gift from heaven that has stood through the centuries as a beacon of truth, hope and light against the battlements of reprobate man, Satan, devils and hell itself could wake her, but in her bedazzled state the Word of God has lost its appeal. Soon the Bridegroom will come and only those who are prepared and have oil in their lamps will go in with Him to the marriage. Too late, too late sleepy church, for when the bridegroom comes to take His bride and the door closes, you will be left behind.

The question is, is your lamp burning today? †

GOD CALLS IT ABOMINATION By Lynette Hughes

I am horrified when I see professing Christians capitulating to the homosexual agenda by sympathizing with homosexuals and refusing to confront their sin. They either take the easy path and remain silent or compromise by misrepresenting God's Word, and actually think they are Christians while doing so. Rather than defend biblical truth and preach the same gospel they would preach to a heterosexual fornicator, they enable them in their unrighteous 'lifestyle' [a euphemism for 'unrepentant sin'] by their silence or soft soaping the gospel.

How should we respond to the success of the gay agenda? Should we accept the recent trend toward tolerance? Or should we side with those who exclude homosexuals with hostility and disdain? Condemnation and compassion are both essential elements of biblical love, and that's something the homosexual sinner desperately needs. In reality, the Bible calls for a balance between what some people think are two opposing reactions — condemnation and compassion. We don't need to condemn people; the Word of God does that, and then proclaims liberation from the bondage of sin, including homosexual sin.

A homosexual does not need

healing – homosexuality is not a disease. They don't need therapy – homosexuality is not a psychological condition. Homosexuals need forgiveness, because homosexuality is a SIN. They cannot get saved until they come to the realization, they are a sinner and under God's wrath. Our message must be repentance and salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

As a Christian, you must never compromise what the Bible says about homosexuality — ever. No matter how much you desire to be compassionate to the homosexual, your first sympathies belong to the Lord and to the exaltation of His holiness and righteousness.

The practice of homosexuality is confirmation of a person's defiant rebellion against the will of their Creator who from the beginning "made them male and female" (*Matthew 19:4*). To proclaim anything else is to compromise the clear revealed Word of God and deceive those who are perishing.

There is no love in being kind and gentle, and welcoming and 'affirming,' if we do not confront the deception of homosexuality [as well as bisexuality and transgenderism] with the truth of God's Word. Failure to expose the deadly lies and warped agenda of Satan is indicative we ourselves are self-deceived; virtual apostates who have defected from the faith once delivered to God's people and indifferent to the eternal consequences that will come to those who practice sexual immorality.

Did you pat their backs, preacher?

Did you tell them all was well?

Did you tell them they mustn't worry,

They shouldn't be afraid of hell?

Did you tell them to live their best life now,

That they must prosper and have good health?

Did you tell them Satan couldn't harm them,

That God wants to increase their wealth?

What other lies did you tell them?

That God's always in a good mood?

Did you tell them God's never angry,

That His Word's misunderstood?

One day you'll stand before His throne,

The great white judgement seat.

You'll be rewarded for your deeds,

When, face to face, you'll meet.

RAYOLA'S Q & A CORNER

Q: "Will people have to repent to be saved during the Millennial reign of Christ?"

A: This is a good question. It is clear that through the past and the present dispensations the main cry was for people to repent, confess of their sins through open confession (New Testament) or sacrifice (Old Testament) and turn from their wicked ways and face God. Repentance is all about turning from the wrong way in which a person is walking to turn to God in humility and faith with the intent of doing right in order to please Him.

However, the Millennium will be a different situation. In this present age Satan is busy using his devices of repackaged lies, grave seduction, and lust to lead man away from God into the slippery-slide of rebellion, depravity, and spiritual ruin, while Jesus will be ruling as the Prince of Peace during the next dispensation to the point even a child will be at peace with the beasts of the fields (*Isaiah 11:6-8*).

During the next age to come, Satan will be bound for a thousand years, which means that he will not be around to tempt man and thwart Jesus' ways of righteousness as the knowledge and the glory of the Lord will fill the earth, silencing man from claiming ignorance and walking in foolishness towards the things of God (*Psalms 72:19; Isaiah 11:6-9; Habakkuk 2:14; Revelation 20:2, 7*).

Remember what Jesus said to "doubting" Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (*John 20:29*). In this age we are saved by grace through faith in Christ and His work of redemption but there will be no debate during the Millennium as to whether Jesus lives and who He is for He will be literally sitting on the throne as King, High Priest, and Judge. There will be no temptation to do wrong and no persuasion to be contrary because the temptation will be alleviated.

We are told that Jesus will rule with a rod of iron and those leaders who do not come to Jerusalem during the Feast of the Tabernacles will bring drought upon their countries (*Zechariah 14:16-17; Revelation 12:5*). Clearly, Jesus will be reigning as a just Judge, which means that consequences will be measured out in

fairness in relationship to any rebellion. Such judgment will ensure order and harmony.

I can only speculate because the Bible does not come out and say man will have to repent to be saved during this thousand-year period. However, it is clear that in this dispensation man needs to obey the King of kings. In our present age, we obey out of faith towards God and in expectation of promises yet to come. We believe what He says in His Word, walk in obedience as a result, which causes genuine faith to walk hand in hand with love (*Galatians 5:6*). In the future age, man will obey because of fear of consequences or out of love for the Lord. Jesus said it best, "If you love me, obey me," and "Why call me Lord when you do not obey me" (*John 14:15; Luke 6:46*)? Even though man desires peace, it becomes clear that it is godly love that will transform the inward character of man to be true to the Lord and His righteousness, regardless of the age and dispensation. Keep in mind, love and acceptable obedience is a personal choice. Love ensures the right motive and obedience sustaining character.

If man does not develop a love for the Lord, then when Satan is loose again, those who refuse to be ruled by godly love and lasting peace will be open once again to be taken down the slippery path of utter spiritual ruin by the true enemy of their souls. †

HAPPY THANKSGIVING (QUOTES ON GRATITUDE)

George Matheson (1842-1906)

"My God, I have never thanked Thee for my 'thorn!' I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my 'thorn;' I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my 'thorn.' Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow."

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963)

"We ought to give thanks for all fortune: if it is good, because it is good, if bad, because it works in us patience, humility and the contempt of this world and the hope of our eternal country."

(Continued next column)

(Gratitude Quotes Continued)

John Newton (1725-1807)

"The Lord afflicts us at times; but it is always a thousand times less than we deserve, and much less than many of our fellow-creatures are suffering around us. Let us therefore pray for grace to be humble, thankful, and patient."

Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

"Let us thank God heartily as often as we pray that we have His Spirit in us to teach us to pray. Thanksgiving will draw our hearts out to God and keep us engaged with Him; it will take our attention from ourselves and give the Spirit room in our hearts."

Alexander MacLaren (1826-1910)

"The prayer that begins with trustfulness, and passes on into waiting, will always end in thankfulness, triumph, and praise."

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)

"Gratitude is an offering precious in the sight of God, and it is one that the poorest of us can make and be not poorer but richer for having made it."

HELENE OF ADAIBENE (From Jewish Women's Archive)

Helene, queen of the Persian province of Adiabene, earned the respect of both the early rabbis and the chronicler Josephus for her leadership and unusual piety. Helene, also called Sadan, converted to Judaism around 30 CE, along with her husband/brother Monabazus Bazaesus and their family. She sent her younger son, Izates, into exile to protect him from coups and plots by his brothers and installed her elder son, Monobazus, as steward until Izates could return. She made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 46 CE, saving the local Jews from a famine by importing grain and figs from Egypt, and donated several gold items to the Temple. She kept a Nazarite vow for fourteen years, abstaining from alcohol and refraining from cutting her hair, and reportedly lived in a massive sukkah frequented by several noted rabbis. Shortly after Izates's death and the coronation of Monobazus in 55 CE, Helene died and was buried with Izates in Jerusalem in an ornate tomb she had designed herself. The tomb was excavated in the mid-1800s, and Helene's sarcophagus now resides in the Louvre.