FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK, AND POWERFUL,
AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWOEDGED SWORD...

THE CHRISTIAN COURIER

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THE BUNDLE OF STICKS

Most adults and children have heard or read stories authored by a man named Aesop. In one such story, Aesop tells of an old man on his deathbed. The man was sorry that he must die, but was even more sorrowful because he would soon leave behind three sons who constantly quarreled. He told his oldest son to bring a bundle of sticks and tie them together. He then instructed his three sons to take a turn at breaking the bundle; none could do it. The old man continued by asking the oldest son to untie the bundle and take one stick and break it. The other sons did likewise. The task was easy, each son breaking his stick. The father ended the lesson by explaining to his sons the necessity of living together in harmony, rather than quarreling. He reasoned that together, they would be strong, but divided, they would be weak. Weak people can easily be defeated.

Christians are often in a similar situation. It is the duty of all Christians to uphold the doctrine of Christ. But there are occasions that arise in which brothers and sisters in Christ find themselves disagreeing and quarreling with each other over matters which have nothing to do with doctrine, but rather tradition and preference. These are the arguments Satan and his angels love to hear. Satan knows that quarreling brings about disagreement, causing some to take sides.

This could lead to division of the congregation, which would leave many members weak. Satan loves weak members because they are the ones he can snare.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians includes several warnings against divisions. One that fits in well with our experiences today, is found in the first chapter, verses 10 and 11: *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you."* And in the same vein, Paul admonished the Corinthian brethren in chapter 3, verse 3: *"For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"* Quarreling among brethren was a problem then, and continues to be a problem from time to time.

Quarreling is an attitude problem shared by two opposing members. Each thinks he has the 'right and only' answer, when there is usually no conclusive answer possible in the first place. This usually comes about through a lack of respect for the opinion of the other. In the twelfth chapter of I Cor., Paul addresses the issue of the importance of each member of the body, that all parts are necessary to make the whole. He states in verses 24 and 25: *"For our comely parts have no need, but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for antoher."* If this was our philosophy, we simply would not quarrel; there would be no need for quarreling.

If quarreling within the brotherhood goes unchecked, then we expose ourselves to the fiery darts of Satan. As the brothers broke the individual sticks, we also can be broken by the designs of the Serpent. But, on the other hand, if we catch ourselves quarreling, and remedy it, and stay closely bonded together and strong, Satan cannot break us. Christ warned: *"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."* Matt. 12:25.

So let us be alert, brethren, and not fall into the habit of quarreling. Let us instead, walk together in unity with the bond of peace. Ps. 133:1 *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

Bro. Dan Ross,
Yakima Congregation

"And cast ye the unprofitable servants into outer darkness" Matt. 25:30.

Are we profitable servants? What is a profitable servant?

We know what a profit is concerning money. That's when you invest your money in something and get back more than you invested. If you only got back what you invested, it would not be profitable.

The same principle applies to a servant. If we only do enough work to break even then we are unprofitable. We must do a little extra in order to show a profit, more than we are asked.

You wouldn't hire someone to work for you just to break even would you?

Neither does the Lord intend to pay us if we don't show a profit.

Brethren, let's do a little extra. Not for ourselves, but for our Savior.

With Love,
L. E. Arnett

GROWING UP IN CHRIST

Belief, faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ is spoken as a birth in the Bible. And again it is compared to the germination of the good seed sown by the husbandman. In like manner those who are just converted to Christ are "as newborn babes," to grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. I Peter 2:2 and Ephesians 4:15. Or like the good seed sown into the field, they are to grow up and bring forth fruit. Isaiah says that they shall *"be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."* Isaiah 61:3.

So from natural life, illustrations are drawn, to help us better to understand the mysterious truths of Spiritual life.

Not all the wisdom and skill of man can produce life in the smallest object in nature. It is only through the life which God Himself has imparted of the life which Christ came to give. John 3:3 *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

As with life, so it is with growth. It is God who brings the bud to bloom and the flower to fruit. It is by His Power that the seed developes, *"first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."* Mark 4:28. And the prophet Hosea says of Israel, that *"he shall grow as the lily." "They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine."* Hosea 14:5 and 7. And Jesus bids us *"Consider the lilies how they grow"* Luke 12:27. The plants and flowers grow not by their own care or anxiety or effort, but by receiving that which God has furnished to minister to their life. The child cannot, by any anxiety or power of its own, add to its stature. No more can you, by anxiety or effort, or determination, of yourself, secure spiritual growth. The plant, the child, the adult, grows by receiving from its surroundings that which ministers to its life, - air, sunshine and food, the substance, whatever it might be, to make it grow. What these gifts of nature are to the animal, plant and human life, such is Christ to those who trust in Him and obey Him and continue to acknowledge Him as our Lord of Lords and King of Kings and Saviour of the world. He is an everlasting light, a sun and shield. Isiah 60:19, Psalm 84:11. He shall be as *"the dew unto Israel." "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass."* Hosea 14:5, Psalm 73:6. He is the living water, *"the bread of God...which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."* John 6:33.

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ.

In Christian Love,
Homer Bryant
San Pablo Congregation

If Christ had not come, John 15:22, there would have not been any way by which we could of had forgiveness of sin, Eph. 1:7. And there would be no commands of love, as in John 15:12-22. We would still be under the law (Gal.3:23-27) for it would not have been fulfilled, Matt. 5:17. We would still be under *"an eye for an eye"* (Matt. 5:22). But Christ took this part out of the way and nailed it to the cross, for it was contrary to us (Col. 2:14). There would not be no more atonement for our sins (IPeter 2:24) and we would still be in our sins. *"For greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for a friend."* John 15:13&14. He said ye are my friends <u>if</u> ye do whatsoever I command you. But we would not have his commands if he had not come and no redemption if no Gospel. (Rom. 1:16) For he brought to light life and immortality by the Gospel (II Tim. 1:10). So the troubled can rest with us (II Thess. 1:7). If Christ hadn't come the invitation couldn't have been given. (Matt. 11:28 and Rev. 3:20). And instead of living under the golden rule (Matt. 7:12) we would still be under an eye for an eye. There would be no peace prophecied for us. John 14:1-4. But we must take heed lest we fall(I Cor. 10:12) for there is a resurrection John 5:28&29. For there is judgement for all, and we must give account to God for our lives. (REv. 20:10-15, II Cor. 5:10, and Rom. 14:10).

Yours in Christ,
Lloyd Treat

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country"
(Prov. 25:25)

Dear Brethren,

News is not much here, just about as usual. We lost Sister Rollins of Burkburnett, Texas March 10th. Sure was a loss for her family and the church there.

We hope all everywhere are fine and the blessing of God we with all.

Yours in Christ
Lloyd Treat
Broken Bow,Okla. Congregation

Brethren,

Bro. Claude Allison has been sick for sometime. He is now in a rest home in Clinton, Ok. Let us all pray that he may soon recover and be himself again.

Bro. Glen Peterson has had eye surgery. He is home now and doing very well.

Sister Blanche Rennels, who has been in the nursing home here in Elk City for sometime was not feeling a bit well yesterday when my wife and I visited her. She may have to go to the hospital today. Please join me in prayer for all these and those everywhere who are ill.

Bro. Earl Atchley
for the congregation at
Colter, Ok.

Brethren,

While I am writing for the Colter congregation I'll say a few words from my home congregation. All able to be at worship with the exception of Bro. and Sister Melvin DeGarmo. Bro. Melvin had surgery, but is home now and doing as well as can be expected, considering what he went through.

We have been saddened by the passing of Sister Emma Spurlin from Reydon, Okla. I'll not say more other than she was a wonderful Christian woman, We all loved her and Bro. John, her husband, who passed away a few years back.

I am sure there will be a report sent in.

Bro. Earl Atchley
for the congregation at
Elk City, Ok.

Dear Brethren,

We at the Bellflower congregation are doing quite well at this time. Brother and Sister Teigue from Dallas, Texas worshipped with us at the last Sunday of the month. We certainly enjoyed their company. He also brought us a very fine lesson.

More time is now being spent at the church building in preparing for our meeting, starting on June 29. The congregation asked that everyone consider and take some time off from other thigs to give us some help down here. Your attendance would be greatly appreciated.

Yours in Christ,
Jerry Perigen
Bellflower Congregation

Brethren,

We have been blessed with visitors this spring, too many to name individually, but we are thankful to them all. Many of them came to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Bro. and Sister Eulon Taylor. We are thankful that we were able to share this happy occasion with them and wish them many more.

Also we are happy to report that Bill McCay Sr. has undergone successful knee surgery and a bout in the hospital.

Our thanks for all of your thoughts and prayers.

In Christian love,
Jerry McCay
Yakima Congregation

OBITUARY

John L. Nichols, husband of Sister Eva Nichols, Yakima congregation, passed away April 27, 1980.

We should remember his loved ones in our prayers, his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Bro. and Sister Eulon Taylor, and sister-in-law, Sister Burdette Taylor.

BAPTISMS

Janine Angel	April 5, 1980	Seattle, Wa.
Janice Cavenish	March 30, 1980	Stilwell, Ok.

BIRTHS

The Yakima congregation has been blessed with two births in the past month.

Brother Bobby and Sister Teri Lamb have a new son, named Travis Christopher. He was born April 17, 1980 and weighed 7lbs. 7 oz. He joins a brother, Brandon at home.

Brother Larry and Sister Polly Roark also have a new son, named Aaron Don, born April 26, 1980. He weighed 6 lbs. 9½ oz. and joins big sister, Shannon at home.

1980 MEETINGS

DATE	HOST	SPEAKERS
June 15-22	Yakima, Wash.	Camp
June 22-29	Cederedge, Colo.	Camp
June 29-July 6	Bellflower, Calif.	Bill McCay, Sr.
July 13-20	Chesterton, Ind.	Tom Broadway
Aug. 3-10	Port Orchard, Wash.	Robert Farley
Aug. 30-31 (Labor Day Week-end)	San Pablo, Calif. (Maps & directions will be mailed out.)	Al Way

When the church seems dead, and the work is low,
When attendance is off, and the songs are slow,
When the prayers of saints lack ferver and power,
When the preacher's sermons seem stale and sour,
Do you look about with a critical eye?
Why not ask yourself, "Lord, IS IT I?"