

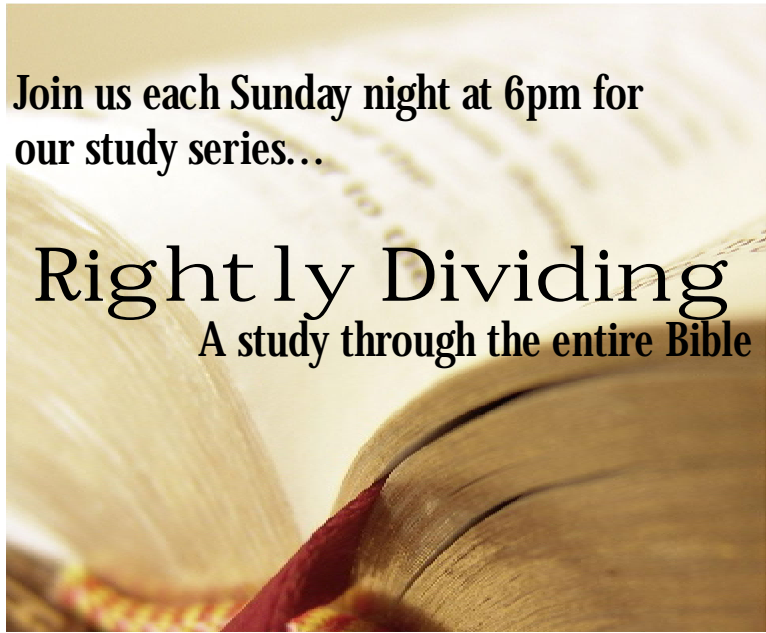
consciousness? The fact that they are still the teachers of the world on these themes forbids the supposition. Was it the result of a profundity of learning never equaled, or of native powers of insight never approached by the genius of other men? Their positions in society and their want of favorable opportunities forbid this supposition, and our opponents themselves are quick to reject it. What then shall we claim as the cause of it? Grant their miraculous inspiration, and all is plain. There is no other rational hypothesis. They were the most arrogant of men, next to Jesus himself, in whom the characteristic of which we speak was pre-eminent, if they were not inspired.

(To be continued)

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"Those Folks Are Different!"

By Kevin Cauley

This past week I was having a conversation with a friend who is a member of a denominational church. She mentioned to me that she wanted to come visit us and that she had told her "pastor" that she was going to visit us. Her "pastor" asked who we were and my friend responded, "the church of Christ." The "pastor" said, "Are you sure you want to do that? Those folks are different!"

There are many members of the church today who would react negatively to that analysis. They would say, "Oh, we're no different than any of the denominations around us." To these, it is an embarrassment that they are considered to be different by the denominations. These would want to change the church into just another denomination, to legitimize and acquire instrumental music, to destroy the autonomy of the local congregation, to call the preacher, "pastor", to get rid of the name

"church of Christ," etc. until the church is no longer distinctive from those around us. However, that would not be the way of God or Christ.

We read in the scriptures that God has always demanded of his people that they be different. In Deuteronomy 14:2, Moses tells the children of Israel that they are different. He says, "For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." The word "holy" means to be set apart, different. God wanted the children of Israel to be a "peculiar people." The new English Standard Version translates this phrase "treasured possession." Certainly something that is a treasured possession is different from everything else one has and is set apart.

In the New Testament as well, Peter quotes from this passage in Deuteronomy and applies it toward "Spiritual Israel"—



Christians. Peter writes, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). God wants us, as Christians, to be different. Paul writes to Titus these words regarding Jesus, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" Titus 2:14). Jesus died so that we could be different. We read in 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Fa-

ther unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." In order to be God's children, the church must be separate, distinct, unique, different.

So, are we different? Yes, we are, and I am glad that we are. Today we live in a time when denominations around us are conforming to the world. We hear of denominations who condone abortion, homosexuality, fornication, and adultery. The church of Christ does not condone such activities because God's word condemns these

things. Instead of conforming to the way that the world would have the church, the church ought to be demanding of individuals that their lives be transformed through repentance and renewal of mind. In Romans 12:2 we read, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Are we different? Yes, we are. We are different because we have been transformed by Christ to be a people who are holy, the

children of God, separate from that which is sinful; different from the way the world would mold religion in its own image today. It is our differences from everyone else that define who we are as Christians. We should never be embarrassed of that!

The world and the denominations may think us "strange" (1 Peter 4:4) but I wouldn't have it any other way. One day, Jesus will return and all will bow and God will be glorified, not because of our similarities with the world, but because of our differences (Matthew 25:34). ~

Inspiration of the Scriptures, Part 3



By J.W. McGarvey

(Editor's Note: This transcript of a sermon delivered by J.W. McGarvey before the YMCA of University of Missouri, May 28, 1892, is continued from last issue.)

The synoptists omit from their narratives four intensely interesting visits of Jesus to Jerusalem; while John omits all of the Galilean ministry, except the single miracle of feeding the five

thousand and a conversation which grew out of it. This last writer, the one who was so oppressed by a sense of the vastness of his material as to say that if all were written even the world itself would not contain the books, makes the most surprising omissions of them all. He skips in perfect silence one whole year between his fifth and sixth chapters, a half year between his sixth and seventh, and three months in the midst of his tenth. And what is more surprising still, though the events which he records cover from first to last a period of three and a half years, all of them up to the time of the public entry into Jerusalem, represent only about thirty separate days. Go through his Gospel, counting one by one the days on which its recorded events took place, and this is the number which you will count, although between the first and the last there were 1,270 days of

the busy life which he is depicting. One day in forty supplies all that he makes us even partially acquainted with. I am told that in the cotton presses now used in the South men can place a common bale of cotton three or four feet square by five or six feet in length, which is already nearly as solid as wood, and compress it into the space of a cubic foot. Some such compression of a mental kind must have acted upon the mind of John to bring his narrative within such limits.

The same restraining power was felt by the author of Acts, else how could he have omitted nearly all of the labors of ten of the apostles, and from the career of Paul, which occupies his chief attention, how could he have omitted many of its most thrilling incidents--those for example which are enumerated but not described in the elev-

enth and twelfth chapters of Second Corinthians? And what mortal man, unconstrained by some high power, could have given us the account of the voyage from Cæsarea to Rome, and left us without a word respecting Paul's trial before Nero? Compared with this trial those before Felix, Festus and Agrippa appear to us of minor importance; and its wondrous significance has so excited the imagination of a modern writer as to bring forth, in Farrar's graphic delineation of the Life of Paul, one of the finest specimens of word painting in the English language. Who persuaded Luke to leave it out?

Let us come to a different class of specifications. Who that was an eye witness of the splendid scene of the transfiguration, in which representatives from heaven, earth and hades came together, arrayed in divine glory, and conversed together for a time on the most momentous theme which ever till then had occupied the thoughts of men or angels, could have omitted it from an account of the career of Jesus? And who that has a heart to feel could have omitted the agonies of Gethsemane? Yet John, who witnessed both, and whose tenderness of feeling is beyond all question, says nothing of either. Again, who that saw the calling of Lazarus out of the tomb, with all the heart-breaking scenes which preceded and attended it, could have been persuaded by all the friends he had on earth to omit it from a narrative in which the divine power of Jesus was to be set forth; yet neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke

has a word to say of it. Were these men made of wood that they could not feel? Did they have hearts of stone? Were their minds absolutely bereft of imagination? Were they totally unlike all the other men who have taken pen in hand? So they must have been if they were not overruled and constrained as to the matter of their narratives by that mysterious being whose thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. This alone can solve the amazing problem.

We now advance to another source of argument, the angelology of these writers; and under this head we shall have reference to the writers of the Old Testament as well as to those of the New. Among men of all nations and among all classes of writers, from the rudest to the most cultivated, there has been a fondness for depicting invisible beings; hence the demigods, fairies, genii, sylphs and satyrs of ancient and modern story. Nearly all of these are either grotesque, capricious, impure, or malicious. In contrast with them the angels of the whole Bible are holy, mighty, humble, compassionate, self-poised, and in every way worthy to be the messengers of Jehovah. These characteristics are everywhere maintained when angels appear in the sacred narratives. "Ever unlike men, they are always like themselves." Nothing like them ever originated in the brains of men. On no other pages, except when copied from these, can their likeness be found. They are beings who, though far different from ourselves, are ob-

jects to us mortals of profound admiration and tender affection. Though their forms are but dimly outlined, we see them; and though they are strangers to us, it is one of our most delightful thoughts that we shall yet dwell among them forever. They are so far above all the creations of human genius that human fancy has not permitted the divine picture to remain as it was, but even Christian poets and painters have persistently given them the form of woman. The Biblical delineation of these heavenly beings must be accounted for. It is found in the writings of shepherds, fishermen, herdsmen and publicans, composed in the early and dark ages of the world, and the writers all belonged to just one race of people, and that not the most imaginative. Surely here is something supernatural; the divine inspiration of the writers can alone account for this--but revelation is the word.

We invite attention next to the air of infallibility which the writers of both Testaments everywhere assume. Though they speak on some themes which have baffled the powers of all thinkers, such as the nature of God, his eternal purposes, his present will, angels, disembodied human spirits, the introduction of sin, the forgiveness and punishment of sin, the future of this earth, and the eternal destiny of us all; on all subjects and on all occasions they speak with a confidence which knows no hesitation, and which admits no possibility of a mistake. Was this the result of stupidity and of overweening self-