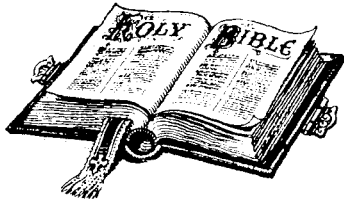


# THE INSTRUCTOR



*"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16*

Volume 22

OCTOBER, 1985

Number 10

## **"OBEDIENCE OF FAITH"**

The phrase, "Obedience of Faith," occurs several times in the New testament. The person who is concerned about his spiritual welfare will exert himself to learn what obedience of faith is. What is involved? The effectiveness of the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem is seen in the statement, **"The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."** (Acts 6:7). The language demands that we recognize that there is something in the faith to be obeyed.

To what were these priests obedient when they **"were obedient to the faith?"** The word "gospel" (Gal. 1:11), is used interchangeably with the word "faith" (Gal. 1:23). Paul said that he preached the **gospel** but that which he preached is also described as **the faith**. To preach the gospel is to preach the faith — hence, to obey the faith is to obey the gospel. All who **"obey not the gospel"** will be **"destroyed from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power"** (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Those at Rome who were **"justified by faith"**, (Romans 5:1), had been **"servants of sin"** before they **"became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye (they) were delivered"** (Romans 6:17). Following their obedience from the heart they were **"free from sin"** and **"servants of righteousness."**

Paul discussed their obedience from the heart in the first part of chapter 6. He wrote, **"We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."** (Romans 6:2-4). The order of progress is: (1) Servants of sin, (2) baptized into Christ, (3) Free from sin but servants of righteousness. It is necessary for one to continue in obedience after he has been baptized into Christ. He must continue serving righteousness.

—Robert H. Farish in  
THE BIBLE STANDARD

**JUDGE SAM DAVIS TATUM**  
SAID: "The spoiled child is an unhappy child; the spoiled child is a mistreated child; and that spoiled child will some day turn against the one who spoiled him and will despise and dishonor him."

—Words of Wisdom for  
Parents and Teenagers, p. 7

## THE INSTRUCTOR

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 1107 Highway 431 South, in Albertville, Alabama.

CARROL R. SUTTON  
EDITOR

Send all questions, comments and criticisms to the editor, 1107 Highway 431 South, Albertville, Alabama 35950.

Second-class postage paid in  
Albertville, AL 35950

### Editorial . . .

#### ***“PROOF REQUESTED, PROOF GIVEN (No. 19)***

Last month in our examination of the teaching that **“a Christian cannot fall from grace and be eternally lost”** we showed by God’s Word that such teaching is false doctrine. The fact that a doctrine may give “assurance” and “hope” to people in their sins does not **prove** its truthfulness. In reality, the so-called “assurance” and “hope” is **not true** assurance and hope.

We hereby challenge those who advocate the doctrine that **“a Christian cannot fall from grace and be eternally lost”** to enter a series of public discussions with us on this subject. Will they do it? Is there anyone out there who has enough conviction and courage to do so? We will wait and see although it is very doubtful that anyone will accept the challenge.

Number **eighteen** is the next item in the list of twenty five things that appeared in THE INSTRUCTOR, October, 1983, under **“Specific Wickedness”** for which **Scriptural proof** for the opposite view (than stated in # 18) has been requested. It reads as follows:

**“18. A Christian may Scripturally swear.”**

**COMMENTS:** Most people (religious, non-religious and members in the body of Christ) with whom I am acquainted believe that **“a Christian may Scripturally swear.”** These people believe that God’s Word prohibits some swearing and authorizes other swearing and the taking of some oaths.

The **CONFESSION OF FAITH** of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, page 50, says: **“The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear . . . An oath is warranted by the word of God, under the New Testament as well as under the Old, when imposed by lawful authority.”** In **A COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES**, page 292, Guy N. Woods said: **“That it was not the design of James (and our Lord, in Matthew 5:34-37), to forbid ALL oaths, including those of a judicial nature, seems evident from the following considerations . . .”** Woods then lists four considerations that he **thinks proves** that all oaths were not forbidden. They are: **“(1) Jesus, before Caiaphas, testified under oath. (Matthew 26:63-64). (2) Paul often solemnly asserted things in the form of an oath, e.g., ‘For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers . . .’ (Rom. 1:9; cf. 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8; Gal. 1:20.) (3) God swore by Himself when He could swear by no greater. (Heb. 6:13.) (4) The prophets often involved the names of God in their solemn affirmations. (Isaiah 65:16.)”**

The fact that many people **think** it is right for Christians to swear does **not prove** that it is right.

A careful consideration of the exact statements as spoken by Jesus Christ and James, a servant of Jesus Christ, should convince every sincere truth seeker that Christians may **not Scripturally** swear. Please read the following passages very carefully.

1. **MATTHEW 5:33-37** says: **“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oath: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”**

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 2)

## **PROOF REQUESTED, PROOF GIVEN**

NOTE: These are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. JAMES 5:12 says: "**But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.**" NOTE: These words were inspired by the Holy Spirit!

### **OBSERVATIONS:**

1. God had commanded the Israelites through Moses in Lev. 19:12 saying: "**And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.**" NOTE: To forswear signifies "**to swear falsely.**" Jesus said those of old time said, "**Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oath.**" Thus under the Old Testament law men could swear, but they were not to swear falsely. They were told to perform their oaths!

2. In contrast with what had been said by those of old time Jesus said, "**but I say . . . SWEAR NOT AT ALL . . .**" Jesus further said "**but let your communication be yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more that these cometh of evil.**"

3. James prohibited swearing by saying, "**. . . Swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath . . .**" He also added, "**. . . But let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.**" NOTE: How could language be any plainer?

### **QUESTIONS RAISED:**

1. First, why would anyone raise objections against the plain, simple statements made by Jesus and James?

2. Are the statements by Jesus and James "**hard to be understood?**"

3. Why not accept these statements as they are given?

4. Why try to justify "oaths" of any kind?

5. Suppose we are unable to answer the objections raised to the statement that **Christians may not Scripturally swear**, does that **prove** that it is **right for Christians to swear?**

## **OBJECTIONS ANSWERED**

1. Woods contends that "**all oaths, including those of a judicial nature**" were **not** forbidden in Matthew 5:33-37 and James 5:12 because "**Jesus, before Caiaphas, testified under oath.**" (Matthew 26:63-64)."

### **REPLY:**

A. It is **assumed** and **asserted** that Jesus **swore** before Caiaphas, but such was not proven! A careful study might show another possibility.

B. However, even if Jesus **did swear** before Caiaphas, that fact would **not** necessarily justify Christians swearing today. Remember, Jesus **commanded**: "**SWEAR NOT AT ALL.**"

C. Jesus lived under the Old Testament law which **allowed** swearing, but it forbade swearing **falsely**.

D. The fact that Jesus was circumcised, (cf. Luke 2:21-24), does **not prove** that we must (or may) practice circumcision today. NOTE: This was practiced under the Old Testament law! Today we may or may not be circumcised, but this is **not** because Jesus was circumcised.

E. The fact that Jesus may have kept the Sabbath, (cf. Lk. 4:16-21), may have observed the Passover, (cf. Lk. 22:1-16), and the Feast of Tabernacles, (cf. John 7:2-16), **does not prove that it is right for us to practice those things today.** NOTE: These things were all a part of the law of Moses.

F. So, the fact that Jesus might have taken an oath does **not prove** that Jesus did not forbid all oath taking! **He did!** (See Matt. 5:34-37 and James 5:12).

2. Woods **assumes** that the taking of judicial oaths was **not** under consideration when Jesus forbade swearing and oath taking because he alleges that Paul swore.

A. Woods **assumes** but does not **prove** that Paul swore.

B. IF Paul swore in the passages cited by Woods, (i.e., in Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8 and Gal. 1:20) he did so **by saying "For God is my witness . . .", "I call God for a record upon my soul . . .", "For God is my record . . ." and "before God . . ."**

C. Even IF Paul swore in these passages, this would **not** justify "judi-

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

## PROOF REQUESTED, PROOF GIVEN

cial oaths" being taken by Christians today because **none** of these statements were made in connection with the **judiciary**. Therefore, they could **not** be "**judicial oaths**." NOTE: If Woods' argument has any merit whatever, it would justify **other** swearing and oath taking, but it would **not** justify "**judicial oaths**." QUESTION: Where is the passage where Paul took a judicial oath?

3. Woods **argued** that the taking of judicial oaths are not forbidden because God swore.

REPLY:

A. Yes, God swore by Himself (not judicially) as stated in Heb. 6:13, but we are forbidden to swear and take oaths. See Matt. 5:33-37 and James 5:12.

B. The fact that God swore does **not** justify us in swearing. God forbids us to take vengeance, but **He can** and **does** take vengeance! See Rom. 12:19-21.

4. Woods **thinks** that the fact that the prophets often involved the names of God in their solemn affirmations

justifies us in taking judicial oaths.

REPLY:

A. I am surprised that Woods would make such an argument. A basic understanding of the fact that we are **not** under the Old Testament should convince us of the fallacy of this argument.

B. Whether or not the prophets involved the named of God in their solemn affirmations has no bearing on the question as to whether Christians are forbidden to swear in Matt. 5:33-37 and James 5:12.

Friends, swearing and taking oaths are prohibited in Matt. 5:33-37 and James 5:12. Read for yourself.

When a person **presumes** to speak the doctrine that "**a Christian may Scripturally swear**" in the name of Christ, he is speaking **presumptuously** and is teaching **false** doctrine because such teaching is **not** found in **God's Book!** The person who so speaks is **guilty of wickedness!**

We should so "**speak**" and so "**do**" as those who will be judged "**by the law of liberty**." (cf. James 1:25).

(CRS)

(To be continued)

---

## — SENTENCE SERMONS —

If a man can't be a Christian in the place where he is, it is quite certain that he can't be a Christian where he is not.

\* \* \* \* \*

If we let God guide, He will provide.

\* \* \* \* \*

Even folks on the level will have their ups and downs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Choice and action, not chance, determines destiny.

\* \* \* \* \*

Looking ahead is a good way to keep from falling behind.

---

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**1107 Highway 431 South**  
**Albertville, AL 35950**