



March 13, 1969

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
(Another in a series)

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**GODLIKENESS**

By T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics  
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God wants his people to be like him. This is stated specifically in many ways and places in the Old Testament. One frequently quoted example is the statement in Leviticus: "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). What is said concerning holiness could be said concerning every other quality or character trait of God. God's people are to be like him.

The appeal to be like God is also prominent in the New Testament. When Jesus exhorted his disciples to love their enemies, he gave us a reason or motive that they might be like their Father: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and one the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). He closes this exhortation with the abidingly challenging words: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

The initial and continuing invitation of Jesus was and is to follow him. It is an invitation to walk in the way that he walked. This is what it means to be a real Christian. Although he does not give us detailed instructions concerning that way, we can discover some guidelines from what he taught but especially from the life he lived while he walked among men.

No brief statement sums up any better the quality of life Jesus lived than Peter's words concerning him spoken in the house of Cornelius. He said that Jesus "went about doing good." If we walk in his way we will go about doing good: comforting the sorrowing, ministering to the needs of people, associating with the moral and social outcasts of society, reaching out in compassion to the restless masses who are "scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36).

Paul over and over again exhorted those to whom he wrote to be like Jesus. He appealed to the Corinthians to be imitators of him as he was of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). He admonished the Ephesians to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us" (Eph. 5:2): here is both example and motive. He plead with the Colossians to forgive one another as Christ had forgiven them (Col. 3:13). He told the Philippians that Christ had set the example for their humility: "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Paul used the example of Jesus to appeal for a liberal offering to the saints at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:9). He also said that the strong should not please themselves but should please their neighbors. Why? Because "Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:3).

We can be assured that if we walk in the way the Lord would have us to walk it will not be an uncharted course. Christ has traveled that way before us. He never asks us to walk in a way that he has not already explored. It is even more glorious to know that we do not have to walk in that way alone. He walks with us. His life is not only a pattern for us to follow: he is a companion to walk by our sides and give us the strength that we need as we seek to live for him and for our fellow man. T. W. Manson expresses beautifully the relation of the resurrected Christ to his followers. He says, "The living Christ still has two hands, one to point the way, and the other held out to help us along."

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## PENDULUMS

By T. B. Maston

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Old fashioned clocks such as a grandfather clock have pendulums. The pendulum swings back and forth with a regular rhythm. If it stops swinging the clock stops.

The word "pendulum" is also used to refer to a change, a movement, or a rhythm of thought and conviction. For example, in the political area there tends at times to be movement back and forth from conservative to liberal and from liberal to conservative. In politics as well as in other areas people may swing too far or continue in one direction too long. After a period of time, however, the pendulum usually swings in the opposite direction. When the latter happens it serves as a corrective.

The same type of movement or swinging back and forth is evident in areas other than political. For example, this kind of movement is seen at times in churches and denominations.

For example, there has been a swinging of the pendulum among Southern Baptists in recent years. This has resulted from a deepening conviction that we have neglected some significant aspects of the Christian life and of the Christian gospel. One aspect that many are convinced has been badly neglected is a compassion for people as such and a concern for the conditions that touch and influence their lives. This deepening social concern has become almost a flood tide among Southern Baptists in recent months.

Sometimes pendulums as correctives swing too far. There is no evidence so far that this is true of the swing of Southern Baptists toward social concern. If a few people here and there tend to go too far and to neglect the traditional emphases of our churches and our denomination let us be patient with them. Pendulums frequently seem to have a built in corrective. Most of those who may go too far will tend after a while to move back to a balanced emphasis.

The latter, a balanced emphasis, is what Southern Baptists want and need. It is what we must have if we are to continue to provide a vital dynamic ministry to both the spiritual and social needs of men. We must retain our emphasis on bringing men into a vital, life-changing union with the resurrected Christ, but we must also have a genuine concern about the daily needs of those men. The latter means a concern for the society in which they live, the conditions that surround them and inevitably affect the development and the expression of their life in Christ.

The latter means, among other things, that we as individual Christians, as churches, as a denomination, or as denominational agencies will not be afraid to get involved in the problems of people and in the problems that plague our world.

W. A. Criswell, the President of the Southern Baptist Convention, has expressed something of this idea as follows: "We ought to be willing to get involved with the perplexities and frustrations of people around us. Jesus involved himself in the world."

Dr. Criswell in another statement stressed the kind of balance Southern Baptists need to maintain. His words were as follows: "We are entering a new emphasis--that of faith and works, of soul-winning and soul sensitivity. God is in this." Statements like these may represent the moving of a pendulum as a corrective but they are not an "overswing" or an "overcorrective."

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WITNESSING OR SOUL WINNING?

By T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Is our task to witness or to win? A few years ago many would have answered "to win." We heard a great deal about soul winners and soul winning. In the contemporary period the answer more frequently given is that our task is to witness.

I personally prefer "witness" and "witnessing" to "soul winner" and "soul winning." One reason for this preference is that the latter terms imply a compartmentalization of man. They represent a tendency to separate the soul and the body of man into two distinct entities. But man is a unity. He is a person. It is the person and not merely man's "soul" that needs to be saved.

Another reason for my preference for "witnessing" is a conviction that the child of God in the truest sense cannot win another person to Christ as Savior and Lord. Some problems in our churches may stem from the fact that some members of those churches have been "won" by human techniques and skills rather than by the power of the divine Spirit. It is our responsibility to witness. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict and convert.

It is possible that we need to restudy Christian witnessing. A study of the New Testament, particularly the book of Acts, will reveal that the main emphasis in witnessing was on the resurrection of Christ. We are not only to tell others that he died for our sins but also that he was raised for our justification.

There is another element of witnessing by the early followers of Christ that is frequently neglected. For example, Peter in the house of Cornelius said, "We are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem" (Acts 10:39 RSV). Notice the words "that he did." Peter and the other disciples had seen the things that Jesus had done. They could witness or testify that he had gone about doing good: healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the sorrowing, and forgiving the sinful.

Another important word to us concerning witnessing is found in the statement that Ananias made to Saul or Paul. He said: "For you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard" (Acts 22:15 RSV). Notice he was to be a witness "for him" (the resurrected Christ) and "to all men." Also, he was to tell what he had seen and heard. This suggests the content of the witnessing. Ananias may have referred primarily to Saul's experience on the Damascus road. However, he doubtlessly also referred to the things that Saul or Paul had learned by personal observation and through what he had heard others say about Jesus. We are to bear witness to what we have seen and heard, including in a most significant way what we have personally experienced.

Surely we will agree that we need to be more diligent about witnessing "to all men"--in the home, where we work, on the street, everywhere--about the death and resurrection of Christ and about his ability to save to the uttermost all who will come to him by faith. We need also to witness concerning the type or quality of life he lived while he walked among men. In other words, we are to witness to his life, death, and resurrection.

The most effective way to witness to the kind of life he lived is to live that kind of life ourselves. He went about doing good. We should go about doing good. We will do this to the degree that we let the resurrected Christ live in us and express himself through us.

Furthermore, our witnessing by the spoken word to the death and resurrection of Christ will be much more effective if we witness by our lives to the kind of quality of life he lived.



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You Can't See Who to Block  
If You Have Tears In Your Eyes

By John Carter

LAREDO, Tex. (BP)--The audience was warmed up. The initial questions about first draft choices, last year's schedule, and the prospects for a future championship were answered. Dallas Cowboy Football Coach Tom Landry surveyed the group of high school coaches, newsmen and pastors and began to evaluate the last question.

The pro football coach was in Laredo to promote the Crusade of the Americas meetings at the Civic Center. Some of us wondered how he would make the transition from talking about football to Christianity.

Landry was asked the contribution that emotion played in developing winning football teams. The question provided the opportunity, and Landry answered like a pro.

"It's always good to have emotion, as long as it has depth," he said. "You don't want it to get out of hand, though. Bobby Dodd (the former Georgia Tech coach) used to say, 'You can't see who to block if you have tears in your eyes.'"

The former University of Texas and New York Giant grid star went on to explain that the depth or motivation usually comes from the establishment of a philosophy. "On the Cowboys, we know what we want to look like, we know what we want our offense to be and our defense to be. We have a plan," he said.

That evening, Landry boldly testified of his own conversion experience and the plan that God had given to him. He told the crowd of his restlessness despite each success that came his way, and said he felt something was missing even as he was making his way to the upper echelons of the rough, competitive National Football League.

"If I had one thing to ask over again," the Methodist layman stated, "it is that someone would have challenged me when I was a young boy, and that I could have had the life that I have had, but with Christ."

He went on to say that the thing he had found characteristic of most athletes is that "we don't discover Christ until late in life. For instance," he said, "I was 33 and already coaching. If I had known Christ earlier, some of my fears and some of my hardships and doubts would not have happened. He gives depth and purpose to life."

Landry said that his mission and the mission of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which he serves as a national board member, is "to challenge young people, and young athletes in particular, to find Christ early in their life--to discover that Christ has a plan for each life."

As Landry spoke, his testimony was translated into Spanish by Texas Baptist Evangelist Rudy Hernandez. The coach's appearance was the opening feature of a six-day revival that attempted to bring the gospel before the combined population of 200,000 in Laredo and Nuevo Laredo.

Two days earlier, Craig Baynham and Buddy Dial of the Dallas Cowboys, along with Bill Krisher, former Oklahoma University All American player, had led a giant Fellowship of Christian Athletes rally here.

The rally and Landry's later appearance were timed to coincide with the annual Border Olympics, which attract many of the nation's top golf and track teams, competing on both the high school and collegiate levels.

It was an all-star weekend for the Texas border city.

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John Carter is press representative for the Baptist General Convention of Texas and a Baptist Press staff writer.

Theme Picked For Baptist  
World Congress In Tokyo

WASHINGTON (BP)--The theme and general program outline for the 12th Baptist World Congress slated in Tokyo, Japan, in July of 1970 were presented to the administrative sub-committee of the Baptist World Alliance meeting here.

Theme for the congress will be "Reconciliation Through Christ."

The congress will begin on Sunday July 12, 1970 at 6:00 p.m., and conclude Saturday evening, July 18, the program committee for the congress reported.

Names of program personnel will not be announced until after a meeting of the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee in Vienna, Austria, in August, according to Mrs. R. L. Mathis, chairman of the program committee.

Mrs. Mathis, vice president of the Alliance and director of promotion for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala., said that the theme for the congress is taken from the Apostle Paul's statement, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself," in II Corinthians 5:19.

At a dinner meeting of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) administrative committee, a report was presented by David Fite, one of two Southern Baptist missionaries recently released after three years of imprisonment in Cuba.

Fite told the world Baptist leaders that Baptist work has continued strong in Cuba despite the island's relative isolation from other Baptist groups. Approximately 40 of the 53 Baptist pastors and laymen arrested along with Fite in April of 1965 have been released, he said.

Gerald B. Palmer, secretary of language missions for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, expressed gratitude to the Alliance for its international role in keeping contact with Cuban Baptists and in its appeal to the Castro government for release of Fite and fellow missionary Herbert Caudill, plus national Baptist leaders.

C. Ronald Goulding of London, associate secretary of the alliance, and R. Fred Bullen and Mrs. Edgar Bates of Canada, members of the BWA Executive Committee all have traveled to Cuba to visit with the Baptist there. Goulding had interceded with the government in both conversation and correspondence, seeking release of the prisoners.

The dinner session also was addressed by Mayor Walter Washington of the city of Washington, D. C. Washington, who is a Baptist layman, told his audience that government leaders are dependent upon the moral and spiritual strength of church people.

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Nevada Baptist Fellowship  
Adopts First Constitution

(3-13-69)

SPARKS, Nevada (BP)--The Nevada Baptist Fellowship, in a preliminary step toward someday becoming a Baptist state convention, met here for its fourth annual fellowship meeting and adopted a constitution as a "fellowship" group.

The Nevada fellowship, with 35 churches and 15 missions and a total of 5,915 members, has not, however, set a target date for becoming a state convention.

Presently, the 50 Southern Baptist congregations in Nevada are affiliated with two existing state conventions. Churches in the northern half of the state are affiliated with the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, while the churches in the southern half of the state are affiliated with the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

Elected president of the Nevada Baptist Fellowship was LaVern Inzer, pastor of First Baptist Church in Winnemucca, Nevada.

The fellowship cited Ben Felts, a retired Baptist layman from Las Vegas who was elected historian of the fellowship, for the long years of service he and his wife have rendered to Southern Baptist work in Nevada.

Felts was instrumental in establishing the first Southern Baptist church in Nevada 20 years ago. He and his wife will move soon to Tennessee.

The 50 congregations in the state reported 4,607 baptisms and 812 additions by transfer of membership during the past year. The churches also reported total gifts of \$539,955, and Cooperative Program mission contributions of \$30,572.

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First Architectural Exhibit  
Seminary Slated at Midwestern

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A three-day Architectural Exhibit-Seminary, the first of its kind at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here, will be held March 26-28, featuring exhibits from manufacturers, builders and distributors of church buildings and furnishings, plus a seminar for pastors and church building committees.

Speakers for the exhibit-seminar include George Fletcher, and Roland Smith, church architecture consultants for the SBC Sunday School Board; Midwestern Seminary Dean of Students Lavell Seats; Harold Souther, director of church education for the Kansas City Baptist Association; Midwestern Seminary Professor Clifford Ingle; Harry Cameron, church building consultant for the Missouri Baptist Convention; and Harold Inman, church building director for the Kansas-Nebraska Baptist Convention.

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Texas, Alabama Girls Win  
Awards for Prose, Poetry

(3-13-69)

BIRMINGHAM (BP)--Top awards for outstanding poetry and prose have been made to young women in Texas and Alabama by the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union here.

Winners for the 1968 Writing and Art contest were announced here, with three awards each being made for prose and poetry, and one award for art.

First place in the prose competition went to Miss Monta Hitt, a senior at Arlington Heights High School in Fort Worth, for her entry, "An Afternoon's Interval." A member of Ridgley West Baptist Church in Fort Worth, she plans to attend Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex.

Top award in the poetry competition went to Miss Linda Ellen Horton, a freshman at Alabama College in Montevilla, Ala., for the poem, "Vernal Eclipse". Miss Horton won the competition in 1967, and is a member of First Baptist Church, Demopolis, Ala.

One honorable mention, the only prose given in the art category, went to Donna Foss of Orlando, Fla., for her untitled portrait.

The first place entries will appear in the May issue of The Window, publication of the SBC Woman's Missionary Union here.

Other awards in the prose competition went to Beth Marschak, Richmond, Va., second place; and Sandy Brown, Memphis, Tenn., third place.

In the poetry category, second place was won by Melane Dyer, Bassett, Va., and third went to Linda Mitchell, Miami, Fla. Honorable mention went to Miss Mitchell for two other poems.

First place winners receive a cash award of \$25; second place, \$15; and third, \$10.

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