

Determined not to Miss Out

By Gary Henry

"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1).

Reaching the goal of heaven requires a healthy measure of old-fashioned determination. When we're choosing what kind of inner character we're going to have, we must choose to have traits like single-mindedness and stick-to-itiveness. We must be tenacious. When it comes down to it, we must be so determined not to miss out on heaven that we refuse to be deterred.

Our assurance of heaven should rest primarily on our confidence in God. There is no doubt as to His faithfulness. But since heaven is only for those who choose to receive it from Him on His terms, there is the question of who will make that choice and who will not. Satan is in the business of persuading as many people as possible to accept his offer rather than God's, and even after we make our choice to go God's direction, Satan continues to discourage us, in the hope that we'll change our mind. Unfortunately, many do change their minds, and the Hebrew writer was right to warn his readers: "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it."

Not only do we have an adversary who's intent on discouraging us, the world we live in presents its own share of discouragement. Our environment is a sad one, seriously damaged by sin; there is no shortage of circumstances that tend to dishearten us and dash our hopes. This world is a far cry from what it would have been had sin not entered the picture, and it's a far cry from what we'll enjoy later, when God has fully restored our created nature and removed the effects of our sin. Are we willing to wait for what's ahead? There's more than a little truth to the old Latin maxim: "Endure, and save yourself for happier times" (Virgil).

Only those will enjoy heaven who have enough character to be patient, and patience comes down to what the old-timers used to call "grit." But mark it well: grit is not something some people are born with and others are not. It's a matter of choice on the part of every person. Furthermore, it's not a choice that can be made once and then forgotten. While the world still stands, each new day will ask us for another decision. Are we determined to see God?

"He that can't endure the bad, will not live to see the good" (Jewish Proverb).



Classes this Week:

Mon 7 PM Ladies' Class at the Rouse's	Mon 12 Noon Campus Class	Thur 11 AM Campus Class	Thurs 7 PM Jn Study at Jillian Petty's
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Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade	Sandlyn Fultz (David Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Jared Nixon	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Ross Folmar	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)	Toni Herd
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Kenn and Ellen Smith (Ken Sullivane's Parents)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Daphene Whatley (Lisa Lanier's Mom)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Mike Reed (Friend of the Long's)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Herbert Missildine (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Christi Gibson (Fallon Hartsell's Mother)

News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: BJ Winslett, Joy Liu, and Amanda Stephens .
- Matthew Sullivane was baptized last Sunday Night!
- Tim Morton was baptized yesterday! He is the son-in-law of the Lanier's.
- We are pleased to have the Hahn family as new members here Church and Darla Hahn, Andrew and Aiden; 4315 Golf Club Dr #2701, 36830; Hm - 334-209-2094, Chuck - (979) 450-3086, Darla - (979) 450-3087
- Larry will be away in a meeting next weekend at the church in LaGrange, Georgia.
- The Southeast church in Montgomery will have Kevin Clark for a meeting Thur-Sun.

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The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Decisive Speech or Divisive Silence

By Tim Nichols



Thought to Ponder

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.

We cannot visit former days in a time machine and alter the past. Such is the material of science fiction. It may be beneficial, however, to look at past events and consider "what might have been" if men and women had chosen to speak up at various crucial points in history. While this will not change the present, it might very well help us to consider our own need to make choices in our own time that just might create a better future than otherwise would have unfolded.

In our own day we can expect to find ourselves in situations where the tide might possibly be turned if we speak -- and might possibly be encouraged along its present course if we are silent.

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

I grew up just south of Akron, Ohio. If you drive through the many towns and villages of that area you are sure to see many signs in front of church buildings that read "Church of Christ." You will see others that read "Christian Church." Not having actually made the count, I suspect that there are a good many more such churches that use instrumental music in their attempts to worship God in that part of the country than there are churches that have remained with the New Testament pattern. These are

confusing for brethren who travel there and look for a place to worship. When they stumble into such churches they are shocked to see that many things are practiced and taught that are not found in the New Testament. The drift away from the Restoration Plea and ideal has continued for well over a century. There was a period of time in which those churches were identical in teaching and practice to those churches that have remained with the New Testament pattern. The drift that ultimately led to division began many years prior

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to the "official" division that came about in 1906. Those who ushered in the novelties that brought the division about were not in any respect different from those who are attempting to do the same thing in our own time. In principle, the issues are the same even if the doctrines and practices being pressed into passive churches today are somewhat different and more numerous. We lay the blame for division at the feet of those who pressed the innovations of a century ago. This is reasonable and fair. The axiom is true: *Those who drive the wedge are responsible for splitting the log.*

There is also room for culpability at the feet of those who remained passive and silent. The church is not a log and must not sleep like one. Those who stand by and watch a crime taking place without attempting to help save human lives share in the guilt to some degree. Our laws recognize this principle. Those who stand by and watch the Body of Christ being mistreated by human hands -- in our day or at any time -- share some of the responsibility for the harm that results.

We need to keep this in mind as we participate in the history that is being written in our own day. Our silence can contribute to division. Our speech can allay it.

In Akron, Ohio... a similar situation occurred. Ben Franklin was invited in April, 1868 to conduct an evangelistic meeting. The church had in the past on various occasions used the instrument, but in Franklin's presence had always refrained. But on this occasion, Franklin went into the building and took his seat, waiting for the singing to start, and then for his time to preach. But when the singing began, so did the instrument. Franklin, opposed as he was to the instrument, was faced with a serious problem of what to do.

He informs us of his thoughts during these few moments:

We have not been more tried in a long time. While this was going off, we reflected and turned the matter in every way possible. What was to be done? We never felt more unhappy. Are brethren determined, we involuntarily thought, to deteriorate the worship into music and compel us to endorse it? If we refuse to preach, it may, we further thought, create a lasting trouble, and some may blame us for it. We decided to preach, and did so, but with a heavy heart, in view of the worship having been thus degenerated before our face (Earl Irvin West, *THE SEARCH FOR THE ANCIENT ORDER*, Vol. 2, pp. 81, 82).

We admire Ben Franklin for so much good that he did in his lifetime for the cause of Christ. We can sense the shame and regret that he had for his own silent course of action when duty called upon him to speak. We cannot go back and nudge him to do otherwise. He could not alter his course after this meeting closed.

In our own day we can expect to find ourselves in situations where the tide might possibly be turned if we speak -- and might possibly be encouraged along its present course if we are silent. Ben Franklin was right in thinking that some would have blamed him for speaking. If he had it to do over again, I believe that he would have willingly born the reproach of Christ for the sake of the lasting good that his words may have done. He had to make a choice in a matter of minutes that had lasting consequences. You see those consequences when you drive through the country around Akron. Apostasy won.

You have choices to make today. What effect will your choices -- either to speak or to remain silent -- have upon the future of the Lord's people and upon those who seem ready to go out from among us?



Churches and Their Buildings

By Bill Hall

Burton Coffman, in his **Commentary on Romans**, makes the following comment concerning the church's meeting in the house of Aquila and Pricilla:

In view of this historical fact, and the inspired evidence of it before our eyes, one may only marvel at the divisions among brethren over the question of whether or not food may be served in a church house! From the facts, as evidenced in, the example of Priscilla and Aquila, it can safely be inferred that anything a Christian might do in his house could under the proper circumstances, be done in a religious meeting house, the home in fact having been the original meeting house of the apostolic church (513).

We suspect that our readers are surprised at such a statement. Do we really believe that anything that can be done in one's home can be done appropriately in the meeting house owned by the church?

But wait! This is not the real issue involved in the "division" mentioned above. According to these brethren not only can churches serve meals in their meeting houses but they can build the facilities into their meeting houses that are needed for serving meals - and this from the money contributed for the Lord's work. Could we not carry brother Coffman's reasoning one step further, and say that anything a Christian might build into his house can, under the proper circumstances, be built into religious meeting houses? Bedrooms? Swimming pools? Recreation rooms? We know a family

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who has built a beauty shop into their house. A beauty shop in the church building? And the lady gives perms and sets hair as a business in her home. Could she do this "under proper circumstances" in the church building? In fact, it is at least possible that Aquila and Priscilla had a "tent-making" area in their house, for that was their occupation. A tent factory built into the meeting house

with money from the treasury?

Besides, we have known of churches that met in YMCA's, union halls, prisons, and court-houses. Does it follow that anything a Christian might do in one of these facilities "could, under proper circumstances," be done in a religious meeting house?

The truth is a church meeting house is authorized as an aid to worship and Bible teaching, which are God-ordained church activities. Whatever is needful to facilitate these God-ordained activities should therefore be built into meeting houses. In keeping with this, if God ordains social activities, recreation, and secular education as local church activities, churches should build facilities, and provide food, balls, bats, racquets, school teachers, books, etc., that will serve as aids to these activities. But if they are not God-ordained church activities, churches have no authority to build into their buildings facilities for such. And to do that for which there is no authority is sin (**2 Jn 9; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 Jn 3:4**). This is the real issue in this controversy.

