

## **A Gift Regretted**

The home of a family of Christians was destroyed by fire. They lost everything. The local congregation gave a large sum of money out of the treasury as is proper for needy saints. However, the members wanted to do more and put together an impromptu, out of pocket collection after services. The deacon who gathered the money saw one little boy tug on his father's sleeve in order to ask him something. The father bent down and the boy whispered his request in his ear. The father smiled proudly and pulled some money from his pocket and gave it to the boy, who in turn gave all of it to the deacon. Then the little boy tugged on his father's sleeve again, and his dad bent down one more time. The little boy whispered again in his ear. This time the father's smile was even broader, bordering on amusement.

The deacon could stand it no longer. He asked the father what that whispered conversation was all about. The dad said, "My son asked me to advance next week's allowance so he would have something to give to the family who lost everything in the fire."

The deacon asked, "Well, what was the second whispering all about?"

The father replied, "My boy told me, 'Dad, I guess you know this means I'll need a raise in my allowance next week.'"

Does a gift regretted mean anything? When you have to ask another for a hug or a kind word, does it mean as much as one given freely and spontaneously? One who regrets coming for worship or Bible study, one who begrudges anything offered to the Lord, one who gazes longingly to the world of sin he left, is one who offers to the God that which is greatly diminished in value.

All we have and all we are is of God. Wouldn't it be better to say, "Here I am Lord, use me up in Thy service," than to wait to be commanded to give of our selves to Him? Donaldson wrote, "Accepting the gift honors the giver." There is no honor in serving God when we would rather do something else. (Prov. 21:27; Mal. 3:13-14; 2Cor. 8:1-5)

## **How to Get to Heaven**

Billy Graham tells of a time early in his career when he arrived in a small town to preach a revival. Wanting to mail a letter, he asked a young boy for directions to the post office. After the boy told him, Graham thanked him and said, "If you'll come to the Baptist church this evening, you will hear me tell everyone how to get to Heaven."

"I don't think I'll be there," the little boy said. "You don't even know the way to the post office." (1John 4:1-3; John 14:1-6) John 5:39 - "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

## **Cakes and Ale**

The following is reported to be a true story regarding exams at Cambridge University. It seems that during an examination an arrogant young student popped up and asked the proctor to bring him cakes and ale. The following dialog ensued:

Proctor: I beg your pardon?

Student: Sir, I request that you bring me cakes and ale.

Proctor: Sorry, no.

Student: Sir, I really must insist. I request and require that you bring me Cakes and Ale. At this point, the student produced a copy of the five-hundred-year old by-laws of Cambridge University, written in Latin and still nominally in effect (like blue laws), and pointed to the section and translated: "Gentlemen sitting examinations may request and require cakes and ale." Tea

and biscuits were judged the modern equivalent, and the student sat there, writing his examination and happily eating.

One week later, the student was fined twenty pounds sterling (about \$50). He demanded the proctor explain why. The proctor pointed to the relevant page of the ancient by-laws which read: "Students sitting at examination must wear a sword and cloak."

Occasionally when we study the Bible, we are careful to find those things that may benefit us, while trying to ignore the passages we dislike. Ever known anybody who only quoted the Bible when it was convenient for them ("Judge not that ye be not judged")? They want to get their cakes and ale but ignore the part about wearing a sword and cloak. God's Word isn't like a cafeteria. We don't get to go through and pick out which parts we want and which parts we don't like.

"But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Luke 11:42). (James 2:1, 9-12)

### **Eaten by Cannibals**

The story is told of a reporter who visited the Fiji Islands to do a story on earth-loving primitive tribes of people corrupted by Western religion. Being an atheist and fashionably antagonistic toward Christianity, he critically remarked to an elderly chief, "You are a great leader, but it's a pity you've been taken in by those foreign missionaries. They only want to get rich through you. No one believes the Bible anymore. People are tired of the threadbare story of Christ dying on a cross for the sins of mankind. They know better now. I'm sorry you've been so foolish as to accept their story."

The old chief smiled and his eyes flashed as he answered, "See that great rock over there? On it we smashed the heads of our victims. Notice the stone furnace next to it? In that oven we formerly roasted the bodies of ignorant travelers. If it hadn't been for those good missionaries preaching the love of God and salvation in Jesus Christ that changed us from cannibals into Christians, you'd never leave this place alive! You thank the Lord for the Gospel in the Bible; otherwise we would be feasting on you for supper when the sun goes down."

The gospel can change one who loves human flesh into one who loves human souls. It can transform one who loves the chaos of a sinful life into one who lives at peace with God, man, and himself. It can change you into what you will never be without God - a child of royal Deity; what you cannot accomplish without Jesus - freedom from all of your sins and the consequences thereof; what you cannot do without salvation - enter the blessed realm of heaven. (1Thes. 1:9-10; Col. 1:10-14)

### **A Moments Wisdom**

- A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within.