



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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Issue # 201

Thinking Through Valentine's Day Vanities

Perhaps this topic raises a few questions in our mind. What is there to say about Valentine's day vanities? However, we do recognize that the matter of Valentine's day observance is a current issue. It is in our surrounding society and I do not think we are totally free from its influence.

Thinking about the vanities of the day does take us into some of the roots that have given rise to the day. We know that

Valentine's day has been observed for many centuries. I would assume that many, of my generation and older, have an awareness of the customs associated with the day. Some of them were learned in our school years and some by simple observation and reading which we have done. Many of the younger generation know less, and I do not think that is all bad.

Valentine's day is observed on

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February 14. It is noted on many calendars but not all of them. Calendars with a religious theme do not mark the day. A vanity is something that is empty, valueless or vain. I can only assume that we would agree that the customs related to the day are merely that.

We could possibly look at some of the vanities related to a few other religious holidays. We can think of the Christmas holiday and we could possibly make

an equal list. There is a difference however between Christmas day and Valentine's day in that we do acknowledge the birth of the Lord on Christmas day and we do think about His incarnation. Whether He was born on December 25 or not, it is a day we agree to commemorate His birth. Yet as far as Valentine's day, to my knowledge, we have nothing in common with it. The observations of the day arise primarily out of the pagan root, even

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though it is considered a “Christian” holiday. Many of the older calendars, at least, would have it listed as St. Valentine’s day. Thus, there was a saint named Valentine who became the bearer of the observance on that day.

On the matter of observing days, the Bible does tell us that not every man esteems every day alike. “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” (Romans 14:5–7) This passage must be taken in its context. It does not teach that any nationally observed day is equal in value and that the attitude that we hold toward the day is totally up to the individual, or that it all depends on how we are persuaded. This verse addresses the continued observation of the Old Testament feasts and the New Testament dispensation. We have made some room for it, and the keeping

of those days was not all wrong. They were like commemorations and commemorative holidays. Paul was saying, “Make some room for your brethren and those who decide to do so, as long as they regard it to the Lord.”

Again, I do not believe that Valentine’s day observances have ever been regarded to the Lord. It would be possible to have thoughts of the Lord in sending a message to a friend, maybe in that way, but I would like to notice the inconsistency of that approach as we move through the message.

The commercial value of the day. I suppose there are many merchants who do not regard the day as vanity, but rather a day of profit. In fact, last year we are told that 103 million roses were sold by florists for Valentine’s day. That is quite a few stems. Confectioners have tallied more than one billion dollars in candy sales for Valentine’s day, primarily in chocolates. It is estimated that the average American, this year, would spend \$100 on the holiday, up from \$80 last year. Therefore, when I say that merchants probably do not look at it as vanity but as profit, this is the reason. One survey of online sales noted that \$3.9 billion were spent online for the Valentine’s day period of February 1 to 14,

2005. It represented a gross of a 130% in jewelry sales alone. Thus we see that something is happening and it is on the increase. We are told that the merchants are pushing and advertising jewelry for the day, and people are buying \$3.9 billion in that fourteen-day period.

The greeting card association estimates that one billion Valentines' day cards are sent worldwide annually, making it the second largest card marketing day of the year, second to Christmas. Thus, there is no question that the sale of cards is an important part the commercial value. Christmas day is hardly passed until the shelves are emptied and the Valentine's day merchandise is put on display and people are confronted with more opportunities to spend.

We are also told that variants of the day are gaining popularity in China and Japan. Valentine's day is celebrated in China as Daughter's day on a different date. The influence of the West is being felt in other countries as well as the commercial activity.

While the day has caught among many youth in some of the Asian countries with the Hindu and Muslim religion, it has also been banned by many of those countries and by their religious organizations. In some of

those countries the religious rule is stronger than the political rule or they are combined. In Saudi Arabia, we are told that police will monitor stores selling roses and will arrest women wearing red. In Pakistan in 2004, an Islamist organization called for a ban on Valentine's day. It was described as, "A shameful day where Westerners are fulfilling and satisfying their lusts." That is their view of it. I share that because it does give a perspective of what others hold of the day.

The background of the day. The official name is, as I noted, St. Valentine's day. Yet, the term saint, if we look on our calendar, is often eliminated because many people do not associate the day with the veneration of a Catholic saint anymore. The veneration of a Catholic saint came from the peak of the Roman Empire. A legend is a story that may be true but is not authenticated, and legend would tell us that the Romans held a festival called Lupercalia during the month of February, in honour of the god of fertility. The purpose was to ensure fertility for the fields and for mammals. Marriage was common at this time.

When Claudius Caesar became emperor, he changed the custom. He feared that men would refuse their duty to fight

because they would not want to leave their marital companions (their wives) behind and he outlawed marriage. It may be true that he did that. We can pick up almost any writing or publication that gives information on the origin of Valentine's day and find something similar to this. It is very commonly stated. We must remember that Rome was a world power. In order to expand that power, they needed armies of devoted, dedicated young men.

As the story goes, when marriage was banned, there were still those young men who wanted to marry and they went secretly to a priest by the name of Valentine who performed the ceremony. When Claudius discovered the activity, he arrested priest Valentine and sentenced him to death. While in jail, the priest developed a friendship with the jailor's daughter, and on the day he was beheaded, he wrote a last note to her signed, "Your Valentine." Therefore, the custom of sending notes signed as your Valentine became a custom.

In 496 AD, after Christianity had overtaken Rome (Christianity being the Catholic religion under the Pope) there was a struggle. Christianity finally rose to power. Actually, the struggle between the king and the Pope went on a long time.

When Christianity rose to power, Pope Galasius outlawed the pagan Lupercan feast. He set aside the day to honour the martyred Valentine as St. Valentine's day. It is interesting that in 1969, the Catholic church removed St. Valentine's day from the official calendar of holidays. This may be one of the reasons why the word "Saint" has been removed as a part of the Valentine's day mark on our calendars.

There would be other stories of how the day came to be. History does record that there were at least three Catholic priests by the name of Valentine who could be linked to the celebration. Two of them were martyred and buried in the vicinity of Rome and one was martyred in Africa, but they are all listed under the date of February 14. And yet the Catholic church has never authenticated that a saint was venerated on this day. If a saint was venerated, he was set apart and elevated to sainthood like they are trying to do to Pope John Paul II. There are some reasons for this I believe.

This is the background of what is commonly given as the basis or the history of the Valentine's day celebration. I would like to go back a little further in history. As I said, the Roman Catholic church was the religious arm of

the Roman empire. As it conquered and Catholicism rose to power, they went on to conquer many pagan, deeply superstitious, and very religious nations. In order to appease these nations they needed to allow them to keep their religious customs and even their gods under the new “Christian” names. The pagans often had, and were devoted to local shrines of particular gods that they worshipped. Christianity, under Rome, in assimilating other nations, adopted some of their customs. They did not try to change them all.

I suppose, in a measure, Rome was a melting pot as America is today. We have our Chinatowns and Latino districts and so forth. Likewise there was some concession to these people. Therefore Christianity, which had risen to power, recognized that in order for them to be successful, they would also need to give some slack to these people who were not Christians and did not worship the Christ child, nor believed in Christianity as they taught and professed it. Thus, they “Christianized” pagan celebrations, established shrines of martyrs, and combined the celebration of these with the recognition of Christian names. They also added Christian names to the pagan celebrations. This is true

for many of the Christian holidays which we observe, and that is the basis or the background to many of the Christmas day celebrations.

This practice, as it was carried out, was successful. It brought people into the Church and support for the Pope. That is what he wanted and was looking for. It produced a new type of literature called *hagiography*, which was the biography of saints. In order to bring the two together, someone needed to write the life story of saints. If they could fit what was traditionally known about the saints into the practice and cultic activities of the pagans whom they had subjected and brought under, then that was good enough. However, if they did not, then they produced a biography that made it plausible and built a story around them which included their shrines and methods of worship.

They would contrive these stories from conventional materials that they had including history records and even folklore. Folklore is a part of, or one of the ingredients that go into legend. It is not really based on known fact but supposition and ideas. If this is passed on long enough, it can be believed to be true. In this way myths and legends of pagan gods became intertwined with

religious practices and it became very difficult to separate the real from fiction.

If Valentine's day is not connected with St. Valentine, and that was all a concoction, then the question that can be raised is, "What is it connected with?"

Almost without fail, research regarding Valentine's day leads the reader to the ancient Roman festival called Lupercalia, which began some eight hundred years before the establishment of Valentine's day. There was a festival that surrounded this pagan name Lupercalia. It was considered the pagan rite of passage for young men who were dedicated to the god named Lupercus. The celebration was held early in February, specifically February 15. The Lupercalia celebration centred around a deity named Lupercus who gathered people together for safety and protection of their flocks. In fact, the Latin name Lupus means "wolf."

The festival of Lupercalia on the 15th day of February was preceded on the 14th day by the festival dedicated to Juno. Juno was the queen of gods who was also known as the goddess of women. There are some links in all of this and I will try to give a few hitching posts along the way to make sense of this. Her name, Februta is a source of the name of the

month February. [Etymology gives the meaning of purification i.e. the month of purification.] and the word meant "feverish or hot." She was called the mother of feverish love. That was on the 14th and then the 15th was the festival of Lupercalia. Thus, she was the queen of gods and this Lupercalia was the god whom the young men were dedicated. Suffice it to say that these celebrations were sinful in nature. There was nothing godly about them. It was vanity. They were empty and licentious.

I would like to pause here. Is it any surprise to us that pink and red are the colours of Valentine's day? If the 14th was the worship day of Juno the queen of gods, who was the goddess of women and the mother of feverish love, is it any surprise that the colours are red? It is also noteworthy, I think, that red or scarlet in the Bible is associated with harlotry. That is a Bible link. The mother of abominations, the mother of harlotry rode upon the beast and she was coloured red. She had a scarlet robe. (Revelation 17:3, 4) This is a primary reason why we teach and preach that we ought to avoid the colour red and its relatives including the maroons, the hot pinks and why we should be very cautious. We make some room for some of the pastels but

in that colour red there is a link to pagan worship.

The question that could be raised then, “Who was this god Lupercalia for whom was this celebration held?” I would again make a few observations. Who was the first man in the Bible to gather people into cities in order to protect them from wild animals and from ambush? We can make a few observations from Genesis 10. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth who were introduced in Genesis 9 and their genealogy given. We read of the moral failure of Ham and we have his descendants given in Genesis 10:6, “And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.” The account continues in verses 8–10, “And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.” I think we understand those names. Babylon, the land of Shinar, is modern Iraq today. We do not know much about it but Jewish history tells us a bit more.

Nimrod became the basis of comparison for renowned men going forward and men who

were hunters. As I said, this Lupercalia was a man who protected. He was worshipped as a god, who was known to protect the flocks of people and towns and people from wolves and wild beasts. The Scripture says of Nimrod that he was a “mighty hunter before the LORD.” If I understand this correctly, this word “before,” is also translated or interpreted “against,” and “in opposition to.” He was not only a man observed by the Lord, but he was rather a man who was against, or in opposition to, the God of heaven. He must have been if he built Babel, because Babel was against God. He was a man respected by the people and very likely idolized by the people. In Genesis 11, we have the record of the building of the tower.

Nimrod is credited with establishing this kingdom called Babel, meaning that he set himself up as king in the plain of Shinar. He was a noted man. Instead of moving out, as God told Noah, to replenish the earth, the three sons of Noah did go into three distinct areas. Ham went into northern Africa, but this son settled not far from Canaan. This son of Canaan established this kingdom called Babel. Instead of doing what he was supposed to be doing, he set

up a tower. It has been suggested that part of the reason, or inspiration for the tower may have been to be able to withstand another flood.

They were anti God and they were not of the godly line. What would withstand a flood better than a tower that was tall enough and would be able to get away from the waters of the flood. They were not respecting God. The system and their king from the very start were anti God. He organized people into walled cities. After they were scattered by the confounding of the languages, no doubt the story of Nimrod's feats, the protection that he offered, what they had, and his exploits, were told again and again, in all languages. We know that practically all history after the flood comes to us from the cradle of post flood mankind at Babel where they were scattered and went from that place.

Legends and myths about this hero king grew. While this is a bit theoretical, it is the way that stories work. When things are told and retold, about a certain king it often grows especially as successive generations come along. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that Noah's son Shem killed his great nephew Nimrod because he was taking people back to the idolatry which

they practiced before the flood. The Bible does not say that, and we will leave it at that. However, we do give some credence to the record of Josephus. Whether he really did or not, I do not think is a big issue, but it is true that stories of Nimrod have abounded under many names.

If you have studied at all the story of the history of Baal worship, you will find that it traces back to Babel and to Nimrod. The Bible record even supports some of this. Nimrod supposedly had a son named Tammuz. These two, Nimrod and Tammuz, became the fountain head of mythology for male god heros and the male gods which were worshipped, and many contortions of that, including faunas with the body of a horse and head of man. We probably have seen mythological pictures of creatures. They all have their root back here. Their names changed from culture to culture and from language to language. However, the story is much the same whether it is a Roman history, a Greek rendering, Assyrian, Babylonian, or Egyptian sources. They all come over a very similar line. Besides, the names of Nimrod and Tammuz, they are also known as Horus [Egypt] or Baal, or Bel. We know the Bible talks about Baal and Baal wor-

ship. There is also Mithro and Bacchus.

That is the one side. The feminine side is Nimrod's wife, Semiramis, who was also worshipped under many names including the name Juno. She is also called Venus or Diana; Diana being the goddess of the Ephesians at Ephesus. She was the wife of Nimrod. There is the root. I would like to make this connection. We must remember the conflict that began in the early pages of Genesis where Satan was against God. He has followed the people of God wherever they went and made a counterfeit. This whole business is about a counterfeit. She is also called Astarte (maybe you recognize that name) or Ishtar [or Isis — Egypt] those are a few.

It is interesting to note, if we read a little bit about Baal worship and some of their cultic practices, the use of the heart symbol as an expression of love and romance goes back to the pagan trinity of Nimrod, Semiramis and Tammuz. There is the story of the death of Bacchus from Roman mythology. In this story of Bacchus (which was the retelling of the story of the death of Nimrod) his wife Minerva managed to snatch away his heart after his death. From his heart, sprang the son

Dionysius and he was Bacchus reincarnated or born again. The heart became the symbol of a false messiah to them. This man who was so revered and worshipped died, but out of his life, out of the heart came the son. The Scriptures however (I inject this here) never use the heart of Jesus to symbolize His love for man. He calls man to give Him his heart. However, our Lord gave His life. I do not think we will find that symbol being used of our Lord Jesus.

I would like to pick up another character now. Some time ago, I had an assignment on Baal worship. It is almost terrifying to know, and to read of some of the things associated with it. The Bible does tell us. Baal worship involved the sacrifice of children to please the gods (the little g-o-d-s). It was their goal to make sure that he was satisfied. He was believed to be the god that brought fruitfulness to the earth. If rain was not happening, they did things, strange things, to appease this god. This Baal worship problem haunted God's people wherever they went and as they moved, it was there. They turned again and again. That is why the pronouncement of judgment is so severe and repeated so many times in the Old Testament prophets.

There is also this little creature that is called Cupid. What about this little naked baby with wings who carries a bow and an arrow? We have seen it on Valentine hearts, candies, and cards. We have seen people draw these little hearts with an arrow through it. We have seen those symbols. Perhaps we have seen it in auto-graph books. It should not be there, but we probably have seen it there. Cupid is the symbol that is purportedly able to take his arrow, and those whom he strikes, he makes to fall in love one with another. That is the idea. However, Cupid, interestingly, is one of the names for Tammuz the son of Nimrod. The bow and the arrow are said to identify him as the hunter, the mighty hunter before the Lord reborn. Thus, he is the little one now. He is the next generation. The wings testify, as his mother claimed, that he is the incarnation of the invisible sun god. Juno was the sun god and Cupid was a god in his own right.

What did Cupid do? What was his gift? Again, as I said, to make people love and desire one another. The name Cupid means desire. In fact supposedly he was so beautiful such that (this is the heathen belief) he caused his mother to desire him and marry him. You can read about Baal

worship and that was a part of it. The Bible talks about the women weeping for Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14). I want to say the following lest I miss it. I mentioned how many million Valentine's day cards are sold each year. Interestingly, supposedly 80 percent of those are bought by women. This tells us something. It tells us what culture passes on, and what is behind it. The heart was also the ancient symbol of love for Baal. Let us think about that. In sending a heart to someone we are borrowing a symbol of Baal worship. I understand this desire of women to be an idol. This is part of Cupid and the mother child.

In Ezekiel 8 we read what was happening in Babylon during the captivity. Ezekiel wrote while in captivity. In verse 3, he was taken up by lock of his head and lifted between the earth and the heaven "and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy." It is my understanding that this seat of the image of jealousy was again a form of idolatry. The image of jealousy and the desire of women was the same thing. In verse 5 we read, "Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So

I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry.” It is associated with idol worship.

“He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.” (verse 6) He looked through the hole in the wall and he “dugged,” in verse 8. “And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.” God’s people were in to idolatry. “And there stood before them seventy men . . . with every man his censer in his hand.” (verse 11) They were worshipping and offering incense. It was a false form of worship.

“He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD’S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

[for Cupid] Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD’S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.” (Ezekiel 8:13–18) If there is any one thing that God hates, it is the effort to combine the pagan with the real. He hates it with a passion. God was saying, “I will not have pity and I will not spare.” In Ezekiel 11, we read of the glory of the Lord lifting up and not returning until the end of the chapter. This is a lesson for us of how God saw the

abomination that was done when the true and the false were brought together by man. God never looks kindly on pagan worship.

As the name Cupid has meaning, so does the name Valentine. It is taken from a Latin word meaning “valence.” The name means “strong, powerful, or mighty one.” This is recorded in the *World Book Encyclopedia*. Thus, as I gave the legend in the beginning, perhaps that name was assigned to those priests because it fit in with the whole story of Nimrod, Baal and the worship of Diana, Astarte, and Tammuz. The whole thing comes together. Therefore, if we ask someone to “be my Valentine,” we are asking them to “be our mighty one.” That is really what it is. That is what is behind it, even as Nimrod the “mighty hunter before the Lord.” Whether we recognize it or not, the practice is honouring a pagan deity.

I would like to think that it is not even a problem and that we would never do something like this, but I am told (I cannot authenticate it) that there are some Valentine’s day cards and memorabilia passed between young people today within our group. If it is, it ought to be stopped. It almost makes the

chills go down my back to think how close we get to this form of paganism today, and how close we get in the Christmas practices at times and think nothing of it. In our minds we are still worshipping God. Is God pleased by that? Is God able to accept the practice of pagan ritual? If it is done in His name and we are thinking about Him while we do it? Absolutely not! Doing that kind of thing is nothing short of idolatry, which God hates.

I would like to think a little bit about the vanities yet. Combining the practices of Valentine’s day with our worship and profession is an abomination. “When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I

command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” (Deuteronomy 12:29–32) God knew the heart of man. This is plain language, and it applies to the New Testament dispensation as well.

When we borrow the symbols of the world as a token of our expression, we automatically borrow some of their meanings. We may not intend it that way, but we do it. We can say, “As long as we are thinking right, my Valentine’s card means that I appreciate you. It really does not matter what is said, or how it is given.” Does God accept pagan ritual in His name? The answer is no. He says it is an abomination. Away with it. The marketing or purchase of Valentine’s day (I am calling it memorabilia — it is the stuff that is associated with the day) whether it is the candies, cards, or something as simple as chocolate is a vanity and it ought not be on our shelves. Maybe we buy it cheap afterward. It ought not to be on our shelves.

Might it be (I merely suggest) that the availability, possession, and the reading of romance novels have conditioned our minds to accept the practice as innocent? Maybe it fits right with it. Much of what is written on the cards is not worth reading. The heart, as

I mentioned, was the ancient symbol of the god Baal. I would like to suggest that we do well to weed the heart symbols off of our stationary, out of our schools, and out of our homes. This includes the heart with a pierced arrow. A symbol of conjunction is an abomination.

What about the rose? They are some of the most beautiful flowers and are beautiful to enjoy. They are not wrong. I love them. I missed our rose bed last year. We got a little bit of dandelion treatment on them and they did not bloom right. What about passing the roses? Someone has pointed out that the simple rearrangement of four letters used to spell the word rose can be used to spell the word *eros*, which is a word for licentious love. Might that be the reason that the rose has been popularized as the symbol of the token of love? I think it is all right to give a rose to our wives, but my personal feeling is that it is best if we avoid its use on engagement cards, wedding invitations and programs, etc. There are many other flowers which we can use.

I would like to suggest that we beware of the 103 million roses. It is a cultural thing. It is borrowed from somewhere. We may say “That is getting quite narrow.” I give my personal testi-

mony and conviction. I think I have a basis for it. As we think about the vanities, tokens of appreciation and love between courting and betrothed couples are better expressed at other

times and in other ways than on Valentine's day. I would conclude with these words from 1 John 5:21, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Scripture References

Genesis		Ezekiel		Romans	
10:6	8	8:3	11	14:5-7	3
10:8-10	8	8:6	12		
		8:8	12		
		8:11	12	1 John	
Deuteronomy		8:13-18	12	5:21	15
12:29-32	14	8:14	11		
				Revelation	
				17:3, 4	7

From the Previous Issue:

Relating to the World's Holiday Practices

From a message by Simeon Rudolph
 Wednesday, December 28, 1994
 Richland Mennonite Church

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 18.

David. — The Crown Prince.

- I. The man after God's own heart. — 1 Samuel 13:14.
- II. Antecedents. — Ruth 4:17, 22; Matthew 1:5, 6.
- III. Anointed to be king over Israel. — 1 Samuel 16:11-13.

NOTE. — Samuel had looked at outward appearance only, while God recognized the undeveloped qualities of the youthful shepherd lad.

Future events proved the superior wisdom of God.

IV. Death of Goliath. — 1 Samuel 17.

NOTE. — Thus unarmed, except by the armor of God, the humblest subject in Christ's kingdom may overcome the mightiest giant among Satan's numerous hosts.

V. David and Saul.

1. David made an armor-bearer to Saul. — 1 Samuel 16:21.
2. David quieteth the evil spirit in Saul. — 1 Samuel 16:16–23
3. Saul's notice of David after the death of Goliath. — 1 Samuel 17:55–58.
4. David incurs the enmity of Saul. — 1 Samuel 18:5–11, 28–30.
5. Saul's attempts to kill David. — 1 Samuel 18–24; 26.

VI. David as an outlaw

1. Visits Samuel. — 1 Samuel 19:18, 19.
2. Eats of the shewbread at Nob. — 1 Samuel 21:1–6.
3. Takes Goliath's sword, flees to Achish at Gath, from which place he escapes feigning madness. — 1 Samuel 21:8–15.
4. Rescue of Keilah. — 1 Samuel 23:1–6.
5. Treachery of the Keilites and Ziphites. — 1 Samuel 23:7–29.
6. Spares the life of Saul. — 1 Samuel 24:1–8.
7. David, Nabal, and Abigail. — 1 Samuel 25.
8. Ziklag given him by Achish. — 1 Samuel 27.
9. The Philistines distrust him. — 1 Samuel 29.
10. Victory over Amalekites. — 1 Samuel 30.
11. Laments the death of Saul and Jonathan. — 2 Samuel 1.

VII. David and Michal.

1. The marriage. — 1 Samuel 18:22–27.
2. Michal delivers David out of Saul's hands. — 1 Samuel 19:11–17.
3. Michal given to Phalti. — 1 Samuel 25:44.
4. Restored to David. — 2 Samuel 3:13–16.
5. Her envy because of David's religious dancing. — 2 Samuel 6:16, 20–23; 1 Chronicles 15:29.

VIII. David and Jonathan.

1. Jonathan reveals his father's plot to kill David. 1 Samuel 19:1–3; 20.
2. Intercedes for David. — 1 Samuel 19:4–6.
3. Comforts David in the wilderness of Ziph. 1 Samuel 23:16–18.
4. David's marks of affection after Jonathan's death. 2 Samuel 1:25, 26; 9:1.

IX. David anointed king of Judah. — 2 Samuel 2:1–4.

X. Notable features of the lesson.

1. David's strength. — (1 Samuel 17:34–37.)
 2. Friendship between David and Jonathan.
 3. Saul's bitterness against David.
 4. Jonathan's remarkable generosity.
 5. David's valor.
 6. David's cheerfulness under adverse circumstances.
 7. David's respect for the Lord's anointed.
 8. David's grief over the death of his enemies.
 9. The moral depravity of the age.
 10. The victory of God's servants over their enemies.
-
1. How did David's thirteen years of preparation fit him for the throne?
 2. What sacrifice did Jonathan's friendship for David imply?
 3. What was the chief cause of Saul's enmity to David?
 4. Contrast Saul and Jonathan.
 5. Describe the conflict between David and Goliath.

LESSON 19.

David. — The King.

I. His reign at Hebron.

1. War between David and the house of Saul.
 - a. Battle between Abner's and Joab's men. — 2 Samuel
2.
 - b. Abner revolteth to David, and is slain by Joab. — 2 Samuel 3.

- c. Death of Ish-bosheth. — 2 Samuel 4:1–8.
- d. David’s conciliatory course. — 2 Samuel 2:5–7; 4:9–12.
- 2. David is crowned king over all Israel — 2 Samuel 5:1–3; 1 Chronicles 11:1–3.
- 3. Conquers Jerusalem, and makes it his capital. — 2 Samuel 5:6–12; 1 Chronicles 11:4–9.

II. His reign at Jerusalem.

- 1. Hiram’s gifts. — 2 Samuel 5:11.
- 2. David’s victories.
 - a. Over the Philistines. — 2 Samuel 5:17–25; 8:1; 21:15–22.
 - b. Over the Moabites. — 2 Samuel 8:2.
 - c. Over the Ammonites. — 2 Samuel 10:6–8.
 - d. Over the Syrians. — 2 Samuel 8:5, 6; 10:9–19.
 - e. Conquest of Edom. — 2 Samuel 8:14.
- 3. The ark returned to Jerusalem. — 2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 16.
- 4. Rebellion.
 - a. Absalom’s attempt to gain the throne. — 2 Samuel 15–18.
 - b. Revolt of Sheba. — 2 Samuel 20.
 - c. Adonijah’s ambition. — 1 Kings 1.
- 5. David forces Joab to number the people. — 2 Samuel 24:1–9; 1 Chronicles 21:1–7.
- 6. David’s penitence for committed sin. — 2 Samuel 12:7–14; 24:17; 1 Chronicles 21:17.
- 7. Preparations made for the temple. — 1 Chronicles 22:1–6.
- 8. Solomon appointed his successor. — 1 Kings 1:32–34; 1 Chronicles 22:9; 23:1.
- 9. David’s charge to Solomon. — 1 Kings 2:1–9; 1 Chronicles 22:6–16.
- 10. Death. — 1 Kings 2:10; 1 Chronicles 29:28.

III. Thoughts on his life.

- 1. David’s reign was a glorious one. Beginning with a mere handful of men, he gradually extended his authority until all Israel had submitted to his rule. The inhabitants of the land promised to Abraham

were subdued more thoroughly than ever before, surrounding nations became tributary, the kingdom was enriched, and for once the kingdom Israel took here place among the formidable nations on the globe. David, following the directions of God, had triumphed over all obstacles.

2. With all the splendor of David's kingdom, we are impressed with the vanity of worldly glory. Scarcely had he triumphed over outward foes, when internal troubles began. The last years of David's reign was embittered by strife in the affairs of family and state. His crimes against morality were beginning to bear fruit. The many bloody conflicts had developed thirst for blood. The brilliant achievements on the field of battle, and the dazzling splendor of the courts had blunted the moral sensibilities of the nation; while justice, mercy, and moral purity were fast disappearing. With these facts resting upon our minds, we reflect that the mightiest victories recorded in sacred history were won by an overruling Providence, without man having a drop of human blood.

3. David was a man of mighty passions, and these led him into most grievous sins. We deplore the fact of his, but rejoice in his commendable attitude when his sins were pointed out to him. There was no effort to justify himself. His humiliation was complete; his repentance genuine. His "I have sinned," was the sincere expression of a truly penitent heart. His penitence is a pattern which every sinner should follow.

4. David's psalms are expressions of ill states of the mind. Some were written while he was on the mountain-top of exultation; some while he was in the valley of despondency; some, while he was on the plains of ordinary life. Throughout, there is a fervor and a depth which at once fascinate and instruct and move and elevate the soul of the reader.

1. In what esteem do the New Testament writers hold David?
2. Mention David's most grievous faults; his most admirable traits of character.
3. What do we learn from David's crimes?
4. What do we learn from David's abject repentance?
5. Why was David not allowed to build the temple?

Children's Book Reprint
THE FOLLY OF PROCRASTINATION;
OR, THE STORY OF CHARLES AND EDWARD MARTIN.
Revised and Reprinted © 2003

INTRODUCTION

“WELL, Ned, you are welcome to do as you please, but I shall go with Mr. Jones's boys; and I'll reckon we'll have real fun,” said Charles Martin to his brother Edward, as they stood in their father's barnyard one fine morning in spring. Charles, with his hands in the pockets of his roundabout,* was leaning against the fence, and Edward was fitting the handle to a garden hoe.

The sun had just risen without a cloud, the dew-drops were sparkling on the grass and trees the poultry cackled in the yard, the cows were lowing for their calves, and the patient horses and oxen were trudging to the plough followed by their whistling drivers. The whole scene wore that air of cheerful bustle, always witnessed in the spring of the year, on a carefully cultivated and well-regulated farm.

Mr. Martin's house (a plain but neat and comfortable dwelling) stood on the banks of the pretty Merrimack,** in the midst of

fields made fertile by care and industry. In front, on the slope toward the river, was a green meadow. On one side stood a thriving young orchard, on the other the garden. At a little distance behind the house was the barn and other outbuildings, half-hidden by a row of evergreen pines.

The family that lived in this quiet homestead were as happy as people could wish to be in this troublesome world. Mr. Martin was a godly, sensible, excellent man; Mrs. Martin was a kind-hearted woman, but perhaps a little too indulgent a mother; and the children (though of course not free from the usual faults of childhood) were, generally speaking, intelligent, good-natured and obedient. There were five of them; two boys, Charles and Edward, and three girls, Mary, Phoebe and Ruth. Mary was a quiet, steady girl; Phoebe could already help her mother to do little chores about

* A large, strait, plain coat.

** A river running through central New Hampshire then into Massachusetts in New England

the house; and Ruth (a playful, pretty little toddler) would bring her father his book or his Bible, as he sat in his great arm-chair, after the day's business was done.

Mr. Martin, though able to maintain his family very comfortably from the produce of his farm, was not rich; yet he gave his children a good education, and, what was still better, he strove to impress on their young minds the importance of "Remembering their Creator in the days of their youth." (Ecclesiastes 12:1) He was constantly reminding them that this world was not to be their abiding home, and that they were but placed here to prepare for a better state hereafter.

The children attended school regularly, except when at harvesting or any great hurry of work they were needed at home.

Their teacher was a man who would water the tender germs of truth and virtue, which parental care had implanted in their young minds. He felt the responsibility of his situation, in being, a great measure, intrusted with the guidance and instruction of so many immortal souls, and laboured faithfully for their temporal and eternal welfare, that at the last great day he might render a good account of his stewardship.

At this time important business had obliged him to absent himself for a few weeks from his little flock; so of course, the children were enjoying holidays.

Charles and Edward Martin were pleasant and sensible boys, and until lately, had manifested similar dispositions. They were affectionate and obedient to their parents, but somewhat thoughtless;—and like most boys, much fonder of frolic than of business.

Recently, however, a marked change appeared in Edward. Edward had come of an age where he had discovered a powerlessness within himself to do the right things. God had called him and he began to discover that he was sinful and that the nature within him was against right and godly living. This had brought condemnation to him. Edward had begun the transition from the innocence of childhood to the accountability of youth. Edward had received good teaching and was able to go to his parents with this problem. The truth of the Scripture was apparent to his parents: "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (Romans 7:9). His parents showed him his need to be changed and how it was to be done. Now, the truths he had been taught sank deeply into his

mind like seed in good ground, and began to bring forth fruit.

Among the first fruits of this *change* were a spirit of compliance not only with the commands, but even with the *wishes* of his parents; a readiness to give up his own pleasures for the good of others; and a true sense of the *value of time*. This is what very few understand, and from a want of this arises the habit of *Procrastination*, the source of so many ills.

“Business before pleasure,” and “Never put off till tomorrow what can be done today,” had become favourite maxims with Edward Martin; and from a proper application of these, he derived great profit and satisfaction. He usually contrived to have his work done “*in advance of time*,” as he called it, that is before the time required; and of course, when it was finished, he could turn to profitable recreation with the greater relish. On returning from school, he used to prepare his most difficult lessons, while resting from his walk in the pleasant shady porch; then he would be ready to enjoy profitable activities, or to run on any errands for his father. Instead of coming home to dine at lunch, the boys carried their dinner with them to schools which was nearly two miles distant. Recess was

long, and Edward when he wished for leisure in the evening, after running about a little for the sake of exercise, would prepare his sums or other lessons for the next day. Thus he gained plenty of time, and bade fair to become one of the best scholars of Mr. Charlton’s school.

All this, was the effect of the good maxim, “*Business before pleasure*.”

In this respect, Charles, unhappily, was very unlike Edward. His habit of procrastination caused him many vexations, and kept him always in a hurry when any business was to be done.

The moment he came home from school, he would carelessly throw his books aside, and be off to play, saying, “Oh, there is time enough; I’ll learn my lessons this evening.” But it generally happened that when evening came, he was so tired and sleepy that he was glad to go to bed, still saying, “Oh, I can learn them before school-time in the morning.”

It was the morning work of the boys, to drive the cattle to pasture, feed the horses, and weed in the garden; so poor Charles had but little time to prepare his lessons, and when Edward would say, “Come, ‘tis almost time to start.” he would reply, “What shall I do? I have not done a single sum yet; I don’t know a word

of my grammar or spelling! Go on, Edward, don't wait for me. I'll follow as soon as I look over those hateful lessons. Then such a searching for the books! "Phoebe, Where's my arithmetic? Oh, here it is! Mary, do hunt up my slate*, please; Ruth had it yesterday, making pictures on it." Then having hastily skimmed over the various tasks, he would race off at full speed, and, heated and out of breath,

overtake Edward nearly half-way to school.

In fact, he was a boy of fine abilities, but trusting too much to these, he became careless, and suffered himself to be excelled by his less apt, but more diligent younger brother. His habit of *Procrastination* it was that checked his progress, and drew him the frequent reproof of his father and his teacher.

* Slate — A type of stone which readily splits into plates, which was put into a small frame and used for writing on —like a portable black board. Each student might have their own or would need to share. This was in the days before commercial paper was readily available and affordable.

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