

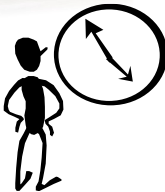
THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

Inside this issue:

<i>The Pillars of the Temple</i>	1
<i>Forgiveness is Unfair</i>	3
<i>The Wise Teacher Guards His Tongue</i>	4
<i>No Reason to Believe the Atheist</i>	5
<i>Firearms and Teaching Children</i>	6
Duty Rosters	7
Announcements & For the Record	8



Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.

Every other Sunday night:

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

The Pillars of the Temple

By Jefferson David Tant

In giving Solomon instructions for building the temple, God gave a somewhat unusual command concerning two pillars at the entrance. *“And he set up the pillars at the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin; and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz” (1 Kings 7:21).*

There were no names given to any other of the numerous pillars that were a part of the temple. So what was the significance of these two that set them apart from all the other pillars? Why were they given names?

Although we have no explanation for this, we can glean something from the Hebrew meanings of their names. From the detailed instructions given for the temple, it does not appear that these pillars supported the roof. In other words, they were apparently freestanding at the entrance.

The Pulpit Commentary suggests that “the balance of evidence appears to favor the view that Jachin and Boaz were monuments erected in the porch, to dignify the sanctuary, and to symbolize the power and eternity of the Being to whom it was dedicated” (I Book of Kings, p, 181).

Jachin means “He shall establish” and Boaz means “In it is strength.” Would not the names of these pillars, which one had to pass in order to enter into the temple, serve as a visible reminder to all those who entered, that this magnificent edifice was ordained and built by their God, whose strong arm would shield and protect them?

Also noteworthy is David’s charge to Solomon. David wanted to build the temple, but God did not permit it. David did make preparation by gathering the material. Then before his death, David gave Solomon the plans. *“Then David gave to his son Solomon the plan of the porch of the temple, its buildings, its storehouses, its upper rooms, its inner rooms*

and the room for the mercy seat; and the plan of all that he had in mind..." ([I Chronicles 28:11-12](#)).

What do you think would have happened if Solomon had not built according to "the plan," the blueprint? Certainly, God would not have been pleased.

Is there an application for us? Isn't the church God's temple today? Paul declared that we are God's temple, not a physical building, but a spiritual building. *"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* ([I Corinthians 3:9-11](#)).

Then Paul continues to admonish: *"Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are"* ([I Corinthians 3:16-17](#)).

No one ever builds without a plan or blueprint. When Christ said he would build his church ([Matthew 16:18](#)), let us not foolishly suppose that he didn't have a pattern or blueprint in mind for that spiritual building.

Some today have the idea that we are free to conduct ourselves with respect to the church in whatever ways seem good to us. They don't like rules or restraints. They want freedom. The idea that we have to follow a "pattern" is not to their liking.

Is God less concerned about such than when he instructed Moses about building the tabernacle? *"Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain"* ([Hebrews 8:5](#)).

Consider [Hebrews 9:1](#): *"Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary."* Now, consider the implications of that statement. I tell my 16-year-old daughter, "Look, even your 10-year-old sister knows how to make up her bed and keep her room clean." The very strong implication is that the older daughter should know how to do it even better than her younger sister.

So, what is the author of Hebrews telling us? If *"even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship..."*, then the inescapable implication is that the second covenant also has rules of divine worship. Some don't like "necessary implications," but that verse has one, even if they don't like it.

Brethren, let us take heed how we build. *"But each man must be careful how he builds on it"* ([I Corinthians 3:10](#)). As those pillars symbolized the power and eternity of the Being to whom the temple was dedicated, let us respect those principles with regard to the church which was built by Christ. We have no right to change the blueprints. Let the temple's pillars remind us of the divine builder of the spiritual temple.

Forgiveness Is Unfair

By Ken Green

“Then Peter came up and said to him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times’” ([Matthew 18:21–22, ESV](#)).

Before we can take forgiveness seriously, we have to grasp what forgiveness means. Forgiveness is the decision to release a person from the obligation that resulted when he or she injured you. When you injure others, knowingly or unknowingly, you create an obligation.

You take something from them: their time, money, pride, or dignity. And if you take something from your brother, then you owe him. Forgiveness doesn’t mean that nobody pays that price. It actually means that the one granting forgiveness pays. He covers the debt. He’s the one who takes care of it.

If I choose to release someone through forgiveness, I pay the debt. I absorb it. I cover it. I forego what is rightfully due to me. I release the person from what he owes. I pay. Not unlike how, when God forgives, God pays. That’s the story of the gospel. I have a sin debt I can never pay, and Jesus pays it for me.

This extravagant, divine forgiveness sets the stage for human forgiveness, but that doesn’t make it easy. Since the debt was unfair in the first place, we instinctively hesitate to pay it ourselves. But our reasons for not forgiving all turn out to be rationalizations.

If we hold out for an apology, we are missing the point. An apology doesn’t pay the debt; only forgiveness can. In the same way, if you’re six months behind on your mortgage, a sincere “sorry” to your bank won’t cancel the debt or the added interest. The apology is irrelevant to the crisis of forgiveness. Forgiveness necessitates a decision point, a true crisis: Will you choose to release the person from the obligation?

For fallen creatures like us, unforgiveness feels like power. Forgiveness surrenders the power to send any more “bills” to that person. Forgiveness foregoes the power to hold the debt over him.

The crisis to choose to forgive feels ugly and messy, but it’s worth it. By releasing someone else, we also release ourselves from the chains of self-destructive unforgiveness.



The Wise Teacher Guards His Tongue

By Jefferson David Tant

“He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding” (Proverbs 17:27).

Those who preach and teach are people of words. That’s obvious, as that’s how we proclaim the message. But how we use our tongue can have a great influence on how the message is received. The proverbs of Solomon deal more with the tongue than any other topic. God intends for the tongue to be used for good, but sometimes when we open our mouths, bad happens. *“And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell” (James 3:6).* In view of this, it would be wise for us to consider how to use our tongues.

AN UNBRIDLED TONGUE

“He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles” (Proverbs 21:23).

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 18:21).

The tongue is a strong weapon, and we must use it wisely. Something as simple as a little gossip can bring strife and discord, and at times the damage cannot be repaired. That is why God gave us a cage to keep our tongues in control. When we are tempted to use the tongue in an unholy manner, just keep the cage shut — your teeth! *“But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (James 1:19).*

A RIGHTEOUS AND GENTLE TONGUE

“The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, but the perverted tongue will be cut out” (Proverbs 10:31).

We should ask the Lord to help us speak in such a way that our words will have a positive influence on others.

WORDS OF KINDNESS

Do you remember what Solomon said about the worthy woman? *“She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue” (Proverbs 31:26).* What a great reputation to have. Yes, sometimes we have to deal with and confront error and sin, but how we do it makes a world of difference. I have known of preachers who display anger if anyone questions or challenges them, or even makes suggestions as to how things may be improved. *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).* responding in anger with harsh words will never edify,

but a soft response can have far-reaching positive results.

MANAGE YOUR ANGER

Yes, there are occasions for anger that are right, but how do we deal with it? *“Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity”* (Ephesians 4:26-27). This is where self-control is extremely important. Even when we have a right to be angry, we must not allow anger to control us, but we must control it.

AN ENCOURAGING WORD

How have you felt when someone complimented you for anything? Maybe they commented on your new shoes, or appreciated a lesson you gave or thanked you for your smile or words of encouragement? You know how you feel, thus you know how others feel who receive your words of encouragement.

“Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad”
(Proverbs 12:25).

“Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances”
(Proverbs 25:11).

“There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Proverb 12:18)

“And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men” (I Thessalonians 5:14).

No Reason to Believe the Atheist

By C.S. Lewis

If the solar system was brought about by an accidental collision, then the appearance of organic life on this planet was also an accident, and the whole evolution of man was an accident too.

If so, then all our present thoughts are mere accidents – the accidental by-product of the movement of atoms. And this holds for the thoughts of the materialists and astronomers as well as for anyone else’s.

But if their thoughts – i.e., of Materialism and Astronomy – are merely accidental by-products, why should we believe them to be true? I see no reason for believing that one accident should be able to give me a correct account of all the other accidents.

It’s like expecting that the accidental shape taken by the splash when you upset a milk-jug should give you a correct account of how the jug was made and why it was upset.

Firearms and Teaching Children

By Matthew W. Bassford

In 2010 and 2011, I became the father of two extremely inquisitive children. In 2019, I also became the owner of a firearm. Naturally, I gave some thought to how these two areas of my life should interact. Should I keep my gun locked away from my kids and forbid them to have anything to do with it?

I chose a different course. In our household, we have basically two firearm rules. First, our children aren't allowed to touch them at all if an adult isn't present. However, if they would like to see one of my guns, all they have to do is ask, and I will go get it and let them look at it, play with it, dry-fire it, etc. While they do this, I'm around to make sure they're not doing anything foolish and to drill them on the rules of firearm safety ("Rule 1: Always treat a firearm as if it is. . . ?").

I know there are risks associated with gun ownership, but I prefer to train my children on how to deal with those risks rather than shielding them from them. After all, if I don't train them, then they won't know what to do if they encounter a firearm when I'm not around.

Of course, I do not speak with reference to guns. I think firearm ownership is morally neutral, but parents are presented with the shield-or-train in many areas of great moral significance. Sex is one. Philosophical naturalism and the theory of evolution is another. Humanist critiques of the Bible are a third.

Many Christian parents, especially those who homeschool their children, choose the "shield" approach. They don't talk about sex with their kids. Sometimes, they're so afraid of evolution that they flat don't teach them anything about science. Certainly, they don't expose them to the arguments that the Bible is a lie.

Admittedly, the quality of my parenting has yet to be established, but I think that's a mistake. In fact, I think it's more of a mistake to shield children from those things than it is to shield them from firearms. It's entirely possible to go through life without ever touching a gun, but in our society, sex, evolution, and humanism are unavoidable.

We can keep our children in bubble wrap for a time (maybe), but sooner or later, they will encounter these ideas. They will hear about sex from a boyfriend or girlfriend, atheism from Richard Dawkins on TV, and Biblical criticism from Bart Ehrman on YouTube. When that time comes, either we have prepared them for the encounter, or we haven't.

For the well-equipped Christian, I don't think there is anything to fear from that encounter. I've found nothing in any of those ideas to turn me away from God. Instead, problems arise when a child's initial exposure to an idea comes from an opponent of truth. They will assume that there is no Christian rebuttal to these things because no one ever taught them the Christian rebuttal, and they may well lose their souls as a result.

Today's parents, then, need to master the art of the difficult conversation. We need to be our children's guides to the strongest challenges to our faith. We can't keep the devil from bringing them to our children's attention. All we can do is make sure he doesn't get there first.