

How's That Again?

When we take time to look critically at our own use of terms and some of our concepts, it can even become amusing. Commonly used words and expressions are easily absorbed into our usage so that we may not think of their real meaning or consistency. We shall list just a few non-life-threatening ones here in order to illustrate our point and maybe make you more conscious of your vocabulary.

<> One of our often repeated mottoes has been, “We speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where the Bible is silent.” But our very motto includes the word *Bible* which is never used in the writings we have in mind! Maybe you are thinking to yourself that the word *Bible* means *book*, and that where the Book speaks we speak and where the Book is silent we are silent. But nowhere is our compiled New Testament canon mentioned, much less called a book! The accepted writings were not approved and collected into anything like a book until generations after the last writer died. So calling the writings the *Bible* is speaking where inspired men have not spoken!

<> “The Bible only produces Christians only.” In 2,340 consecutive days of broadcasting in New Iberia, Louisiana many years ago, I probably repeated that favored slogan of ours a thousand times. If that contention be true, however, there were no Christians during the first century, for generations passed before there was a compilation of the Bible. Not a word of the New Covenant scriptures had been written when the church began on Pentecost. Peter preached (proclaimed, evangelized) the Gospel which led hearers to believe and become disciples. In their obedience to the Gospel, the Lord made them to constitute the saved group which we call the church. Thus, people became Christians and their congregations began operation without the Bible. Must it be different today?

<> We all know that Jesus was a carpenter, don't we? He worked in his father's carpenter shop, we learned from childhood. But where does the Bible say a word about that? According to Vine, Joseph was a *tekton* – meaning “any craftsman, but especially a worker in wood, a carpenter” (Matt. 13:55; Mk 6:3). If Jesus was a *tekton*, that could mean that he made jewelry, pottery, furniture, or houses. Sons often followed the trade of the father, but not always.

<> The word *cross*, meaning a beam of wood with a crossbeam, is not found in the New Testament writings. The word is always translated from the Greek *stauros* which means an upright pale or stake.

<> No doubt, many times you have heard that Mary Magdalene was a former prostitute. She was one among “some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out...” (Luke 8:2). Her previous condition was a far cry from prostitution. Why would people want to imply such a thing since there is not a shred of evidence in the scriptures to support it?

<> Through the years and until this day, people talk about Jesus sweating blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. The text says, “And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:44). This does not identify his sweat as blood, but it was *like blood* in some way. How was it like blood? Not in its nature, but in the manner of its falling. It was falling from his body to

the ground profusely in similar manner that a mutilated person would bleed. We need not attach some mystical meaning to the words.

◊ In interpreting prophecy, sometimes a *day* means *a thousand years* and visa-versa. Have you not heard that? In commenting on God keeping his word, Peter said, “But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8.). He did not say it IS but IS AS. That is a comparison, not a literal meaning. God will keep his word whether a day or a thousand years pass before he does it.

◊ For some time I have recognized that those *mansions* mentioned in John 14:2 are not heavenly palaces awaiting each of the redeemed. I had not, however, given it such study as John Bray has done. Thinking you may like to consider a new viewpoint, I am printing his article for your consideration. If you do not agree, that is all right. We are not imposing an opinion on you for I would be at fault in doing so. A correct understanding of this subject is not essential to your spiritual welfare. So check John’s piece out with no fear. []

◊ **Salt - preservative**

◊ The “day” the Lord comes. Day of resurrection. April 29- 28.

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