

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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"I KNOW I SHOULD"

By William Beasley

Old Charlie was a nice guy. He was friendly and seemed genuinely glad to have someone visit him. During the visits the conversation often turned to things spiritual. It was not at all unusual to remind Charlie of his spiritual condition. Perhaps speaking of what used to be (i.e., when he was regular in attendance, leading prayers, waiting on the table, etc.), and reminding him of his urgent need to return to the Savior. "You know, Charlie, you need to be worshiping with the saints on Lord's day" (Hebrews 10:23-30). His response, almost invariably, was "I know I should." There was no anger or resentment at being rebuked, but just the softly spoken four word response, "I know I should."

When other brethren, many different people called Charlie "My old friend," urged on

by reading Galatians 6:1 (*"Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*) spoke with him the result was the same, "I know I should." Even when the admonition got a bit pointed, and the voice was a bit louder (perhaps from nervousness) than usual Charlie's response was the same, "I know I should."

Charlie was found on his front porch, the victim of a heart-attack. Charlie was certainly not young, but, then, he really wasn't old either. He, like so many others, could be described as "middle aged." But, sadly, death does not play by the rules we would like to apply. Each time a youngster dies we are shocked. We shouldn't be, but we are. In fact, we are even shocked when others, like Charlie, are suddenly with us no more.

Looking at his corpse many thoughts raced through the mind. His face looks about

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the same, but somehow the suit seems almost out of place. Bib-overalls would have seemed more natural. Over and over it seemed that one could hear again, "I know I should." "I know I should," "I know I should." If we could look beyond the curtain of death, I am sure that Charlie, like the *"rich man"* (Luke 16:19-31), would be interested in persuading others to put God first. A taste of the *"sorer punishment"* (Hebrews 10:29) would make rabid evangelists of us all. Now, if Charlie could speak, I believe we would hear him, with the agony of torments (Luke 16:23) in his voice, say "You know you should." Any resemblance to men or women who are still living away from Jesus is purely intentional. **"You know you should."**

A dusty Bible leads to a dirty life.

BAPTISM WITHOUT CONSENT

By Frank Richey

In Louis Cochran's classic restoration novel, *Raccoon John Smith*, Cochran relates a story about Smith as he was riding past a Methodist

camp meeting one day. Smith observed a rebellious infant being sprinkled. The baby squirmed and resisted, but to no avail. The infant was baptized according to the Methodist Discipline. Cochran relates that Smith dismounted his horse and grabbed the Methodist preacher by the arm and attempted to lead him toward the creek a few yards away.

"What are you trying to do, Brother Smith," the young preacher protested. "Are you out of your mind?"

"What am I trying to do?" John affected deep surprise. "Why, sir, I am going to baptize you by immersion into the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his commandment." "But I have no desire for such baptism. I know of you; you are called 'the Dipper.' But you are not going to dip me, I'm a Methodist; let me go!" John tightened his hold on the man's arm while the crowd watched, some in apprehension, others in amusement. "That is a scoffer's blasphemy of a holy ordinance," he said sternly. "Are you a believer?" "Of course I'm a believer," the preacher said indignantly. "But I'm not willing to be immersed. It will do no good

for you to baptize me against my will. It would be wrong!" "I don't understand," John said. Only a few minutes ago you baptized a helpless baby against its will, although it screamed and kicked. Did you get its consent first: "Come along, sir, we will have no more of this foolishness."

The crowd broke into open laughter, and John gave the young preacher a quick pull toward the creek, and then as suddenly released him. He waved to the people for silence.

"Brethren and friends, I shall be in the neighborhood for a little while visiting among you; let me know if this poor, misguided man ever again baptizes another without his consent. For you have heard him say that it would do no good, that it would be wrong.

Cochran writes that Smith spoke to the crowd for almost an hour and the people listened closely. He pointed out the gospel plan of salvation. When John Smith extended the invitation, seven young people, all from Methodist families, responded, requesting baptism by immersion. He led them to the creek and baptized them.

As he stepped back on the bank, the mother of one of

those baptized, confronted him. "You are a demon," she cried. "When you led my innocent young daughter into that water, you led her that much further toward hell."

Raccoon John was much shocked and surprised by the statement; but then replied, "My good sister," he said quietly, "When you read your Bible more and your Methodist disciple less, you will learn that people do not go to that place by water."

Cochran says in his account of this incident that Smith used the following passage in his sermon: "**Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even**

so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). (Raccoon John Smith, pp, 324-325).

**How Do I Know the
Bible Is the
Word of God?**

By Howell Ferguson

Its wonderful unity convinced me. The Bible is not really one book; it is 66 books. There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New. They were written over a period of about 1500 years by at least 40 different authors, and in at least three different languages. They were written by people of all walks of life. Some were poets. Some were shepherds. Some were kings. Some were herdsmen. Some were farmers. Some were prophets. Some were preachers. And some were priests. In many instances the one had not read what the other had written. Yet when you gather these materials together, they don't read like 66 books. They read like one book. How is this possible? God planned His Book from the beginning. "**Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit**" (2 Peter 1:21).

"Brotherly love is a principle that controls action, rather than a sentiment that would withhold truth from a brother"

(F. B. Srygley).

We have heard of many people who did too little for God; but have you ever heard of anyone who did too much?

Selected Thought
