



PARACHUTIST--Bill Clendenning of Raeford lands in the target area during the Accuracy event at the United States National Parachuting Championships, June 26-July 10 in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The goal is to touch the Mini-Frisbee -- four inches in diameter -- in the center of a 50-meter pea-gravel circle. A good parachutist can land consistently within centimeters of dead center. Points are awarded not only for accuracy, but also for style and overall proficiency in handling a parachute upon exiting the aircraft towards a safe landing. This 20th annual event is sponsored by the United States Parachute Association.

Sunday School

Remember the old saying, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating?"

Well, for all of its simplicity, the saying is really a rather profound truth in life. The value or integrity of something is often best and most truly reflected in its performance. We may admire a beautiful automobile as it sits in the car dealer's showroom, but if, after we have purchased it, it doesn't run very well, it will not be worth nearly what we had assumed. We may drool over a certain item on the restaurant's menu, but if when the waiter brings it, it doesn't taste all that pleasing, the item will be a great disappointment. We may look forward eagerly to a play that is "simply great," but if, when we see it, we are not entertained or deeply moved, it will mean little to us.

The test of the value of the pudding -- like so many other things in life -- is our own tasting of it and satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Doesn't this apply to religion as well? We may argue about the relative merits of this belief or that, this church or another, but argumentation is not the real test of any religion. The real testing is to be found in the experience of that religious conviction in terms of what it can produce in our lives.

In the early church there seemed to be a lot of concern over "true belief." Some people were deeply concerned over the question of how they could determine when they were receiving essential Christian teaching and when they were receiving something which was contrary to established Christian faith. People were deeply concerned that they not slip unwittingly into any kind of error.

Many people today are no less concerned about finding the "right" beliefs, making certain that they are not beguiled into following the "wrong" preacher or teacher. To compound our confusion, there are a great multitude of religious groups who weave a spell of uncertainty and anxious suspicion by their constant references to "heresy" and "unbelief" and the various means whereby suspicious beliefs and practices can be tested.

Yet, what is the one sure test? It is not a matter of argument or proof - texting or even doctrinal standards. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 16:7), and the writer of I John puts it into these words ... he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God" (I John 4:8). Thus, the real test of any religious idea and practice is not argument, or ecclesiastical rules and regulationsit is LOVE, the kind of love so beautifully illustrated in Jesus Christ. That alone is the "proof" of our ecclesiastical and theological puddings!



Read I Corinthians 3:1-11

"There can be no other foundation beyond that which is already laid; I mean Jesus Christ himself." (I Corinthians 3:11, NEB)

Strolling along a street in ancient Hebron in southern Israel, we saw a Greek inscription on a tablet on an old wall -- "Of Christ the King, I, His blameless priest, Obodianus, of the gentle heart, have embellished with mosaics the house, its floor and entry by the hands of my own disciples."

So read the foundation stone of a house - church truly laid in the infant years of Christianity.

The egotism of Obodianus can perhaps be overlooked because of his missionary zeal. Hebron became the see of a Latin bishop in the year 1168, though the town was captured some years later by Saladin and remained a Moslem center for 800 years.

That stone plaque yet bears witness to the strength and durability of the Cornerstone on which the priest's faith had rested.

Let never fail to take heart even though our immediate witness for Christ bears little fruit and results seem only of a temporary nature. The smallest thing we do for Jesus' sake is woven into the eternal fabric of the kingdom, whose builder and maker is God.

PRAYER: Lord, we do believe that in Your strength and by Your grace our every labor for You and the kingdom will succeed. Amen, and again, amen.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Christ is our cornerstone, and He remains forever.

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--Arthur Bottrell (Daw Park, South Australia)

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Wildlife Afield

By Jim Dean N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

The American crow is one of nature's heroic villains, widely admired and perhaps equally despised. Some think of the crow as a swashbuckling rogue -- the Errol Flynn of birdland. To others, he may be more nearly the Clyde Barrow of the airways.

If you're a hunter or an amateur naturalist, no doubt you have a high respect for the crow and his native intelligence, but if you're a farmer trying to get a corn crop off the ground, the crow's resourcefulness may not be so greatly appreciated.

What happens is that when the corn is first planted, crows may gather and eat some kernels before they have sprouted. Some farmers, in an effort to discourage this practice, have scattered poisoned corn in the corners of fields. The crows eat the scattered corn and die.

It would be bad enough if only the crows were killed (they're now classified as gamebirds), but there are biologists who believe that other seed-eating wildlife species may also be poisoned unintentionally. Besides, the use of many poisons is illegal, not to mention hazardous to humans.

"It's hard to say how big or widespread the crow and wildlife poisoning problem is, but it may be significant," says Charles Hill, a game biologist and management supervisor for the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. "I don't know of specific studies, but such species as bobwhite quail, doves, grouse and turkeys are all likely to be accidental targets. Some animals, like raccoons and squirrels, may also be affected."

Charlie recently met a farmer

(who also hunts) who seems to have found a practical solution to the problem.

"This fellow is a highly successful farmer," says Charlie. "One of his neighbors apparently recently used corn treated with a highly toxic poison to kill crows. It isn't known for certain whether wildlife populations might have gotten into it, but there have been no wild turkey tracks in this field since the poisoned corn was put out. Before that turkey tracks were common."

"The concerned farmer says that the use of poisoned corn is unnecessary," explains Charlie. "Instead, he recommends that farmers merely scatter a rather small amount (a quarter or half bushel) of untreated corn in the edge of the field."

"This farmer has been doing this for some time, and he says that the scattered corn attracts the crows and keeps them out of the crop without actually doing them any harm," adds Charlie. "In fact, he says that it does not require any more untreated corn than poisoned corn, yet it accomplishes the same purpose. Therefore, it's not only effective, but it's less expensive."

"I know that this tactic has worked well for him," says Charlie. "There are many situations where this would be highly feasible for attracting crows, while at the same time not endangering valuable wildlife species."

Of course, it's already too late to use this tactic this spring since most corn crops are already belt high and still climbing. But next spring, if crows are a problem, give it a try. It was developed by a successful farmer, so it should work. Also, it won't harm your quail, doves and turkeys.

Accent On Agriculture

The 200th birthday of our country is a time of looking backward and taking stock. We can be justifiably proud of our heritage, rich in the tradition of freedom and high ideals.

However, our bicentennial anniversary should mean much more than a glance backward. It means drawing from the past to strengthen the present and future. It means an examination of what remains true for us. We look to the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence because they are contemporary -- because they speak truths to us today. What we have been celebrating this year is that they are alive. And, their truths -- those noble principles and ideals -- must be rediscovered by each generation, since in a democracy each new generation is a new people.

Bookmobile Schedule

Dundarrach, July 19 -- Eva Conoly, Myrtle Sappenfield, Mrs. G.C. Lytle, Ruby Saunders, Ina Mae Womack, Ophelia Womack, Mary Thompson, Ethel Hayes, Betty Livingston, Joan Balfour, Lawanna Hayes, Mrs. N.H.G. Balfour, Peggy Currie, Helen Locklear.

Blue Springs & Antioch, July 21 -- Mrs. Dora Leslie, Shirley Carson, Mamie Webb, Mrs. J.M. Pendergrass, Lottie Walters, Cassie Walters, Hazel Hendrix, Mrs. Annie B. Autry, Jean Currie, Mrs. Irene Currie, Gladys Niven, Bonnie McLaughlin, Pat McAnulty.

Change will always occur and, as our past has shown, it can be for better or for worse. The important thing is our successful adaptation to change. And, the secret to this is the proper determination of what to keep and what to discard.

The basic structure of our government and our traditions of freedom, however, must endure. Therefore, as we begin our third century we should not only cherish our great heritage but we must keep alive those great principles that will still be just as contemporary at our tricentennial observance.