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*"...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind."* Matthew 13:47

**Number 2**

**OH, BUOY!**—The title of this article has to do with an expression used by many people and has no reference to a physical "buoy," which is a floating object anchored in the water for safe navigation upon entering or leaving harbors and other bodies of water. (Titles like this are chosen because this periodical is given to the use of nautical terms illustrating practical truths.)

Oh, buoy (boy)! To give a definition will send us in many directions. When the user voices these words it could be meant to express delight (like receiving a letter from one of our readers saying they enjoyed the publication). It could also mean that someone was overwhelmed (like receiving a thousand letters from readers...oh, buoy!). It also has a connotation that something seen or heard is questionable or exaggerated.

This is the area on which I choose to comment. I have seen this in stories told me by my children and grandchildren (I will leave the politicians alone). You cannot imagine the length someone would go to explain a poor decision, mess made, or damage incurred. I have stood in the room of a child and have had them explain to me how it got so messed up. Explanations ranged from neighborhood kids, siblings, Martians, earthquakes, the cat, the dog...oh, buoy! What tales I have heard!

The same has been observed in malls, department stores, television viewing, etc. Salesmen make the most of their products by leading you to believe the product will last forever, never fail, produce unrealistic results, and all at an unbelievable price--\$19.95! You watch and see many dive for the goods, as you think, "Oh, buoy! Look at the suckers!"

What is sad is that the expressions can well be used in "religious circles" (in a general sense) with the printed page and electronic media. I am appalled at the statements of some so-called believers who handle the Bible so recklessly. They speak of salvation as something we earn. Oh, buoy! Nothing is clearer in the Bible than the work of Christ. What a blessing to know He paid it all! Salvation is a work of God, done through Christ, and it is a finished work ("*...It is finished...*" John 19:30). To add anything of human instrumentality to salvation's plan is to bring out a big "oh, buoy"!

With the world becoming more ecumenical by the day, you hear things that bring out that expression daily. Islam, as Christianity, is a peaceful religion (oh, buoy). Catholics and Protestants are together working to get to the same place (oh, buoy). The old hymns do not move us; we need contemporary music to keep our kids in church (oh, buoy). The old denominational names must be removed (and they are giving way to "generic" church names) to keep us together (oh, buoy). Doctrine divides; love unifies

(oh, buoy). Is there no end? There is no depth to the things of God anymore, and an "anything goes" theology has replaced truth. This writer awaits soon the coming of Christ. "*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*" (Hebrews 10:37). My "oh, buoys" stemming from inaccurate, exaggerated, lying references to God and His Word will give way to an "oh, buoy" of delight over seeing the Saviour, and having Him remove me from this planet to my heavenly home. How about it? Are you ready? The "oh, buoy" of doubt will give way to the "oh, buoy" of delight! --AWM 2002

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**LIVING IN BON SECOUR**—In Genesis 49 we have Jacob's last words. These words have to do with prophecy concerning his sons. In verse 13 Jacob says, "*Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.*" Zebulun's portion of Palestine was from the Sea of Galilee west to the Mediterranean, then to Mt. Carmel on the north through all the port cities of Phoenicia to Zidon. He shall be for a haven of ships—"safe harbor," so to speak. What a necessity for the shipping industry of Zebulun's day!

Harbors are a necessary part of our world, and a very exciting place to live. I live in the beautiful port of Bon Secour, a small harbor in south Alabama. Do you know that salvation is like finding a harbor in a storm? Those of us who have found the safe harbor can truly sing the lyrics of a favorite old hymn, "I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest...". No more wild seas for me! I am the most privileged of men on earth, to live right in a beautiful harbor physically and to have a saved, secure soul in God's harbor. Spiritually I am of Zebulun stock.

For what is a harbor used? First it is a place for building ships. Within a 300-mile range of this writer are some of the largest shipyards in the world, and every one is in a harbor. What about your life? Where were you built? Jesus Christ is God's harbor of salvation. Jesus is described in the Bible as the "wise master builder". He was in such a trade as a child in Joseph's carpenter shop. For those who know Him as personal Saviour, it is said of them in 1 Corinthians 3:9, "*...ye are God's building,*" and in Colossians 2:7, "*Rooted and built up in him...*". If God doesn't build you, you are headed for a sinking experience.

Harbors are also a place of safety. Many times I left the turbulent waters of the Gulf of Mexico under storm-covered skies and ran for a harbored area that provided safety. As my vessel would rock back and forth, up and down amidst the huge waves, what a blessing it was to find smooth waters in which to anchor and rest! The same is true with Jesus Christ. He provides not only the best of materials for good building, but after you are built by the great designer, He provides eternal safety no matter what storm in

life is encountered. As Solomon puts it so well in Proverbs 29:25, “...whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”

Zebulun would be a place of building, a place of safety, and also a place of repair. The big ships that run the oceans of the world often have to be dry-docked. Problems with the hull, rudder, propeller, and shaft have to be corrected and given constant care. Antifouling paint must be applied to ward off the barnacles that bring unwanted weight. Where is this done? It is done in the harbor. It is so with God’s children; we are brought to Christ frequently for repair. The enemy, even though he cannot damage or sink us eternally, tries to stop our effectiveness by bringing on stormy troubles, but in God’s harbor I find a place to be refurbished and get some mending for weak areas in my life.

Finally the harbor is also a place to come ashore and unload. I’ve seen ships come in loaded with fruit, wood, meat, cars, metal, and seafood. All of these have to have a harbor—a place to unload their cargo.

I am glad to be able to live in Bon Secour. It is a small harbor, but a good place to be built and repaired, a safe place, a place to call “home”. Moreover I have a heavenly “Bon Secour” (French for “safe harbor”) that I trust will call me soon. M. Erickson penned it this way:

“Think of stepping on shore and finding it Heaven,  
Of taking hold of a hand and finding it God’s hand,  
Of breathing new air and finding it celestial air,  
Of passing from storm and tempest to an unbroken  
calm,

Of waking up in Heaven and finding it HOME!”

Do you have a Bon Secour? --AWM

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**THE ATHLETIC MANIA**—It is a sad day for education when the college hero is the football star instead of the valedictorian. If the present athletic mania keeps up, my definition of a university as a football stadium with a college annex will be quite correct. (Note: this was written in 1927.)

William Allen White is certainly justified in saying that the football tail is wagging the college dog, and Roger Babson has a right to deplore “big business athletics”.

Bricks and brawn are becoming more important than brains. When a football coach can draw a bigger salary than a professor, when the center of interest is the gridiron instead of the classroom, can you wonder that a lopsided young generation is marching out of our colleges into life with a distorted and unbalanced standard of values? Can you wonder that the scale of life’s interests is so miserably twisted and upset today, when the heaven of the average student is the athletic field and the star athlete is his god? When it is more desirable to be a fullback than it is to know the spiritual treasures of literature and history, can you expect anything but a return of the philosophy of the beast? When the physical is so exalted above the spiritual that a pigskin artist can draw more spectators than twenty preachers can draw listeners, the fault is not entirely with the preachers. When a young man can draw a larger salary and crash into the limelight far more quickly by having a big body than

by having a big brain, don’t be surprised if he gives up greatness for gridirons. One sympathizes with the father who said that he spent thousands of dollars on his boy’s education and got only a quarterback.

When you consider the mob that turns out to any sort of physical combat and listen to the Comanche yell of several thousand fans, you can’t help reminding yourself that we are still only a bunch of savages with a thin veneer of civilization. I am no pessimist but whenever I see a modern stadium crowded with frenzied athletic fanatics, my thoughts drift back to the amphitheatres of Rome in the days of her waning glory. And I wonder whether the experience of bloody centuries has taught us anything after all. Below the few surface and superficial changes there is little difference between modern America and decadent Rome.

No nation can last long when it stops praying and takes up playing. Of course, we ought to mix them but we don’t. There has never yet been a nation that was able to retain in its days of prosperity the discipline and hardihood of its early adversities. America shows no signs of being an exception.

At first thought it might seem that the discipline of athletics would offset the growing softness of America. It does the opposite, for it takes only a tiny percentage of our manhood and makes athletic specialists of them in order to entertain the sluggish multitudes who are too lazy to play and prefer to pay others to play for them. When athletics is commercialized to amuse a stupefied generation of mushy dyspeptics, don’t expect it to harden them. America is in the grandstand, getting softer all the time.

Modern athletics has succumbed to the same commercializing spirit that threatens every phase of our civilization. God save us when America is dominated by real estate and athletic promoters!

--Vance Havner

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**FISHY QUESTION**—Last edition asked which month people slept less, and why. The answer is February because there are fewer days. For this edition name the verse that gives a Biblical reason we like to smell good.

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#### FISHY HUMOR

Things that kids say to God...

...Who draws the lines around the countries?

...I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is that okay?

...Did you mean for the giraffe to look like that or was it an accident?

...Thank you for my baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.

...I think about you sometimes, even when I’m not praying.

...Please send me a pony; I never asked for anything before; you can look it up.

...I didn’t think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset on Tuesday.

...I bet it is hard for you to love all the people in the world; I can never do it with just the four in my family.

...If you watch me Sunday, I’ll show you my new shoes.