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CHRIST'S LAST WORDS

I. His last words—on the cross—words of grace.

On the cross Jesus said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46.) Long before this time David, Christ's forefather, had said the same thing. (Ps. 22:1.) These words indicate the humanity of Christ, and yet at the same time show his willingness to sacrifice himself in behalf of mankind. He was willing even to be forsaken by the Father in order that he might fulfill God's eternal purpose to save man.

On the cross Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) Here we see his words of grace in that he was praying for those who were responsible for his suffering on the cross.

On the cross Jesus said to one of the thieves, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43.) It is believed by some that Christ was telling the thief that he was saved that day, and that consequently the thief serves as an example of conversion now. Since nothing is said about the thief being baptized, therefore baptism—according to the argument—is not essential to salvation. Even if what Christ said to the thief meant that he was saved, he would not be an example of conversion for us today. He lived before the death of Christ, when Christ was here and could speak to him directly. We live after the death of Christ, and under his last will and testament, in which he has made baptism essential to salvation. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.)

On the cross Jesus said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46.) Jesus has come from the Father, and having accomplished the work that God gave him to do, he was ready to return to be with the Father again. Daniel had prophesied that he would return to the "Ancient of days." (Dan. 7:13.)

On the cross Jesus said to his mother, "Mother, behold thy son." (John 19:26.) In saying this Jesus was entrusting the care of his mother to John, and from that hour John took her into his home.

On the cross Jesus said, "I thirst," and "It is finished." (John 19:28, 30.) These words again show his humanity and at the same time his great love for man, and his willingness even to die in order to finish and accomplish God's purpose to save man from sin and its terrible consequences. The words spoken on the cross were indeed words of grace.

But Christ's last words on the cross were not really his last words.

II. Christ's last words—before his ascension—words of grace.

Last words are very important. Just before a loved one dies, while still conscious, he speaks to us. Of all that he could say he chooses his last message. We cannot remember many things that he might have said in life, but we cannot forget those last words.

After Jesus arose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples several times, and before

his ascension and return to be with the Father, he delivered his last words on earth to his disciples. Since they are his last, these words must indeed be important. Of all that he could have said he chose to say these particular words to his disciples. These last words are so important that they have been recorded by three of the gospel writers. Just before Jesus left his faithful disciples on the earth he said to them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:18-20.) Luke recorded the last words of Christ: "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46,47.) Mark also has given his record of Christ's last words: "GO ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16.)

These are indeed words of grace, for they show God's provision for man's salvation and set forth the simple conditions that man must meet in order to be saved. It is evident from the last words of Christ, spoken with all authority and power in heaven and on earth, that man must hear the gospel, that he must believe, that he must repent, and that he must be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in order to be saved. And having been baptized he must observe all the commandments that Christ has given to direct his disciples in loyal service and proper conduct. These last words of Christ apply to us today. They were spoken after the death of Christ on the cross, and they will be in effect "even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) Preaching under the authority of these last words of Christ, Peter on the day of Pentecost, told people, who were pricked in their hearts by his preaching of the gospel and who believed what he said concerning their guilt, to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins." (Acts 2:38.)

Though these words of Christ apply to us today, and tell us plainly what we must do to be saved, they are not really the last words of Christ.

III. Christ's last words—after his ascension—words of warning.

In the very last part of God's revelation to man Christ has spoken certain words of warning. In Revelation 22:7 he has said, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." In Revelation 22:12 he warns, "And, behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." In Revelation 22: 16, again he warns, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify (tell, warn) unto you these things in the churches." In Revelation 22:20 he says, "Surely I come quickly." Since his coming will be quick and unexpected, as a thief in the night, will you be ready and prepared? Do you believe on him as did Peter, that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God? (Matt. 16:18.) Have you repented and been baptized for the remission of your sins? Are you living in humble obedience to the commands which he has given to guide and govern his disciples?

Paul has described the coming of Christ: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:16-18.) To the faithful the

coming of Christ will be a glorious and welcome event. But to the unprepared and disobedient it will be a different story. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 Paul tells what the coming of Christ will mean to them. He will come "with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

But Christ's words of warning recorded in the last chapter of Revelation are not really his last words.

IV. The last words of Christ—at the judgment—words of justice.

When the day of judgment comes, Christ as the great judge will then speak. His words then will not be words of tender mercy and grace. To us he is now speaking those in the gospel and in his great commission. (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46,47; Mark 16:15, 16.) His words then in that great day must be words of justice. To some he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 25:34.) To others he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41.)

In that day of justice, what will be the words of Christ to you?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?

Eugene Crawley

Often today when we question the practice of others in religion, they ask, "Well, what's wrong with it?" or possibly say, "Just show me where the Bible says not do it." This is also becoming prevalent with some of our brethren who engage in unauthorized practices. If they are asked for authority for doing it, rather than gladly accepting the challenge as was done so many years, they resort to this same thing. Knowing that they cannot show by the inspired Scriptures where such is justified, they seek to focus attention on something else, throw reflection on someone, or place the burden of proof on another. Such is not obeying the instruction of Peter to "... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15), nor is it speaking as the oracles of God. (1 Pet. 4:11.)

Such seem to think that they are justified in their practices if they cannot be shown in so many words that the Bible says, "Do not do it." The silence of the Scriptures must be respected; to fail to do so is to tread on dangerous ground. If the word of God does not authorize a thing, God does not approve it, and neither do those who would faithfully follow Him. Since His word furnishes us unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16,17), and He hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), that not included cannot be done with Divine approval. According to such an argument Noah could have said, "I can use some pine wood in the ark, for after all He did not say, "Do not use pine wood." In commanding him to use gopher wood, He did say in principle, and by the law of exclusion, not to use any other.

In reality, we're not obligated to show where a thing is wrong. Those who would teach and practice it are bound, however, to show that such is right. The fact that the Bible is silent on a thing shows that God does not authorize it, nor does it give license to do as one pleases. He doesn't have to say, "Thou shalt not do such and such" for it to be wrong to engage in it. The Bible is as silent as can be on the use of cake and ice cream in the Lord's Supper. We are not obligated to show where the Bible condemns it as such. It is the obligation of the one who would use it to show where it is approved. But after all, the fact that God did not include such is proof of His disapproval. What's wrong with it? It just is not authorized! And this can be said of a number of things being practiced today.

Really, the question is not, "What's wrong with it?" but rather, "What's right with it? Is it authorized in the word of God?" What about that which you practice??

"A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH"

Earl Kimbrough

The Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa. 119:105.) He also said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (v. 130.) Thus, the humblest servant of God may understand things which the learned of the world may not. The word of God gives light that transcends time, space and matter.

1. The word of God gives light regarding the past. It shows man his origin and nature and the reason for his existence. He came into being by the creative power of Almighty God. (Gen. 2:7.) He consists of both body and soul. (Matt, 10:28.) He was made in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26.) Man was created to honor and glorify his Creator. (Isa. 43:7; Rev. 4:11.) His whole duty is to fear God and keep His commandments. (Eccl. 12:13.) No other book gives such knowledge of man. No scientist can understand these things by science, nor can a philosopher understand them by his philosophy. The Bible alone gives such marvelous light.

2. The word of God gives light for the present. All that man needs to direct his moral and spiritual life is abundantly supplied in the Scriptures. If man's duty is to fear God and keep His commandments, His word shows what this means and how it is done. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.)

3. The word of God gives light of the future. It shows that the grave is not the goal of life. There is far more to the purpose of man than merely living to die. There is within man a soul that cries out for immortality, and there is an eternity that answers man's cry. Beyond the material realm, with its sorrow and pain, "there is a land that is fairer than day." There is a land where those that love the Lord and faithfully serve Him here will enjoy His bliss through an endless eternity. (Rom. 2:8-12.) But there is also a hell that awaits those who deny their purpose and reject God's word as their guide. (Matt. 25:41; Jno. 12:48.)

Because of God's word we need not wander in doubt. We know who we are for we know how we came to be. We know why we are here, for God did not hide His purpose from us. We know what lies beyond the grave, for God has lifted the curtain. With a word so grand, with light so clear, how can we fail to live with it daily?

MAKING EVERY MINUTE COUNT

Earl Kimbrough

W. E. Garrison, the noted Restoration historian who passed away early in 1969, was a prolific writer. During the process of producing some literary work in the early 1930's, a student asked how the project was progressing. In reply Garrison said, "Often when I get home from the campus and ask Mrs. Garrison how long it will be before dinner was to be ready, if she indicated there would be as much as twenty minutes available, I would get to work on one paragraph in the manuscript. You might be surprised," he added, "how many twenty-minute or half-hour periods there are in a day between assignments that can be used profitably."

Garrison had learned the secret of why some people "find time" to do so many things that others "don't have the time" to do. No matter how busy we are, there are idle minutes in every day that most of us could use profitably in one way or another. Yet, many of us waste these minutes by keeping them idle. Why not keep a Bible, a tract, a gospel paper, or a Bible lesson handy for those "idle minutes" in your schedule? To paraphrase Garrison, "You might be surprised how many extra minutes there are amid the activities of the day that can be profitably used to improve your understanding of God's will." Look for them and use them!

Nicodemus

Curtis E. Flatt

There was a ruler of the Jews who was also a disciple of Jesus. His name was Nicodemus. He was one of the minor characters of the New Testament. Many will likely hardly recall having heard his name. He made but three brief appearances in God's revelation, but in each of these appearances he touched three real essentials in being what one ought to be.

Nicodemus Came to Jesus

In John 3:1-5, we find Nicodemus coming to Jesus. Many came to Jesus during his personal ministry, but many who came to him were prompted by the wrong motive. They wanted to see him perform a miracle or they wanted to be fed or they wanted to receive some personal gain. Nicodemus, however, appears to have had the purest of motives. He came to Jesus with an interest in spiritual things which brought forth that profitable teaching in regard to the new birth.

Like Nicodemus, men today must come to Jesus to be pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Jesus wants men to come. He invites: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28.) That invitation implies that men need to come to Jesus. It also implies that men can come to Jesus. It tells that Jesus wants men to come to him. Moreover, it implies that it is up to men to decide whether or not they will come to Jesus. Nicodemus wanted to come. He could come. He did come. Jesus is the savior, the redeemer, and the hope that man has in the hereafter. He is the one in whom all spiritual blessings are to be had. (Eph. 1:3.) To such a one, men can come. We have even been told to come to him. From John 6:44,45, we learn that, to come to Jesus, men must hear and learn that which God wants them to know. Whatever God has said is that which we must follow to reach him. Realizing this, one should want to rush to do what God says to do to get into Christ. God's message in regard to this is that one must hear his words, must believe them, must repent of his sins, must confess his faith in Christ as God's son, and then must be baptized for the remission of sins to get into Christ. (Romans 6:1-4; Gal. 3:26,27.) Nicodemus came to Jesus in the way that was available to him. You can't come as Nicodemus did, but have you come to him in the way that is available to you?

Nicodemus Spoke in Behalf of Jesus

In John 7:45-51, when the Pharisees and chief priests were trying to take Jesus, a ruler of the Jews by the name of Nicodemus, (he that came to Jesus by night,) stood up and spoke in behalf of Jesus. Even in that dangerous position he said: "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" As one reflects upon that scene, he cannot but be impressed with the fact that it took great appreciation for Jesus and great courage to speak in behalf of him that day.

In this we find another essential to being on the Lord's side. Once one comes to Jesus, he becomes obligated to speak of him—to proclaim him. Let us read of the early Christians in this regard. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to

none but the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11:19-21.) The apostle Paul gives us the same marching orders. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2.) Truly, men must speak of Jesus to be pleasing in the sight of God. Minor character, though he was, Nicodemus shows us the way, and so few of us see the importance of it.

Nicodemus Did Service for Jesus

Subject to great risk, no doubt, when Jesus was crucified, Nicodemus was one of the two who came and asked for the body of Jesus, wound it in linen clothes with the spices they had brought, and buried it in a new sepulcher. He performed a real service for Jesus. How can anyone fail to appreciate Nicodemus and the service which he rendered?

Of course, none of us can render the same service for Jesus. So many probably would not do so if they had the opportunity, especially in the face of danger. However, any of us can do far greater service for him. He expects us to do so. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16:24.) In religion, whatever we do, we are to do it in the name of the Lord (by his authority), and we are to do it heartily as unto the Lord. (Col. 3:17-23.) A word of instruction to show the way, a helping hand in a moment of trouble, a word of encouragement by the way, a morsel of food, a cup of cold water; by these we do service for Jesus. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40.) The songwriter aptly put it like this:

There is room in the kingdom of God, my brother,
For the small things that you can do;
Just a small, kindly deed that may cheer another
Is the work God has planned for you.

Just a cup of cold water in His name given
May the hope in some heart renew;
Do not wait to be told, nor by sorrow driven
To the work God has planned for you.

There's a place in the service of God for workers
Who are loyal to Him and true;
Can't you say to Him now, "I will leave the shirkers,
And the work thou hast planned I'll do."

Nicodemus came to Jesus, and then later spake of and for him, and then finally did service for him. What is your record, dear friend?

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Hiram O. Hutto

Have you heard about the group of Christians in your community that is not at all like the denominations so often encountered? This group, known as the church of Christ, is different in a number of ways. Space permits us to consider only a few of them, and those but briefly.

1. DIFFERENT, in attitude toward the Bible. These Christians believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, complete, authoritative word of God, and that the New Testament is the final expression of that word. This faith is based upon such scriptures as 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:3-4, 21; Rev. 22: 18-19; John 10:35. But, do not all Protestant denominations believe this? There was a time when they did, but now many of them will tell you unhesitatingly that they no longer do. Even those denominations which are known as "Fundamentalists" are guilty of dividing the commandments of Christ into "essential;" and "non-essential" commands. This, in effect, nullifies the authority of the scriptures because it will let every man decide for himself what is essential and what is not. But not these Christians! They believe that man shall live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. " (Matthew 4:4.) Is this what you believe?

2. DIFFERENT, in attitude toward how to become a Christian. Since their faith in the scriptures is such that it will not allow them to divide the commandments of Christ into essential and non-essential commands, this group of Christians insists that because every man has sinned and separated himself from God (Rom. 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2), man's only hope of benefitting from the blood of Christ is to do all that Christ has commanded men to do in order to reap these benefits. This, of course, involves faith in Christ as the Son of God (John 20:30-31; Mark 16:16.) But since the scripture says that our faith avails only when it works by love (Galatians 5:6; James 2:24), they also repented of their sins (Acts 17:30), confessed with their mouth what they believed in their heart (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10), and gladly obeyed the command of Christ to be baptized, i. e., immersed (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2: 12) in water (Acts 8:36) for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22: 16), or to be saved. (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21.) When one has done all these things—and not until then—the Bible reveals that he is saved, a child of God by faith (Gal. 3:27), and a member of the Lord's church. (Cf. Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 1:1-2.) Is this what you did?

3. DIFFERENT, in insisting on being simply a Christian—nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else. Every religious group teaches that a person can believe all the truth, obey every command of God, be a Christian while he lives, and go to heaven when he dies without ever belonging to any denomination whatsoever. Since this is true, this group of Christians sees the unimportance of every denomination and hence have not joined any denomination and are not a part of any denomination, but are simply Christians—nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else? Furthermore, since the Bible reveals that it is wrong and sinful to divide the people of God into different categories and be called by different religious names (1 Cor. 1:10-13), this group is satisfied with the name given in the New Testament, i. e., the name Christian (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16), and pleads for all believers to be one even as Christ prayed. (John 17:20-21.) They are satisfied to be simply members of the Lord's church and just Christians. Can this be dangerous? Can it be anything but safe? Is that what you are; or are you a "Christian plus another name"?

4. DIFFERENT, in attitude toward church worship and work. Since the New Testament commands Christians to assemble together (Hebrews 10:25), these do so; but such does not make them a denomination in any sense of the word. Such is simply the congregation of the Lord's people, the congregation devoted to and belonging to the Lord, or the church that belongs to the Lord, hence, the church of Christ or church of God. (Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16.)

Since these Christians have the confidence in the scriptures already mentioned, they accept the New Testament as the divine, verbally inspired and authoritative blueprint for the church throughout all ages. Whatever acts this blueprint reveals that Christians did when they thus assembled is the pattern for them, and to it they cling tenaciously. Since the New Testament reveals that Christians are to assemble on the first day of the week to break bread, or eat the Lord's supper, give of their money, sing, teach the apostles' doctrine, and pray together (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Acts 2: 42; Eph. 5:19); that is exactly what this group of Christians does. Since the Bible forbids adding anything to what is revealed (Rev. 22:18-19), these Christians do not do anything else in church worship. Is this unreasonable? Can it be anything but right? Is this what you do?

The New Testament also tells that the church is to preach the gospel, edify itself, and care for its needy. (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:16; Acts 6:1-6.) This group is glad to do just that.

5. DIFFERENT, because it has no ecclesiastical or denominational hierarchy. Since this group accepts the New Testament as its blueprint for the church, it is happy to follow the pattern therein given for church organization. The New Testament reveals no ecclesiastical authority higher than the local congregation, except Christ, the head of the church. (Eph. 1:22-23.) The local congregation is to be overseen by elders (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-3) with deacons to serve (Philippians 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-10) and is not governed by any conference, association, synod, pope, or council, but is simply free under God to do the will of Christ. It has no denominational machinery or earthly headquarters but is a free, independent, and autonomous body of Christians. Is the church of which you are a member like this?

This group occupies a unique and enviable position, indeed! It is a position based upon and produced by the infallible word of God. This group does not occupy this position merely as their opinion but because the word of God tells them and all others to do so.

WHY A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

Phillip Danner

I. Jesus Christ established only one church.

A. There is one body.

1. Romans 12:4,5: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

2. 1 Corinthians 12:12: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."

3. Ephesians 4:4: "There is one body ..."

4. Colossians 3:15: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

B. This body is the church.

1. Ephesians 1:22,23: "And hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

2. Colossians 1:18: "And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church ..."

C. In the book of Matthew, chapter 16, Jesus Christ stated that he would build his church; not churches! (Matt. 16:18.)

II. Every saved person will be in this church.

A. Acts 2:47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

B. Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

C. Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ..."

D. Jesus Christ never promised to save any individual of this generation who is not a member of this church.

Question number one: "How does an individual know for certain that this church is not some Protestant denomination or perhaps even the Catholic Church?"

Answer: When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, he wrote during the first century about the church which already existed. Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:4, "There is one body ..." (Emphasis mine.)

1. Paul was not writing about the Lutheran Church because the Lutheran Church was not established until 1530!

2. Paul was not writing about the Baptist Church because the Baptist Church was not established until 1611!

3. Paul was not writing about the Presbyterian Church because the Presbyterian Church was not established until 1684!

4. Paul was not writing about the Methodist Church because the Methodist Church was not established until 1739!

5. Paul was not writing about the Episcopal Church because the Episcopal Church was not established until 1789!

6. Paul was not writing about the Mormon Church because the Mormon Church was not established until 1830!

7. Paul was not writing about the Seventh Day Adventist Church because the Seventh Day Adventist Church was not established until 1831!

8. Paul was not writing about the Christian Scientist Church because the Christian Scientist Church was not established until 1879!

Today, there are well over 300 Protestant denominations. Certainly not one person would believe that Jesus Christ established them all? Not one Protestant denomination was established until the 16th century!

The apostle Paul could not have written about the Catholic Church because the Catholic Church was not established until the year 606 A. D.

Paul could not have written about denominational churches which exist today because denominational churches do not practice everything and teach everything that churches in the New Testament did!

Question number two: "How does a person know for certain that the church which Paul wrote about has always been in existence and is in existence today?"

Answer: Daniel, the prophet of God, wrote in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ would establish his church and that it would never be destroyed! (Daniel 2:44; 7:14.) The apostle Paul wrote that the church would give Christ glory throughout all ages. (Eph. 3:21.)

Question number three: "How can a person know that the church which Paul wrote about is the church of Christ?"

Answer:

1. Churches of Christ wear the same name which churches in New Testament days wore. (Romans 16:16.)

2. Churches of Christ offer the same worship to God which churches in the New Testament offered to God.

A. Prayer is offered to God. (1 Thessalonians 5:17,18.)

B. Preaching occupies a main part of the worship service. (Acts 20:7.)

C. Members give as they have been prospered. (1 Corinthians 16:2.)

D. Churches of Christ have the Lord's supper every Sunday. (Acts 20:7.)

E. Churches of Christ have singing without the use of instrumental music. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.)

3. Churches of Christ perform the same work which churches in the New Testament performed.

A. They maintain worship. (Acts 20:7.)

B. They preach the word of God by supporting evangelists. (2 Cor. 11:8.)

C. They aid members of the church who are poor. (2 Cor. 8 and 9.)

4. Churches of Christ maintain the same organizational structure which churches in the New Testament maintained.

A. As were churches in the New Testament, churches of Christ are composed of three distinct groups: members, deacons, and elders. (Phil. 1:1.)

B. There is no central agency which regulates the activities of churches of Christ, because in the New Testament each church in each different locality controlled its own affairs.

C. No individual or group is recognized as the head of the churches of Christ because Jesus Christ is the only head of the church. (Col. 1:18.)

Question number four: "How does one become a member of the church of Christ?"

Answer: The book of Acts teaches that God places people in the church when they become Christians. (Acts 2: 47.) In order for an individual to become a member of the church he must become a Christian. The same process which makes one a Christian makes one a member of the church.

Question number five: "How does one become a Christian?"

Answer: First, he must hear the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed., (Rom. 10:17.) After hearing the gospel he must believe the gospel. (Heb. 11:6.) Next, he must turn away from his sins. (Acts 3:19.) He must publicly confess his faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. (Matt. 10:32,33.) He must be baptized for the remission of sin. (1 Pet. 3:21.) Then he must live righteously until death. (Rev. 2:10.)

"Except It Be For Fornication "

Guthrie Dean

All Bible students are familiar with the above statement. It is the only reason stated in the New Testament for the dissolution of the first marriage and the entrance into the second marriage. Matthew 19:9 reads: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery. and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Matthew 5:32 uses the phrase: "saving for the cause of fornication." While it is not the purpose of this article to argue the marriage question, I wish to briefly analyze Matthew 19:9 before entering the body of this study.

1. "Whosoever" includes and involves married couples then living, and all to follow thereafter. Jesus is not here stating something that would later be replaced by something else. On the contrary, He is showing the New Testament teaching on the subject. In the sermon on the mount, he points out what the law taught regarding various matters, and then would conclude with: "But I say unto you." Or, "But I say unto you.., whosoever ..." (Matt. 5:22,28,32, etc.)
2. "Shall put away his wife ... and shall marry another" is positively speaking of divorce and remarriage.
3. "Except it be for fornication" states the only scriptural reason for this divorce and remarriage. Mark 10:11, Luke 16:18, Matt. 5:32 (as well as Matt. 19:9) show that divorce and remarriage WITHOUT this scriptural reason constitutes adultery.

My question for your consideration is this: Why does God allow remarriage only on the ground of fornication? Why not for drunkenness, or insanity, or in the case of a felony? Why are marriages dissolved because the guilty party has committed fornication? Why is it based on the stipulation, "except it be for fornication"? What is so different about the sin of fornication? And what has that got to do with the marriage relationship, that other sins do not affect? All of these questions are one in nature: Why fornication? Did God here set up an arbitrary rule simply to keep us guessing? No, not at all. There is nothing arbitrary about the matter. Allow me to illustrate, as follows:

- I. WHAT MARRIAGE IS. Marriage is not something that takes place without forethought and consent. "Drunk marriages" and "shotgun weddings" bypass one of the most important factors in marriage; that is, forethought and consent. From the day of Adam and Eve, marriage has required the following steps:
 - a. Leaving father and mother (of course they had none). But the idea is the same. The man accepts the responsibility of his own household; thus he leaves father and mother.
 - b. Cleaving to the wife. To live with, to join fast together, to cohabit.
 - c. As a result, becoming one flesh. (A man who does not cleave to his wife, does not become one flesh with her.)

II. WHY FORNICATION THWARTS THIS MARRIAGE. Marriage is for the purpose of companionship. It is for the purpose of multiplying the race. It is for the purpose of sexual enjoyment. (1 Cor. 7:1-2.) But fornication with the third party tends to destroy this sacred relationship. It does what neither drunkenness nor murder could do. 1 Cor. 6:1-11 shows that some of the Corinthians had been guilty of many different crimes, including fornication. He continues by saying, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body... Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh."

No other sin would make a man "one flesh" with a harlot. But fornication will! So Paul concludes: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." (Verse 18.) Language could not be plainer. So this is why the one exception is given: "Except it be for fornication." Fornication has the power to make two people "one flesh"; and this is not a scriptural marriage, but is called adultery! The guilty party who thus commits fornication, releases the innocent party to marry again. (Matt. 19:9.) If the innocent party wants to forgive the companion, that is another question.

THE CENTRAL IDEA OF THE BIBLE

(Matt. 16:16)

What, then, is the great affirmative proposition, lying at the bottom of all faith, and hope, and everlasting consolation? What, then, is the great truth of all truth, that is under all and supports all? It is the truth concerning the Christ, the Anointed of the Father, full of grace and truth; that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is not that he is anointed. Aaron was anointed, David was anointed, and so were many others; but Jesus is **THE CHRIST**, or **THE ANOINTED**, in a sense above all others. He is not simply Son of God, or a Son—there were many sons of God—but he is above all these; he is **THE SON**. But this is not all; he is not only the Son of God, but of **THE LIVING GOD**. There were lords many, and gods many; but **THE LIVING GOD** is above all, and through all, and in all. This proposition concerning Christ is one of the most complete propositions ever uttered, and has the definite article inserted in three of the most important places in it possible. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. All rests on this. This is the central idea of the Bible. It is the center of attraction in the spiritual system, as the sun is of the solar system, and everything else revolves round this. — Benjamin Franklin in **THE GOSPEL PREACHER**, Vol. II.

MOTHERS OF MEN

Call the roll of sons of great men, and, for the most part, you will get but sorry responses unless the mothers are found to be worthy. Socrates, though bald-headed, snub-nosed, big-eyed, and bandy-legged, was the greatest mind and one of the purest souls of all antiquity; his son, Lambrocles, offspring of the unworthy Xantippe, amounted to nothing, preferring to eat melons with ne'er-do-wells on the sunny side of a wall to a knowledge of philosophy; so that Aristotle, who knew the young man well, used him to illustrate genius and its degeneracy. Alexander the Little, son of Alexander, the conqueror of Asia and the master of the civilized world, was a puny boy, who perished miserably in a dungeon. Marcus, the son of Cicero, to whom were addressed some of his father's noblest works, gained fame as the hardest drinker of his time. Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, the great philosopher, philanthropist, and ruler, was as basely ignorant as his father was enlightened, as cruelly heartless as his father was tender and just. His mother was the profligate Faustina, who had long deceived her husband. Louis, the son of Charlemagne, was compelled to abdicate his throne because of admitted incapacity. The son of Cromwell was Richard the Lazy.

The molding influence of the mother is traceable in the lives of the majority of men of action. We can find the proof in the biographies of statesmen, preachers, soldiers, orators, famous merchants and men of large affairs; and although great mothers may not have secured justice from historians, they are represented in their distinguished progeny, and in this way every true woman glories to be known. It is a common saying of the world that the great men have come from the farm, and to the general conditions of farm life their success is attributed; but it is more likely that their success is due, not so much to general conditions, as to a particular condition—namely, the kind of mothers to be found on the farms.—Anonymous.

(The world today is, beyond question, in a state of moral and spiritual degeneracy. Much of the trouble can be traced to failure of parents to meet their responsibility. It is evident that though affluent in natural resources the world is suffering a dearth of godly mothers—and fathers.

When God needed great characters, he chose for them godly parents. John the Baptist had a great work to do—to prepare the way for Christ. (Matt. 3:1-3.) Ungodly parents could not have prepared him for this work. God chose for him parents that could: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:6.)—BN)

BAPTISM—ITS DESIGN OR PURPOSE

Cecil F. Cox

In this third article on the subject of baptism we wish to study its design or purpose. QUESTION: Does the New Testament assign to the act of baptism any real purpose or design? If it does this is exactly what each one of us must teach and practice. Let us look at the New Testament and see what is taught in this matter.

First, we turn to Mark 16:16. Here we find Jesus saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This passage teaches clearly that belief and baptism are required in order to be saved. More may be required in another passage in the New Testament, but we must recognize that we cannot be saved upon less than this passage requires. Therefore, no one has the authority to say that either of these are not essential. Nevertheless, many religionists for years have failed to teach and even denied the importance of baptism. Let us remember that our Lord included baptism as being essential unto salvation.

Now let us turn to Acts 2:38. In this verse we have the answer to the people's question, "What shall we do?" Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Observe that Peter says baptism is "for the remission of sins." Some have tried to destroy the force of Peter's statement by saying that "for" can mean "because of" and therefore we are baptized "because of remission of sins." I wonder if they will stay by that kind of reasoning in Matthew 26: 28, where we read, "For this is the blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Notice we find here exactly the same form as it is in Acts 2:38. Now does the word "for" in this passage mean "because of"? Did Christ shed His blood because of remission of sins? Did He shed His blood because remission of sins was already possible? Of course not!! I know of no one who would so argue. He shed His blood in order to make remission of sins possible. Now, He commands that we be baptized, and the purpose for this is that we might have the remission of sins. The point we are illustrating here is that the word translated "for" in these passages never means "because of." It does not look backward to something, but rather forward.

The last passage that I shall consider in this article is 1 Peter 3:21. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." I wish to emphasize here that Peter says baptism doth also now save us. I sincerely believe that he told the truth. But may I also say that neither Peter nor I teach that baptism only will save. "Baptism only" will no more save than "faith only" would. In order for baptism to avail it must be preceded by faith and repentance. (Read my article in the November, 1969 issue of GOSPEL GUIDE.)

Many honest and sincere people do not believe that baptism has anything to do with salvation. But these passages we have noticed in this article, and many others that could be added, all show that baptism is essential to salvation. Therefore, let us faithfully proclaim the purpose of baptism as taught in the New Testament.

DEVOTE YOURSELF TO THE CAUSE

W. A. Moody

Over 1,900 years ago Jesus, our Lord, brought forth under heaven His new creation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the glory of God, the Father, and the salvation of our souls. (Eph. 3:21.)

Now we are engaged in the great struggle showing that this new creation so conceived and dedicated shall endure throughout eternity. (Eph. 2: 10.)

We assemble in congregations everywhere to praise our great King who, though now living, was raised from the dead having given His life that we might be created anew to live in His kingdom now and forever. It is proper and fitting that we should praise Him together. For we have been translated into this kingdom of God's dear Son. (Col. 1:12-14.) We have received a kingdom that cannot be moved. And all the kingdoms of earth are to become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. (1 Cor. 15:24-28.)

The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it should never be permitted to forget what God hath wrought. It is for us, His servants, to go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever our King has commanded us. (Matt. 28:19-20.) It is for us, His subjects, to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us, and from this crucified One to take increased devotion in behalf of the cause for which He gave the last full measure of devotion; and to highly resolve that he shall not have died for us in vain, that all should obey His perfect law of liberty, and that all should walk worthy of God who hath called us unto this new creation, Christ's kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Rom. 14:17-19.)

(Credit is given to Abraham Lincoln for the phrases taken from the Gettysburg Address.)

GOD'S CRAZY PEOPLE

When Paul spoke before King Agrippa, and those assembled with him, Festus, the Roman governor, cried out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." (Acts 26:24.) God's faithful servants have often been accused of being mad, or crazy.

I. God's crazy people in time past.

Elisha sent one of the prophets to tell Jehu that he was to become the next king of Israel. When he had completed his mission and had left, the friends of Jehu asked, "Wherefore came this mad (crazy) fellow to thee?" (2 Kings 9:11.) The people of God, doing the will of God, do not always appear sane in the eyes of the people of the world.

Christ was thought to be crazy by some of the people of his day. His enemies accused him of being out of his mind. They said, "Thou hast a devil." (John 7:20, marginal reading: "You are crazy.") Again they said, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." (John 8:48, marginal reading: "You are crazy.") In the 52nd verse of the same chapter they said, "Now we know that thou hast a devil." ("You are crazy.") Later they said, "He hath a devil and is mad." ("He is possessed of a demon and is crazy. ") (John 10:20.)

Even his friends thought him mentally ill. "And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself." ("He is unbalanced.") (Mark 3:21.)

Festus said to Paul, "Paul, you are mad. You are crazy." The New English translation has Festus saying, "Paul, you are raving; too much study is driving you mad." (Acts 26:24.) According to the Williams translation, in 2 Corinthians 5:13, Paul said, "For if I did go crazy, it was for God's glory."

II. Characteristics of the mentally disturbed.

The mentally ill are often obsessed with one idea. Normal people can change their attention from one idea to another, but often people with mental disturbance cannot be divided, or distracted, from one particular notion. When they get something on their mind, it is hard for them to free themselves of that thought. The prophet in the time of Elisha was possessed of one idea, of delivering the message he had for Jehu. Christ was possessed of one great propelling idea—to do his Father's will. To his disciples he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John 4:34.) Paul was possessed of one great idea—to preach Christ and him crucified. This he did before King Agrippa and Festus. When he had opportunity to defend himself and prove himself innocent of the false charges brought against him by his enemies, he chose to preach Christ and him crucified. When he wrote to the Corinthians, he said, "For I was determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2.)

The mentally ill are often characterized by burning zeal, and almost inexhaustible energy, and furious drive. Christ had a burning zeal and inexhaustible energy. His disciples

remembered that it was written concerning him, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (John 2:17.) He engaged in his great work from morning to night. He showed his disciples the great urgency of work: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 9:4.) Paul had the same kind of drive. He spent his time preaching publicly and from house to house, by day and by night. (Acts 20:20, 31.)

The mentally ill are sometimes characterized by disinterest in things materially valuable. Christ had no interest in material things. Even though the kingdoms of the world were offered to him, he was not interested in the offer. (Matt. 4:8-10.) He said to his disciples, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28.) Paul had no interest in worldly honors and material possessions. He said that if any man had right to trust in material things he had that right because of his lineage. But he said, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ... for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Phil. 2:7, 8.)

The mentally ill seem to have no fear of being different. Christ had no fear of being different from the world. Paul had no fear of being different from others. In fact, he showed that God's people must be different. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate." (2 Cor. 6:17.)

III. God's crazy people today.

1. They are people who are obsessed with one idea—of doing God's will. They seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. (Matt. 6:33.) They deny themselves; they take up the cross daily in order to follow Christ. (Luke 9:23.) With Christ they say, "Not my will, but thine be done."

2. They are people who are characterized by burning zeal and constant effort in behalf of the cause of Christ. They are determined to preach Christ and him crucified to every soul who will listen. They preach and teach in season and out of season, under favorable circumstances and under unfavorable circumstances.

3. They are people who are characterized by far greater interest in spiritual than in material values. They sometimes give up lucrative positions in order to devote more time to extending the borders of the kingdom. They look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, not at the temporal but at the eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18.)

4. They are people who have no fear of being different—in fashion, in speech, in conduct, in religion. They realize that they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they may show forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:9.)

5. They are people who speak strange things. They say that there is one church, and that it is all sufficient. (Eph. 1:22,23.) This seems strange to many. They say that baptism is essential to salvation. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2: 38; 1 Pet. 3:21.) This seems strange to many. They speak as the oracles of God, and such language seems strange to the world.

Actually, people with the characteristics of the insane have often been the ones who have accomplished the great feats of mankind. With the characteristics of the mentally

disturbed, Michelangelo produced his masterpieces. Doctors, nurses, workers in times of epidemic and disaster have shown the characteristics of the insane in their super-human efforts to alleviate human suffering.

An emergency exists today. Men and women are rushing headlong to eternal destruction. "The wages of sin is death." There is urgent need for God's crazy people, with superhuman effort, to preach Christ and him crucified.

THE DESIRE TO PLEASE GOD

Robert E. Waldron

Our day is a day of analysis and discovery. Men are not satisfied to know that a thing happens. They must know why. So many of our social problems are being given psychological explanations. Therefore, we have been told that drunkenness and stealing and murder, etc., are really psychological illnesses. It is only natural therefore that religious behavior be explained on a psychological and a sociological basis also. Thus it can be shown that digressives in most periods of innovation have come from wealthier classes of people. They have tended to come from the upper classes. The temptation is to say the rich are wicked and the poor are good. Such an assumption would, however, be highly unwarranted. What we are therefore saying is that we must be very careful how we employ psychology and sociology in religion.

Job's Righteousness

Anthropologists have always sought to account for religious behavior purely on the grounds of sociological needs. There is a sociological need—and a psychological need—for religion; yet these explanations, or these needs alone would not account for religious behavior. There are many exceptions to the usual sociological explanations for religion. For example, how could we account for Job's righteousness on a sociological or a psychological basis? He was not righteous because he was poor in view of the fact that he was also righteous when he was rich. His social status made no difference in his righteousness. Think about his psychological situation. There he had been, with everything to begin with. Then, in one fell swoop, it was all swept away. Psychologically, Job was placed in a very trying position. All the psychological explanations for Job's behavior and for his trust in God were removed. Job admitted that he did not know why God had brought such misfortune upon him. But he remained faithful to God. Why? Why were so many religious characters in the Bible faithful to God? Because they loved God and desired to serve Him.

Reason for Righteousness

Now, when we look at the institutional–instrumental music division of the past century and see that wealthier, higher class people socially digressed, and lower class, poorer people tended to remain faithful and think that their respective behavior was merely because of social and financial status, we leave out the most important part of righteousness of all: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (Jn. 14:15.) There were wealthy people who opposed the instrument. Some wealthy people opposed the missionary society. Not many; but some did. Why? Because they loved God and wished to keep His commandments. No doubt, it was easier for lower class, poorer people to resist these innovations, simply because they had not the money to indulge them; and their likes tended to be simpler, more conservative, and stricter. But to account for their opposition is to leave out the most important part of righteousness of all: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." That is why rich Abraham, poor Lazarus; rich Job, poor Job; rich David, poor Elijah; rich Joseph of Arimathea and poor John the Baptist served God. They had almost nothing in common sociologically or psychologically, but they did have one thing in common—they loved God and desired to serve Him. It is obvious, then, which influence is the greatest, and that is the desire to serve God because it transcends sociological and psychological boundaries.

Need for Religion

That brings us to another question: What about the need for religion? "Some people need it and some people do not." That statement leaves much to be desired. A more nearly accurate statement of the idea would be some people feel the need for religion and some do not; but all men need religion. Whether men realize it or not, they need religion. Whether men realize it or not, they need the Bible; and whether they realize it or not, they need to be very careful to obey God. We must remember that there is often a great difference in what we need and what we think we need.

"Preach the Gospel to Every Creature"

It is true that people have differing types of minds. These differences are due to heredity and environment. These minds desire different types of religion, different types of mental activities. It has been said that it is not the mission of the evangelist to badger those of differing minds and needs into accepting something they do not want. Now this is true. It has happened before, and the result has been some half-converted members. However, there may be a tendency to carry this idea too far so that we will use it as an excuse not to try to convert unlikely prospects. In other words, just convert the souls that fall into one's lap. Remember though, that in Matthew 13, there were different kinds of hearts (minds), and only one kind of mind was really fruitful. Nevertheless, seed was sown to all the hearts. The heart that needed, and knew that it needed the word, and which accepted it, was the heart that was fruitful. The other hearts were eventually rejected.

This is the way we must proclaim the gospel today. "Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mk. 16:15, 16.) Let us also be careful, in talking about the type of mind that needs Bible religion, that we do not leave the impression that if you need it, fine; if not, fine. Neither leave the impression that if one does not happen to have the right heredity and the right environment to create the right kind of mental disposition, then conversion is impossible. Attitudes can change. After all, isn't that what conversion is all about?

The Conversion of an Evangelist

Curtis E. Flatt

"And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue; whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly." (Acts 18:24-26.)

This introduces an evangelist by the name of Apollos. He was quite an outstanding man. He was eloquent—a gifted speaker. He was mighty in the scriptures, that is, he was well versed in the scriptures and he knew how to use them. He spake boldly. He was fervent in the spirit—his spirit. He spake with burning zeal. He was instructed in the way of the Lord. He knew God's promises concerning Christ. When he arrived at Ephesus, he did what he should have done. He began to teach boldly in the gathering place of the Jews.

He Needed To Be Right

With all his outstanding qualifications, Apollos had one great deficiency. He knew only the baptism of John. A number of years had passed since Christ had come to earth, died, and ascended to heaven. For an extensive time, some had taught the baptism authorized by Jesus. Thousands, by this time, had heard, had believed, and had been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins. But Apollos was unaware of any of this. He knew only the baptism of John. Something was lacking. He needed to be right.

It was impossible for Apollos to guide others into being right when he, himself, was not right. In reference to teaching, years before this, Jesus had taught: "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. 15:14.) The teacher is to be right in all essential matters before those whom he teaches. "These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12.) A false teacher will lead others into the error which is his regardless of how sincere he may be. Apollos was a mighty teacher but Apollos needed to be right.

He Thought That He Was Right

Not only did Apollos need to be right in order to properly guide others, he thought he was right. That is very apparent. He taught diligently and he spake boldly. In addition, his attitude in being willing to be taught shows that he thought he was right. There is nothing in any way to indicate insincerity on his part. He thought he was right.

He Was Not Right

Even though Apollos thought he was right, he was not right. His thinking that he was right did not make him right. He must have been honest and sincere but he was honestly and sincerely mistaken. If anyone is right because of the fact that he thinks he is right, then every honest and sincere person is right regardless of what he thinks. That would soon eliminate

the need of Christ. It would soon eliminate the need of Christ ever to have come to this world. It would eliminate anything and everything God has said, for somewhere there are those who honestly and sincerely disagree with all that God established in religion. Having given some thought to this, who can agree that a person is right only on the basis of being honest and sincere? When every man does what he thinks to be right, pandemonium, confusion, and wild tumult is the result. It was that way once in Israel. "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6.) Please go back, dear reader, and read that chapter and notice where they went and what they did by each one doing what seemed right unto him. The scene of chaos in the religious world today is the result of so many people doing what seems right unto them, and then maintaining that as long as they are honest and sincere, they are right. Apollos was not right, and his thinking that he was right did not make him right.

What Made Him Right?

What was done to change Apollos? What made him right? What made the difference? Several things contributed to changing him from one who was wrong to one who was right.

To begin with, he met some people who were interested in him and also in his being right. Aquila and Priscilla heard him. They knew that he was not adequately informed and that he was thereby in error. They knew that John's baptism, although divinely authorized, was out of date. They knew that what he preached could never put people into Christ, could never make them members of the Lord's church, could never make them children of God, and could never give them the benefit of the shed blood of Jesus. Thus, they took him unto them and taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly. This was the contribution they made to his change from wrong to right.

Then, the attitude of Apollos had much to do with his change from wrong to right. When he learned of that which was lacking, he rectified it immediately. From what is said of him and his work immediately after this and in First Corinthians, one could hardly reach any conclusion but that Apollos, himself, was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. He would hardly require others to do that which he himself had not done. His example is worthy of following. When one learns that he has been incorrectly baptized, he ought to be baptized as the New Testament teaches immediately. People, who have the wholesome attitude that Apollos had, will do so.

Apollos came to Ephesus preaching but knowing only the baptism of John. But from that point on, how different it all is! "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." (Acts 18:27,28.)

PETER'S SERMON AT THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS

Earl Kimbrough

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34, 35.)

These are the beginning words of Peter's sermon at the house of Cornelius where the gospel was first preached to the Gentiles. No effort had been made by the apostles to preach to any save the Jews up until this time. Peter had gone to Caesarea under direct orders from the Spirit. When he arrived in that city and entered the house of the Centurion, he was informed of the angel's message to Cornelius instructing him to send for Peter. It was then that Peter "opened his mouth" and preached the gospel to this devout but unsaved man,

1. Peter called attention to the fact that God is no respecter of persons. This was probably as much for the benefit of those Jewish brethren who had accompanied Peter as it was for Cornelius. The apostle himself had perceived this only within the past few days, if not on that same day. Three things contributed to this new light on the part of the apostle. (1) The vision he had seen in Joppa four days before by which he learned to call no man "common or unclean." (2) The Spirit's instructions for him to go with the men who had come from Cornelius "doubting nothing." And (3) the testimony of Cornelius concerning the angel that instructed him to "Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter ... who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee." The gospel is intended for all men of every nation, race, and class.

2. Peter told them who it is that is acceptable with God. The word "accepted" denotes one who is regarded favorably. While God does not respect the person of men he does not "accept" all men. Otherwise all men would be saved. (Jno. 5:28,29.) But acceptance with God requires two things. (1) Man must fear God. "But in every nation he that feareth God... is accepted with him." (Acts 10:35.) This "fear" is reverential fear. It is "a wholesome dread of displeasing God." It is the kind of fear Jesus spoke of when He said, "but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." (Matt. 10:28.) (2) Man must work righteousness. "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." To work righteousness simply means to do God's will. (Cf. Matt. 3:15.) One works righteousness when he obeys the gospel of Christ.

3. Peter related the ministry of Jesus. (Acts 10:31-41.) Several things about that ministry are stressed. (1) Jesus was sent by God to preach peace to the children of Israel. This peace which Jesus preached is peace with God that comes through the forgiveness of sins. Without the coming of Jesus there could be no peace with God either of Jew or Gentile. This peace which Jesus preached is realized only in Him. (Eph. 2:14-17.) (2) His ministry began with his baptism by John. (Acts 10:37.) (3) The nature of Jesus' ministry is set forth. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, He performed miracles "in the land of the Jews," and God was with Him in all that He did. (4) His ministry ended with His death, burial, and resurrection. Of these things He had chosen witnesses who had accompanied Him throughout all His ministry beginning with the baptism of John. Peter was one of these chosen witnesses. And (5) the present position of Jesus is declared. Peter said, "he is Lord of all." Peter perhaps told Cornelius the words Jesus spoke before His ascension: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.)

4. Peter informed Cornelius about the great commission. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (v.42,43.) The prophets had foretold these things. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:46, 47.) This command was given unto the apostles just before Jesus ascended. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16.) Surely the words "among all nations," "all the world," and "every creature" now took on new and more significant meaning to Peter, as they soon would to all the apostles. The conversion of Cornelius paved the way for the gospel to be spread by the apostle Paul to the far-flung boundaries of the Roman Empire. (Col. 1:23.)

5. Peter told Cornelius what to do to be saved. This was the cause for which he had been sent. "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:14.) But the sermon Peter preached to Cornelius was interrupted. While Peter was speaking "the gift of the Holy Ghost" was poured out upon the centurion and his household. This event actually occurred near the beginning of Peter's sermon. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." (Acts 11:14,15.) That the Spirit did not fall upon Cornelius to save him is evident from two facts. (1) He was to be saved by the words of Peter, yet the Spirit fell before the words were spoken. (2) The Spirit fell on Cornelius in order to bear witness to the truth—that the Gentiles "should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." (Acts 15:7-9.) Peter said the heart of Cornelius was purified by faith. (Acts 15:9.)

Cornelius was saved by faith but not by "faith only." The faith that causes one to be accepted with God is the faith that "works righteousness." Cornelius' faith moved him to repent. (Acts 11:18.) And it moved him to be baptized in the name of Christ. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48.) Baptism in the name of the Lord is baptism for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) Peter preached to Cornelius that he might understand, believe, and obey the gospel. It was necessary that he speak unto him "words" whereby he and all his house should be saved. Men were saved that way on Pentecost. Men are saved that way now! Men must hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Christ. The facts of the gospel are persuasive, the commands of the gospel are clear, and the promises of the gospel are available to all who will believe the facts and obey the commands.

"WHICH CHURCH SHOULD I JOIN?"

Raymond E. Harville

One of the problems facing a person who has decided to be religious is, "What church should I join?" This is a problem those who lived in the first century did not have to face. When the apostles were alive, they preached but one faith; they practiced but one baptism. All were members of the same church. This was indeed a fortunate situation. This was as God wanted it then and as he wants it now. See Eph. 4:1-6; John 17:20,21.

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW. Instead of there being only one church, there are about 300 churches of different faiths and orders. These all claim to be acceptable unto God. These all claim salvation for their members. These all claim to be doing the will of God and the work of God.

HELP REALLY CONFUSES A PERSON. One inquires about the churches. He wants to be a member of a church, but he does not know which one to join. He really does not know what to do. He asks his friends. They assure him that it really does not make any difference. However, they are different in religious beliefs, and each is fighting for his own belief. He has seen the division and is confused. He has asked for help in the matter, and he is more confused.

HE INVESTIGATES, BUT IS MORE CONFUSED THAN EVER. He could not decide to join one church because of its **TEACHING**, for after all, the teaching (as he has been told) does not make any difference. If he joined church "A" because he thought their teaching was right, that would mean the teaching of church "B" is not right. If he thought of joining church "C" because he felt their worship was more acceptable, then he is implying that the worship of church "D" is not as it should be. If he joined church "E" because they baptized a person like he thought they should, he would be implying that the baptism of church "F" is not right. If one church is as good as another, the teaching and practice of one is as good as another.

One could not join a church because of the people. After all, the people in the many churches are all going to heaven, and that is good enough for any one. We have no right to discriminate among Christians.

WHAT ABOUT PHYSICAL REASONS FOR JOINING A CHURCH? One might join a church because it has a better building. But here is another church that needs a new building. Why not join them and help them build a new building? One might join a church because it gives him more social prestige. Is this the purpose of the church? One might join the church for business improvements. Would not this mercenary motive be wrong?

SOLVING THE PROBLEM. If it does not really make any difference, why even consider? Why not just join one. Go to the one nearest you. Put the names of the churches of the community in a hat and draw out one and join it. This might be rather exciting. You might even be a Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, or a Seventh Day Adventist. You have probably decided this would not be using good judgment. Why isn't it? Is not one church as good as another?

IF IT REALLY DOES NOT MATTER, WHY NOT JOIN SEVERAL? It is obvious that when a person joins one, he will be deprived of the benefits of the others. If you go to town to shop, you do not shop at just one store, do you? Different stores offer different things, so we shop all the stores. Different churches offer different things. Why not join several of them? Do you say this would not be right? Why not? I join church "A" and you join church "B". You say that is fine. Could I join church "B" and you join church "A"? You say, "Yes." If we can be members of either of these churches, could we not be members of both? If it is right for two people to be members of two churches, why can one person not be a member of two churches? Is there anything wrong with the churches that I could not be a member of them? Do I not have a right to join that which is right within itself? I can join two civic clubs. Why not two churches?

HOW MANY CHURCHES DID JESUS BUILD? HOW MANY FAITHS DID HE

REVEAL? HOW MANY FAITHS DID THE APOSTLES PREACH? The answer in each case is one. If Christ built only one church, and the apostles preached but one faith, do people today have a right to foster many churches and preach many faiths? You must answer this question either "Yes" or "No." The answer must come from the word of God, the Bible. I find the answer in Ephesians 4:3-6. There is one body, and there is one faith. Do I have a right to differ with the Bible?

In the previous part of our article we have shown that there was only one body (church) and one faith (belief) in the days of the apostles. Things are different now. There are about 300 bodies now, and an equal number of faiths. Which shall we believe, and which church should we join? We are assured by people in general that one church and one faith is as good as another. The conclusion one is to reach from this is that it really does not matter what we believe, nor what church we join. Please think a little with me on this.

WHAT WILL A PREACHER PREACH? You may answer that he should preach only the Bible. The answer is not that simple. Remember, it does not really matter what one believes as long as he is honest and sincere. In such a case (it does not matter what you hear and believe), it does not matter what a preacher preaches. If a teaching is all right for you to believe and live by, it is all right for a preacher to preach.

CAN TWO PREACHERS PREACH TWO DIFFERENT DOCTRINES? If one preaches for this church, and another preaches for another church, (the) will preach different doctrines. What church one joins does not matter, what we believe does not matter; therefore, what one preaches does not matter. Yet agree that two preachers preaching for two different churches (thus, differing doctrines) is all right. Can one preacher preach for these two churches?

ILLUSTRATION: Preacher "A" teaches one cannot fall from grace after being saved. Preacher "B" teaches one can fall from grace. As long as two preachers honestly preach these, the preachers are accepted by both groups of believers as honorable men. Could one man preach on Sunday morning in one church that you cannot fall, and then go to the other church on Sunday night and preach that you can fall? If two men can preach these contradictory doctrines, could not one preach both doctrines and be just as right?

The preacher who believes you cannot fall also says that baptism is by immersion only. The preacher who thinks you can fall from grace believes that one can be baptized by

sprinkling, pouring or immersion. The religious world says this is all right. If one of these preachers died, could the other take his place and preach both thoughts? Could he not preach on the first and third Sundays to one group of people that they cannot fall from grace, and to be properly baptized one must be immersed? Then on the second and fourth Sundays, could he not preach to the other church that they can fall from grace and that they can be baptized by having water sprinkled on their heads? You may say one man cannot preach such contradictory doctrines, but two men can, if they believe that way. Do you suppose God believes these two contradicting doctrines when two preach them, but will not believe them when only one preaches them? Do you suppose Christ will tolerate two men teaching two different doctrines, but will not allow one man to preach contradictory doctrines?

DIFFERENT DOCTRINES DO NOT COME FROM GOD. "FOR GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION, BUT OF PEACE, AS IN ALL CHURCHES OF THE SAINTS." (1 Cor. 14:33.) One can either fall from grace, or he cannot fall from grace. It cannot be both ways. If one man preaches both ideas he is wrong. If two men preach both ideas, **ONE OF THEM** is wrong. God does not "lead" one preacher to preach one idea, and another preacher to preach the other idea. All preachers who preach what God wants preached (the Bible) are preaching the same thing. The truth is harmonious. When there is a difference, somebody is **WRONG**. There is one faith (Eph. 4:4,5), and we have no right to make two.

WHAT CHURCH SHALL WE JOIN? WHAT DOCTRINE SHALL WE PREACH? We shall preach the gospel of Christ. We shall join no church. The church of Christ is not a party or club to join. It is a body of saved people. When one is pricked in the heart as a believer in Christ and wants to be a Christian, he is to repent and be baptized in order to the remission of his sins. (Acts 2:36-41.) He does this in order to be saved. As a saved person, he is a part of that body of saved people. He did not join it, he became a Christian. The Lord added him as a Christian to the church. The Lord adds all saved people to the church. (Acts 2:47.) If he adds all saved people to the church, then there are no saved people outside the church. Those who are saved are the ones who make up the church of Christ.

It does matter what you believe. It does matter what a preacher preaches. Error will cause the one who preaches it and the one who believes it to be lost. (2 Jno. 9; Gal. 1:6-9.) Thus, truth saves, but error causes one to be lost. It does make a difference.

"WHY CAN'T THEY UNDERSTAND?"

Skipper Falls

How many times have you asked yourself the question, WHY CAN'T THEY UNDERSTAND? You have studied your Bible, and you know the truth, and to you it is easy to understand. God's plan of salvation is so simple to tad and find in the scriptures. It is not hard to find the way to worship God in spirit and truth. You can even see that Christ built only one church. (Matt. 16:18.) But why can't they see it? There have even been those who would argue from day light to dark with you, and then obey the gospel. But they, too, may ask the same question, "Why can't they understand?"

The Scriptures reveal to us the reason why people cannot understand. While Jesus was on earth he tried to prepare his apostles for this, and, in doing so, has taught us the reason. In John 17:14-16, in his farewell prayer, Jesus teaches us that neither he nor his apostles were of this world. "I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world ... They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." From a study of the gospel we easily see that the world rejected Jesus and even killed him. Even when his disciples tried to preach the gospel, they were beaten, stoned, some even killed. Why? Because they were not of the world.

1 John 3:1-27

1 John 3:1, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." From this passage we learn that those that do not understand are a part of this world. As children of God, we are not of this world. That is, we are in the world, flesh and bones, but not a part of this world, spirit and mind. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight ..." (John 18:36.)

Now we know that for people to understand, they will have to come out of this world. Now, let us see how. Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:24.) Mammon is riches of the world. This shows us that people will have to let go completely of the things of this world. They will have to get their minds off more money, a big name, or trying to outdo the Joneses. This is really the key to the scriptures. People are trying to serve God and, at the same time, the things of this world. Most people search for a religion to suit their present lives. The more liberal and less demanding religions are the ones most people accept. Some of their accepted practices are dancing, mixed swimming, divorce and remarriage, and social drinking. The Holiness churches have fewer members because, even though in error, they are more demanding. Unless we "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness," and let him add the temporal things, we will not be able to understand.

John 10:22-27

Let's look at some examples. Take your Bible and read John 10:22-27. Here we find Christ walking in the temple, and the Jews come to him and ask him some questions. In verse

24 the Jews ask, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answers them, "I told you, and you believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." Now the Jews are the ones who have the scriptures; and we know that they studied them, because they were looking for the Christ who was to come. They did not recognize Jesus as the Christ though, because they were looking for an earthly kingdom. Nicodemus knew Jesus was the Christ because of the works that he did. (John 3:1-5.) When Jesus saw Peter and Andrew casting their nets by the sea side, and said, "Come follow me"; they did not hesitate; they did not ask for a sign. They just followed him. The same was true of James and John, and also of Matthew. They could see that he was different, and they were not trying to please men.

John 5:30-47

Now, read John 5:30-47. Notice verse 34 where Jesus says, "The witness which I receive is not from man." The witness of Christ was a godly witness and not a worldly one. In verse 39 he tells them that they search the scriptures for eternal life, and then in verse 44 he says, "How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" People try to serve God with one hand and hold on to the world with the other. It just cannot be done. Notice verse 42, "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves." People who love God obey him. (John 14:15.) This is the reason they do not understand, because they love the world and not God. Love is that which motivates faith (Gal. 5:6), and faith comes from hearing. (Rom. 10:17.) So people that do not hear God, do not love him.

Matthew 19:16-22

Our final example is found in Matt. 19:16-22. It is about the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and wanted to know what to do to have eternal life. He found that keeping the commandments was not enough—he would have to give up the things of this world and follow Christ's teaching. He was at least smart enough to know that he lacked something. There are many people who claim to be Christians and keep the commandments, but are really not following Jesus with all their hearts. They are holding on to the world, and they cannot learn any more because they are carnally minded. (1 Cor. 3:1-3.)

In conclusion, let us remember that when we study God's word, that we do so with the mind of pleasing him. When we teach others let us tell them to study the scriptures with the intention of pleasing God and seeking his help. Then God will tell them what to do through his word. We can please God and serve him if we will follow Paul's instruction: "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth." (Col. 3:2.)

LITTLE THINGS

For the novelty of it, a man walked from the Golden Gate Bridge to New York City. He was asked what were the greatest difficulties he had to encounter on the road. The interviewer suggested that it must have been the great mountains that exhausted his strength, the turbulent and swollen rivers he had to ford, the hazards of the desert, or the biting winds; but to all these obstacles the traveler said, "No." But after a little he said, "What almost defeated me in my journey across the continent was the sand in my shoes."

Isn't it so? It's not the mountainous things that keep the average person out of the kingdom of heaven but the trivial things of life. A desire for more sleep on Sunday morning, the thought of making a little more money, a bit more pleasure on Saturday night—and so many little pinching grains of sand (prejudice and preconceived ideas) in the mind. Undoubtedly these stand as the greatest barriers to obedience to the gospel. Do not allow any of these little things to keep you out of heaven. —Adapted.

Baptism Keeps Good Company

Irven Lee

We have all heard and believed that a person tells us much about himself by the intimate friends he cultivates. If one delights in the company that is lawless, then he is lawless. If one diligently seeks the friendship of the righteous and delights in this association, he is complimented. One seated beside the president in a political parade would naturally be identified as a politician with high position. We know by the company.

Often Mentioned With Important Principles

Baptism keeps good company. It is mentioned with its associates dozens of times in the New Testament. It is not listed with the trivial and insignificant but with the principles and commandments that all recognize as important. Faith and repentance are often mentioned in the same context with baptism. Such precious promises as forgiveness, remission of sins, and salvation keep its company, also. Either the Father, the Son, the Spirit or all the Blessed Trinity are mentioned in the immediate context almost every time baptism is mentioned! Search for yourself and be impressed. Is this not a vivid reminder that baptism is by heaven's authority? Baptism keeps good company.

Mentioned in Great Commission

In the great commission as found in Mark (16:15,16), baptism sits in the seat between faith and salvation. Notice: "He that believeth and IS baptized shall be saved." Is faith important? Baptism is by its side. Salvation, as usual, is mentioned after baptism in the great commission as in other Bible references that mention both baptism and salvation. People interested in the truth and in salvation should search and see. We should all also remember that baptism is mentioned in the commission under which the apostles worked and under which the church works today. There is no reason for our being ashamed of this ordinance of the Lord.

In the great commission as found in Matthew (28:18-20), the Savior mentioned His authority and gave the commandment to teach and to baptize. These acts, then, are to be done in His name or by His authority. We are baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit. Would an insignificant thing be used in bringing man into this family relationship. Notice the company baptism keeps.

Part of Answer to Important Question

The first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ was a great day. The apostles were endowed with power from on high so they could bind on earth exactly those things that are bound in heaven. Error must not be taught because the law that is still binding on mankind was being delivered by heaven's ambassadors. The sermon that convinced them that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God pricked their hearts and led them to ask the important question. They were told to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ and for the remission of sins. Is repentance important? Baptism sits beside it. It is by the authority or name of Christ, and it leads to—it comes before—remission of sin. If you read the context you see the call of God the Father, the gift of the Holy spirit, and the name of Christ

mentioned. Baptism keeps good company. It is not mentioned with the trivial. (See Acts 2:37-41.) On Pentecost "those that gladly received his word were baptized." Is it still that way?

Philip Evidently Emphasized It

Our Savior's plan was for the disciples to testify of Him at Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the world. Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them. "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:12.) Look at the company baptism keeps. Why were they baptized? Evidently Philip had taught them to be and had told them of the authority back of the command. He associated it with the authority of Christ in this great kingdom of God. No wonder they were baptized when they believed! Would more people be baptized today if preachers kept it in its proper context?

When Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian nobleman, the eunuch learned to be baptized and how to be baptized. This evidently fitted into a sermon the subject of which was Jesus. (See Acts 8:35-39.) The confession the Ethiopian made was that "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The sermon that convinced him of this fundamental fact taught him how and why to be baptized. They got out of the chariot and both went down into the water. After the baptism they both came up out of the water. He obeyed that form or picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ. He was taught to do this. So are we.

"Thou Must Do"

Saul the persecutor obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. The Lord knew of his zeal and of his good conscience. The Christ appeared to Saul and took away all doubt as to the divinity of Christ. The astonished and trembling Saul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord said, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou MUST do." The message that came to him in the city by the mouth of the heaven sent teacher included these words, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (See Acts 9:1-18; 22:6-16; 26:12-20.)

Father, Son, and Spirit

John came preaching in the wilderness of Judea and introducing baptism unto repentance. It was a new thing that he introduced in preparation for the day when the great Teacher would ask all men everywhere to repent and be baptized in His name. Christ went to John to be baptized of him in the Jordan in fulfilling all righteousness. Is it any wonder in the light of the passages we have studied that the Holy Spirit descended as a dove upon Him, and the Voice from above conveyed the Father's message: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? (Matthew 3.) The Father and the Spirit marked the baptism of Jesus as a special event. It is a special event today when a penitent believer obeys from the heart this form of doctrine.

A GREAT INVITATION

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18.)

I. This passage of scripture shows us the POWER OF GOD.

God's incalculable power is seen in the creation. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1.) "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. 11:3.) The power of God is further seen in the governing of the universe. All things are upheld by the word of his power. (Heb. 1:3,) In him all things consist, that is, are held together. (Col. 1:17.)

But this passage shows the power of God to remove the dreadful stains of sins—"though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Today we hear much advertising about the power of enzymes to remove stain from cloth. This is set forth as a great accomplishment, but no one has been able to remove the stain of sin from the soul. We cannot remove our own, nor can we remove others. However, God through his Son Jesus Christ has provided the cleansing agent. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7.) "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7.) One of the elders identified to John the apostle those who were arrayed in white robes before the throne of God. "These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14.) Christ shed his blood in his death, and sinful man reaches its cleansing power in baptism. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we were 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." (Rom. 6:3,4.)

II. This great invitation also shows us the GRACE OF GOD.

Almost from the beginning man stained and contaminated his soul by sin. Though God made Adam and Eve, they chose to believe the word of the devil, and in doing so they transgressed his law and repudiated his will. (Gen. 3.) But even though man has been so rebellious against God, God has shown his grace over and over again. He could have destroyed all men in the time of Noah, but he spared this man and his family and so made possible the continuation of the human race. He could have destroyed the Jewish people again and again because of their rebellion against his will, but he gave them opportunity after opportunity to turn from their evil. Finally, as the greatest demonstration of his grace, he sent his Son to be "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.) "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.)

III. This passage of scripture shows us the REASONABLENESS OF GOD'S WAY.

"Come now, and let us reason together."

God's explanation of creation is reasonable. It is much more reasonable to believe that the physical universe came from supreme power and wisdom than from some unintelligent, inanimate particle of matter. God's laws of conduct are reasonable. These laws have stood the test of time, and when men and nations through the ages have lived by these great principles, they have enjoyed a far greater measure of happiness and stability than those who have followed the course of human wisdom and have sought to satisfy the baser appetites of the fleshly man. Today our nation is in grave danger because too many, even some in places of high authority and influence, are making a mockery of the great time-tested principles of God and are exalting the low, degraded, doomed-to-destruction ways of godless men.

God's plan of salvation is reasonable. When Jesus was on earth, he preached that it was necessary for men to believe on him, repent of their sins, confess their faith in him, and be baptized for the remission of their sins. (John 8:24; Luke 13:5; Matt. 10:32, 33; Mark 16:16.) When he gave his great commission before he returned to heaven, he taught the same thing. (Matt. 28: 18-20; Luke 24:46,47; Mark 16:15,16.) When the apostles went out under this commission to preach the gospel throughout the whole world, they taught the same thing, that men must believe in Christ, repent of their sins, and be baptized in order to be saved. (Acts 2; 8; 9; 10; 16; 18.) This great plan of salvation is very reasonable because faith in Christ destroys the love of sin; repentance destroys the practice of sin; confession of one's faith in Christ destroys allegiance to sin; baptism destroys the guilt of sin. Though God's great plan of salvation is based upon faith, the wisdom of God's way gives reason for man's faith.

IV. This great invitation shows MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY. "Come."

Christ said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) God has always given man the responsibility of doing something for himself. Noah could not keep the flood from coming, but he could build the ark as God told him to do. The blind man could not cure his blindness, but he could go to the pool of Siloam and wash as Jesus told him to do. (John 9.) We cannot remove our own sins, but we can believe in Christ through all the evidence that God has given in his word. We can repent of our sins. We can confess our faith in Christ the Son of God. (Acts 8: 36,37.) We can be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:19,20.)

V. This great invitation shows us the VALUE OF TIME. "Come now."

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) Today, now, is the time to accept this great invitation and come to God for cleansing through obedience to the gospel of Christ, the power of God to save. (Rom. 1:16.) Someone has told about a lad's reaction to Proverbs 23:26: "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." This bright boy heard and was deeply impressed by this text, but he did not give his heart to the Lord. He did not obey the gospel, because he had plenty of time. Ten years later a brilliant young collegian heard the same text under favorable circumstances, but there was still plenty of time., Twenty years later a statesman of considerable fame heard the same text from an aged preacher, but at the moment there was much government work to be done, nations to be visited, great responsibilities to meet.

While on one of his state missions, he was stricken and died. He was heard to say, "Too late." The bright boy, the brilliant collegian, the renowned statesman were all the same. He had passed many opportunities by. Procrastination gave Satan the victory. For our good in this life and for our eternal welfare, the Lord says, "Come now."

The most frightening fact we have to face: "... every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12.)

Called The Sons Of God

Curtis E. Flatt

There are those who are correctly called the sons of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (1 John 3:1.) Not only does that verse show that there are sons of God, but it also shows that not all people are sons of God. Of course, in the sense that God created man, all men are the offspring (sons) of God. (Acts 17:28, 29.) However, there is another relationship where God has children and the devil has children. (1 John 3:10.) The sons of God are the promised heirs of God. (Romans 8:14-17.) This should be reason enough to learn all things possible about being the sons of God.

Who They Once Were

The sons of God have not always been his sons. The Ephesians were children of God. (Eph. 1:5-11.) However they had not always been his sons, for at one time they had been by nature children of wrath. (Eph. 2:3.) The Colossians had God as Father. (Col. 1:3.) But at one time they had been children of disobedience. (Col. 3:6.) All men, who are capable of knowing right from wrong, have been other than sons of God. Jesus Christ came to earth to give men the power to become sons of God. (John 1:12.) And even now, all men are either the sons of God or else they are the sons of the devil.

How They Became Sons

God has fathered all his sons. He has begotten them. (James 1:18.) The seed by which he has begotten them is the word of God. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth..." (James 1:18.) However, man must receive this seed for it to be effective. That is why it is said that Christ gave men power to become children of God. Men must hear, believe, and obey this word, which is of the Father, to become his children. New life begins after obedience. "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.) That is much like the statement found in 2 Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature..." The new creature comes when one gets into Christ. One gets into Christ when he is baptized into Christ in obeying the word which is able to save. In Galatians 3:26,27 we learn that men become sons or children of God when they believe and obey. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." This process of becoming sons of God is called a new birth. (John 3:3-5.) It is also called adoption. (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5.) Both God and man do something when a man becomes a son of God.

The Son's Place

Now, what is the place of one who has become a son of God? His is a place of subjection unto the Father. Like the only begotten Son of God, the born again son who has become a joint heir with him, is required to obey the Father. Jesus did. The other sons must. That is the teaching of 1 John 3:1-10 where we are taught that the son of God does not live

a life of sin as he once did. He cannot sin; that is, he cannot habitually sin. He cannot remain in subjection to the devil, and still be a son of God. He, as shown in 1 John 1:8-10 and 1 John 2:1, will still be subject to temptation and sin in the which he will have Christ as his lawyer to plead his case. However, he cannot continue in a sinful life. His place as a son is a place of righteousness before the Father.

The place of the son of God is also a place of fruit bearing. (John 15:1-5.) God expects his children to be laborers in his vineyard. There is so much to do. There is work on every hand. The sons of God are charged to do this work.

The place of the son is also a place before the altar of the Lord. He is to offer up spiritual sacrifice to the Father. (1 Peter 2:5.) His place is in the gathering when true worshippers come to worship God in spirit and in truth, He not only is to be there but is to exhort others to be there who might be negligent. (Hebrews 10:25.) The sons of God have a place to fill.

The Sons' Prospect

There is a portion which belongeth to the son even in this life. Here he is in Christ where all blessings are to be had. (Eph. 1:3.) Redemption, salvation from past sins, justification, and many other like blessings are things which are his portion now. In prospect, the son has much in store. This is summed up in 1 Peter 1:3-5 like this. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. " What a prospect!

Are you a child of God? Can you rightfully be called sons of God?

* * * * *

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

Youth: Too happy to think—time yet,

Manhood: Too busy to think—more gold,

Prime: Too anxious to think—worry,

Declining Years: Too aged to think—old hearts harder to get.

Dying Bed: Too ill to think—weak, suffering alone.

Death: Too late to think—the spirit has flown.

Eternity: Forever to think—God's mercy past. Into hell I am righteously east, forever to weep my doom.

—Author Unknown

"THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS"

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

One of the principal doctrines of CALVINISM is that it is impossible for a child of God to be eternally lost. This is often referred to as "The Impossibility of Apostacy," or "Once Saved, Always Saved," or "The Security of the Saints."

I give you here one of the more bold statements of the doctrine by a Calvinist preacher, in a tract entitled DO A CHRISTIAN'S SINS DAMN HIS SOUL? Quote: "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul ... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in anymore danger." (Underlining mine, CGM.)

CAN YOU BELIEVE SUCH???

Please understand me: I have no ill will toward any group or individual who believes or teaches this doctrine. (I myself was a member of a church in which this is taught for several years of my younger life.) But this doctrine originated with Satan himself; and this very attitude was expressed by him in the garden of Eden when he said to woman, "Thou shalt not surely die," after Jehovah had warned that as surely as they ate of the tree which stood in the midst of the garden they would die! Just as soon as I began to study the Bible for myself, and ceased simply to listen to preachers and take what they said without question, I immediately saw that this doctrine was false.

As is so with all religious error, God anticipated this erroneous teaching and, IN HIS WORD, refuted it before it was conceived in the mind of man! CONSIDER WITH ME SOME OF THE MULTITUDE OF SCRIPTURES WHICH DISPROVE THIS DOCTRINE.

One Talent Man Cast Out

In Matthew 25:14-30 we have the "Parable of the Talents." In this the "One Talent Man" was, as were the others, a "servant of his master." Because he was "wicked and unprofitable," he was "cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." This represents a CHILD OF GOD, as a "servant" of THE MASTER.

Unfruitful Branch Cast Forth

Consider John 15:1-2,4,6: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch IN ME that BEARETH NOT FRUIT he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me... If A MAN abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and CAST THEM INTO THE FIRE, AND THEY ARE BURNED." Here you

have a "branch" IN CHRIST (and for one to be IN CHRIST is to be a "new creature"—2 Cor. 5:17) being cast into the fire and burned because of UNFRUITFULNESS!

Carnal Mindedness Is Death

In Romans 8:1 we are told there is "no condemnation to them which are IN CHRIST, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The implication is that even for those ("new creatures") IN CHRIST there is CONDEMNATION if they "walk after the flesh"! Further in the same chapter (v. 6) we are warned that to be "carnally minded IS DEATH"! But, a child of God CAN be carnally minded, as shown in 1 Corinthians 3:3.

Unfaithful Branches Broken Off

Then further on in that same Roman letter (11:20-22): "Well; because of unbelief they (Jews) were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, TAKE HEED LEST HE ALSO SPARE NOT THEE. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which FELL, severity; but toward thee, goodness, IF thou continue in his goodness: OTHERWISE THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF"! Of whom is the inspired writer speaking? Of Gentile Christians, who, if they failed to continue FAITHFUL, would be CUT OFF from Christ!

Paul's Fear of Being a Castaway

Now, I challenge you to begin reading at verse twenty-seven of First Corinthians, chapter nine, and read through verse twelve of chapter ten. In this the apostle Paul expressed fear that he himself might be lost! Then he relates the condemnation of the Jews, for their rebellion against God, as children of God, and urges the Corinthian Christians that this should serve as a warning to them: "Wherefore LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL"! This really does not sound much like it is IMPOSSIBLE for a child of God to be lost, does it?

Galatians Removed from Grace

The same inspired apostle wrote to Christians of Galatia that he "marveled that (they were) so soon REMOVED FROM HIM WHO CALLED (them) INTO THE GRACE OF CHRIST." Can one be saved without the grace of Christ? Those Christians, who had to be IN His grace in order to be saved from alien sins (Eph. 2:8-9), had now been REMOVED from that grace because of their following after false teachers, who had perverted the gospel of Christ. Further, in that same letter (5:3-4), "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is debtor to keep the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE." Those who had been "called into the grace of Christ" were being deceived by false teachers into thinking they should keep portions of the old law; and they are told that if they thus attempted to be "justified," they HAD "fallen from grace"! Then UNINSPIRED men come along and say, "It's IMPOSSIBLE for a child of God to fall from grace"! Which will YOU believe???

Warning to Christians

Finally, consider the warning of the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:9-10. After having listed

the "Christian graces" and urging them (and us) to give diligence to add the same, he warns, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that HE WAS PURGED FROM HIS OLD SINS. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to MAKE your calling and election sure: for IF ye do these things, ye shall never fall." The clear implication is that all who do not grow in these characteristics, although they have been purged from their old sins, WILL FALL!

These passages could be multiplied; however, I believe these prove, beyond a shadow of doubt that it IS POSSIBLE for a child of God to so sin as to be ETERNALLY LOST, and that we must therefore carefully guard against such.

But, although I do not believe the Bible teaches the Calvinistic doctrine of such, I DO believe that even here, in the last scriptures cited, Inspiration teaches "The Security of the Saints," and this I hope to present for your consideration in the next issue of this paper.

MEDITATION

Robert E. Waldron

There is a decided lack of real Bible knowledge among Christians. Very few Christians can tell a sinner how to be saved with passages to substantiate. This situation can be and must be improved. The way to improvement is by the avenue of study and meditation. Following are a few remarks which, perhaps, will be worthwhile in your efforts to make improvement in this exercise of your mind.

Meditation, in the spiritual realm, can be compared to sunshine in the physical realm. A fact, meditated upon, becomes an idea. Many seem to be of the opinion that meditation went out with fasting. Meditation is simply the dwelling of the mind upon some fact. Meditation takes one into the farthest corners of an idea. "But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and on his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psa. 1:2.) Thus is the blessed man described. David says, "Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psa. 119:97.) He says in yearning, "Mine eyes anticipated the night-watches, that I might meditate on thy word." (Psa. 119:48.)

One meditates by considering things which have been learned. We learn that God created the heavens and the earth. If we meditate upon this fact, then we, too, with the psalmist, will utter, "Bless Jehovah, O my soul. O Jehovah my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty: who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters..., who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be moved forever." (Psa. 104:1-3,5.)

Meditation will enrich the soul. Make it a practice to meditate every day at some time or other. Meditation is a vital part of one's spiritual life. Do not neglect it. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.)

Life is a one-way street and we are not coming back.

ARE WE LIKE JONAH OF OLD?

Jonah was a prophet of Israel from the tribe of Zebulun. God spoke to Jonah and commanded him to go to Nineveh and proclaim its doom. But Jonah refused to do as God had told him. Instead, he went down to Joppa and boarded a ship for Tarshish, thinking he could escape the presence of God.

However, God sent a great tempest upon the sea, and the waters became so troubled that those on board feared the destruction of themselves and the ship. So the mariners commanded everyone to throw all baggage overboard to lighten the ship.

During all this uproar, Jonah was down inside the ship asleep. The shipmaster came to him and said, "What do you mean, sleeper? arise, call upon your God, if he will consider us, so we will not perish! (Jonah 1:6.)

Then they decided to cast lots to see who was the cause of the storm, and the lot fell upon Jonah. So they began to question Jonah, asking, "What is your occupation? and where are you from? and of what people are you?" (Jonah 1:8.)

In answer to these people, Jonah replied, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord who made the sea and the dry land." (1:9.) This frightened the men, therefore they asked Jonah what they should do to him that the sea might become calm. He told them to cast him into the sea. However, the men tried, in vain, to row the boat to land.

After a prayer to the Lord, they threw Jonah overboard and the sea ceased its raging.

Now God had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, where he remained three days and three nights. He prayed earnestly to the Lord, and the Lord caused the fish to vomit Jonah on dry land.

Again God told Jonah to go preach to the Ninevites, and Jonah went.

It took a tempest and being thrown overboard to bring Jonah to his senses, to do as God said. Must we be taken by storm and destruction to make us do as God has commanded us: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel"?—Selected.

"EXPERIENCES WITH GOD"

Carl Gilbert

Our religious friends and neighbors have made great blunders in talking about their experiences of grace, or their experiences with God. They seem to think one must relate some strange experience as a condition of acceptance with God. Nowhere in the Bible do we find such taught. But I do not believe we should allow the error that has been and is being taught to blind our eyes to the reality of the many experiences we must have with God if we are to please him.

John, the apostle of love, said in I John 2:3, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." Thus, I ask the question: "What does it mean to know God?" There is more involved than simply acknowledging the existence of God.

(1) We must know something of the divine character of God: His goodness, mercy, longsuffering, and his willingness to forgive. All of these can be seen in his dealing with our forefathers which are recorded in the Bible for our learning. In 1 Corinthians 10:11 Paul said, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and are written for our admonition " He further states in Romans 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience of the scriptures might have hope." Thus we know of his love and patience and his willingness to forgive by observing his dealings with his people of old.

(2) We cannot really know God until we have known him through "experience."

A. We experience the goodness and kindness of God in the daily provision of bread; and for this we should ever be grateful.

B. We experience the grace and love of God when we (through obedience to his word) are forgiven of our sins and adopted into the family of God.

C. We experience the fellowship of God in our periods of private prayer and public worship.

These experiences are real, and very vital in forming the proper character before God. Thus, in knowing God, we must have an experience with him; but this comes in our study of ant obedience to God's word.

Experience his love and forgiveness by hearing his word (Rom. 10:17), believing in Jesus as the Christ (Acts 2: 37), repenting of your every sin (Luke 13:3), confessing your faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and that before men (Matt. 10:32-33, and being baptized for the remission of your sins. (Acts 2:38.) Then, experience his fellowship in your worship and work for him (1 John 1:7) until the time when you can experience an association with him around his heavenly throne.

CAN WE KNOW WHETHER WE ARE SAVED OR NOT?

Frank Timmerman

This question or one similar is one that troubles quite a number of people it would seem. Then there are others who are certain they are saved who have placed their confidence on erroneous proof. Surely the question is one that deserves careful study.

I. There are two avenues of knowledge open to man. One is the knowledge of experience. I know that water is wet because I have felt it: it is a matter of experience with me. I know that there is such a place as Lockhart, Alabama, for I have seen it and live there; hence, I know it by experience. We know by experience that such things as telephones, radios and televisions exist because we have seen and heard, hence, experienced them. There is a good deal that is known to us by experience. However, if all we know is what we have experienced, we would know comparatively little, because by far the greater portion of human knowledge comes through the avenue of faith, or evidence. I know that such a person as President Nixon lives and is the chief executive of this nation, not by experience, but by evidence, hence, by faith. I have never seen nor had personal contact with Mr. Nixon in any way; therefore, if I could only know a thing by experience, I could not know anything about our president. Fortunately, such is not true. I am just as certain that I know that there is such a man and that he is president as I am of anything. The fact is that the vast majority of the average person's knowledge comes by means of evidence or faith.

II. Can one know by either of these two avenues whether he is saved or not? Do we know that we are saved because of something we have experienced? We must remember that forgiveness that produces salvation takes place in the mind of God. Can I know by experience what takes place in the mind of another being? It seems to me to ask that question is to answer it. Surely no man of judgment would say that we can experience what is taking place in the mind of another person. In 1 Cor. 2:11 the same question is asked in these words: "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Hence, no one can know by experience what is in the mind of a man nor of God. Such knowledge has to be revealed to him; but when it is revealed it is not known by experience, but by faith in the evidence of the revelation. Therefore, since salvation takes place in the mind of God, if I am to know that I am saved, God must reveal it to me by some means so that I can believe it, or know it by faith.

III. God does reveal the knowledge of salvation to man. He does this through the gospel. Paul points out that He "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. 1:10.) In Rom. 1:16 it is pointed out that "the gospel of Christ ... is the power of God unto salvation." The gospel tells us what kind of a person God has determined in His mind to save. You and I can read the gospel to find out what kind of a person God says He will save. Then we can examine ourselves and determine whether we are that kind of person or not. For instance, the gospel says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16.) That verse tells me what kind of person God said he would save; and I know whether I have complied with the conditions given or not. Thus I can know by faith in what God has revealed whether I am a saved person or not. Certainly there is more to the gospel than one or two verses, but the point is, we can read all the gospel says about salvation and determine whether we are the kind of people that the

gospel says God will save or not. This is what is meant by the writer of the letter to the Hebrews when he said, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." (Heb. 10:22.)

IV. Let us run a test on ourselves:

1. The gospel reveals that one must hear and learn what God teaches, for John 6:45 says, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Have you heard and learned God's teaching?

2. The gospel further testifies, "These (things) are written, that y might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing y might have life through his name. (John 20:31.) Have you believed in Christ as God's Son?

3. Again the gospel says, "Re pent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Have you repented?

4. It is also written in the gospel that one must "arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) Have you submitted to baptism?

5. The gospel also tells us to add the graces found in 2 Pet. 1:5-7 which are to our faith add virtue knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love And in verse 10 it is affirmed, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Have you added these things to your life?

6. The gospel warns in 2 John 9, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Are you carefully abiding in the teaching of Christ?

7. In Matt. 24:13 Christ said, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Are you continuing faithful?

V. Yes, one can know. Having done those things demanded, and having avoided those things which I am told to avoid, I certainly ought to know that I am saved. If I am still in doubt, it is no compliment to me to be a doubter. Rather, it only manifests my lack of faith in what God hath said. Further, it is an insult to God, because in doubting Him, I make Him a liar. (Cf. 1 John 5:10.) Certainly the Bible teaches that we can know and will know when we are saved; and the person that is in doubt of his salvation either does not know the gospel, or he just doesn't believe it; or else he knows that he has not come up to what God asks of him.

Do you know that you are saved? If not, will you not act NOW?

DIVINELY GIVEN NAMES FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE

Earl Kimbrough

The New Testament employs a number of terms to identify and describe the saved collectively. For instance, the saved are referred to as "the body" of Christ, "the house of God," "the kingdom of his dear Son," and "a spiritual house." The New Testament also employs a number of terms to identify and describe the saved individually. Your attention is called to some of these terms used to designate the members of Christ's spiritual body. Each of these has special significance and shows a particular relationship which is sustained by the faithful children of God.

1. The word "Christian" shows relation to Christ. The word signifies "a follower of Christ." It was first used at Antioch in Syria. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26.) Those who fail to comprehend the importance of this name contend that it was first given in derision by the enemies of Christ and later came to be accepted by the disciples as a proper designation. There is no proof for this. In fact, the verb translated "were called" is used about eight other times in the New Testament and always indicates a divine call, or a divine action. This name seems to have been divinely given in fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah said, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." (Isa. 62:2.) It is significant that Antioch in Syria was the first predominantly Gentile church and that from it Paul went forth to declare the gospel to the Gentiles of the Roman world. The apostle Peter regarded the name "Christian" as a divine designation for God's people. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Pet. 4:16.) The New American Standard translation makes this clearer: "but in that name let him glorify God." There is no name greater than the name of Christ. (Acts 4:11,12.)

2. The word "children" shows relation to God. The word literally denotes one who is born, a son, or a descendant. It is used figuratively to signify the new birth. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12, 13.) It is also used figuratively to indicate character. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." (John 8:39.) Jesus was speaking to the literal children of Abraham, but they were not of the character of Abraham. On the other hand, they were of the character of the devil, and Jesus called them children of the devil. (v. 44.) New Testament Christians are God's children because they have been born again and because they seek to develop a godly character by doing the Father's will. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14.)

3. The word "disciple" shows relation to the truth. A disciple is literally "a learner." The word "denotes one who follows one's teaching." The term therefore shows relation to a teacher as a result of his teaching. "A disciple is not above his master (teacher)." (Matt. 10:24.) The New Testament speaks of disciples of John, disciples of the Pharisees, disciples of the Herodians, Moses' disciples, as well as the disciples of Christ. In each case the disciples sustain a relation to their teacher, being bound to him by means of his teaching. The word disciple is used in three ways in regard to Jesus. (1) It denotes His personal followers during His ministry on earth. (Matt. 10:1; John 4:1.) (2) It denotes believers before

baptism. "Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19.) This does not mean that believers were children of God before baptism (Gal. 3:26, 27); but it simply means that in becoming children of God, the first step is to learn the truth. It is only in this sense that believers are disciples prior to baptism. (3) It denotes those who are children of God and members of the Lord's church. (Acts 8:3; 9:1.)

Discipleship in the latter use of the word requires four things. (1) To be a disciple of Christ, one must follow Christ. (Matt. 16:24.) (2) To be a disciple one must continue in the word, the teaching, of Christ. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31,32.) (3) To be a disciple one must love the Lord's disciples. (John 13:34, 35.) One simply cannot be a disciple of Christ if he hates or mistreats other disciples. (4) To be a disciple one must bear fruit. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:8.) All of these things require the right relation to the truth: knowing the truth, believing the truth, obeying the truth, abiding in the truth. Without the truth one cannot be a disciple of Christ.

4. The word "brother" shows relation to God's family. The word is used literally to denote the children of the same father, or fleshly kinship, but it is used figuratively with reference to Christians. The Colossian letter is addressed "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ." (Col. 1:2.) This brotherly relationship pictures God as our Father, Christ as our brother over God's house, and all the brethren as God's spiritual family, the church. (Eph. 4:6; 3:14,15; Heb. 3:6.) This relation, like all of those the Christian sustains, makes certain demands of us. (1) It requires brotherly love. (Rom. 12:10.) (2) It requires brotherly helpfulness. (1 John 3:17.) (3) It requires brotherly admonition. (2 Thes. 3:6,15.) (4) It requires the exercise of care so as not to cause a brother to stumble. (1 Cor. 8:13.) One can no more disregard the duties of this relationship than he can disregard any other obligation GOD has placed upon him.

5. The word "saint" shows relation to righteousness. A saint is one who is separated. Spiritually, it denotes one who is separated from sin and consecrated to God. A saint is a holy person: holy because he belongs to God, and holy because he lives a life consecrated to God. The word is applied by inspired men to the members of the Lord's church. (Col. 1:2; Acts 9:13; 8:3.) This shows that the church is made up of sanctified people, those who have been set apart for God's own purpose. (1 Cor. 1:2.) It is in this sense that Paul refers to the church as "the churches of the saints." (1 Cor. 14:33.) These were local congregations composed of saints. Christians have been sanctified through the gospel. (Eph. 5:25-27.) This sanctification requires a life befitting one separated from the world and consecrated to God as His own possession. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1.)

Each of these five terms—Christian, children, brethren, disciple, and saint—describes and identifies the people of God, the members of the Lord's church. Each shows a different phase of the Christian life. And each indicates the Christian's relation to divine things, as well as his obligations and the blessings that grow out of this divine relationship.

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Baptism Keeps Good Company – No. 2

Irven Lee

In an earlier study, it was noticed that baptism was included in the great commission, and found sitting in the same seat with faith and repentance. On Pentecost and in examples of conversion among Jews and Samaritans, baptism was mentioned in connection with the authority of Christ, the kingdom of God, and the remission of sins. The Father, the Son, or the Spirit are mentioned regularly in the verses that mention baptism. This heaven assigned ordinance keeps good company.

Baptism Commanded

In the conversion of the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, Holy Spirit baptism was taken as proof by the Jews that water should not be refused the Gentiles for baptism. They were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Peter and other Jews had to learn by impressive evidence that they were not to call any man unclean. Learning that God had granted repentance unto life meant they could also be baptized into Christ.

Baptized That Night

Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to the jailer and his house so that they could believe in Jesus Christ and be saved. This sermon said enough on baptism and its significance that "he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Acts 16:30-34.) He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. The sermon that led them to believe and be baptized was in answer to his question: "What must I do to be saved? They were not talking of trivials. Was it ridiculous for them to be baptized the same hour of the night? Were not all the examples of conversion selected for our learning in the book of Acts examples of people who were baptized immediately after they believed? Was baptism always mentioned? Search and be impressed. These examples were written for our learning.

Hearing, Believed, and Were Baptized

The book of Acts tells of some of the work of men who went out into various parts of the world to preach the gospel so people could believe, be baptized, and be saved. Paul, for example, was not disobedient to the heavenly vision authorizing and equipping him to go to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" in Christ. His experience at Corinth was typical. It is said that "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." (Acts 18:8.) Why, do you suppose, was baptism always mentioned? It was taught by those inspired men. To reject it would have been to reject "the counsel of God against themselves." (Luke 7:30.) Forgiveness and sanctification were goals in Paul's efforts. When he succeeded, the hearers believed and were baptized. (See Mark 16:16.)

Romans Six

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart

that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6: 17,18.) Of what form of doctrine was he speaking? Read the first part of the chapter. He there speaks of being baptized into His death, of being buried with Him by baptism, and of being raised in baptism as Christ was in His resurrection from the dead. This planting and resurrection is a picture or form of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We are to obey this form. This is important because it leads to being made free from sin. If you have doubted the importance and necessity of baptism, read chapter six of Romans a few times and be impressed with the company baptism keeps.

Faith in the Operation of God

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. 2: 12,13.) This act of baptism, which is a matter of being buried with Him and raised with Him as commanded, is accepted because of faith in the "operation of God." He is the One to forgive sins, and He promises this to penitent believers who obey this form of doctrine. People travel through this life only once. It pays to be careful. Many people need to read the many passages that mention baptism and notice the company it keeps. It is not mentioned with the trivial.

Baptism Doth Also Now Save Us

Peter mentions the longsuffering of God that "waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:20,21.) Baptism doth also save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ or this verse would not have so plainly stated it. Man cannot boast when his sins are washed away or forgiven; but he can well afford to be thankful that God gives so much by His grace when man complies with His will that is so often repeated.

Water by the Word

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. 5:25,26.) He gave Himself, so the price is already paid. He then cleanses and sanctifies those who accept the washing of water that is authorized by the word. What washing of water is the commanded? There is only one washing of water authorized in the New Testament. It is called baptism, and is mentioned in connection with Christ's death and in connection with His great victory over death. It is certainly often mentioned with cleansing, washing away of sins, forgiveness, remission of sins, and with salvation or being saved. Stop and think of the company baptism keeps. Remember you make this trip through life to the judgment but one time, and you should leave no stone unturned to be prepared to be saved at that time.

"TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR"

Some people get much more out of a talk, or a lecture, or a sermon than others because they listen more attentively. A little boy was asked by his teacher to stand before the class and read aloud a paragraph from his reader. After he had finished the reading, the teacher asked him to explain in his own words what he had read; but he said that he could not. When he was asked why he could not explain what he had just read to the class, he replied, "I wasn't listening;"

This article simply points out how to hear most effectively the word of God when it is preached. In Luke 8:18 Jesus said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear"

1. We need to hear restfully—that is, we need to be rested instead of worn out, tired, and sleepy when we come to hear the word of God preached. Sometimes people work so hard, or stay up so late before they attend a service that they are physically and mentally exhausted. Then when the lesson is being taught, and they are battling sleep, they are in no condition to receive much benefit from the proclamation of the word of God. Christ said that his disciples are to put the kingdom first. (Matt. 6:33.) There are many ways by which we can put the kingdom first, one of which is to look forward to the worship with such joyful anticipation that we see that we come with rested bodies and alert minds.

2. We need to hear attentively. In the days of Nehemiah, when the people had returned from Babylonian captivity, and the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street to hear the reading of the law of God. Even though Ezra read from morning until midday, the scriptures say that "the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." (Neh. 8: 1-3.) When Peter preached the great sermon on the day of Pentecost, he demanded the attention of the people: "Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words." (Acts 2:14.) Knowing that he had a message that was absolutely vital to their salvation and to their eternal destiny, he in no uncertain terms demanded their attention.

3. We need to hear humbly and reverently. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.) When we come together to worship and to study the word of God, we need to remember this promise and humbly to be aware of the presence of the Lord. Recognizing his majesty, those before the throne of God humbly give him glory, honor, and thanks by saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11.) Surely, as creatures of the earth, we need to be humbly reverent before him.

4. We need to hear honestly. We must not cling to cherished views of our own, and exalt them above the word of God, but rather our attitude should be that of young Samuel when he said to the Lord, "Speak; for thy servant heareth." (1 Sam. 3:10.) Once a girl read Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." When she was asked what the passage teaches, she said that it teaches that faith is essential to salvation. When it was pointed out to her that the passage says "he that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved," she then replied, "All my life I have been taught that salvation is by faith, and even though the passage mentions baptism, I still think that salvation is by faith without baptism." And yet in this passage baptism is clearly set forth as a prerequisite of salvation as is faith.

5. We need to hear inquiringly. Men of Berea are complimented in the scriptures in these words: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11.) When Paul came to Berea preaching the gospel, because this was a new and strange message to the people, they inquired into the matter and put the teaching to the test by searching the scriptures "daily, whether those things were so." John has warned, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone into the world." (1 John 4:1.)

6. We need to hear eagerly. Since so much depends upon our learning and doing the will of God, we should always hear the truth with great eagerness. We are told that the young ruler ran to Jesus to ask him the question, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17.) The preacher also should be eager to proclaim the gospel, God's power to save. Philip, the evangelist, ran to the eunuch to preach to him Jesus. (Acts 8:30,35.)

7. We need to hear patiently. No hearer should ever look at his watch, or the clock, during a service. In the first place clock watching indicates lack of interest, and in the second place it will not bring the service to a close one whit sooner. The following incident in the life of "Raccoon" John Smith shows that time means little when one is truly interested in hearing the gospel. This happened when Smith heard Alexander Campbell preach for the first time. He had been introduced to Campbell by a friend named William Vaughn. "when the congregation was dismissed, Smith immediately remarked to Elder Vaughn: 'Is it not hard, brother Billy, to ride twenty miles, as I have done, just to hear a man preach thirty minutes?' "You are mistaken, brother John; look at your watch. It has surely been longer than that?" He looked at his watch, and to his surprise, saw that the discourse had been just two hours and a half long. Holding up his watch he remarked: 'I have never been more deceived. Two hours of my life are gone, and I know not how, though wide awake, too, all the time!'" (Life of Elder John Smith, by Charles E. Williams, p. 131.)

8. We need to hear personally. The question is, "What must I do to be saved?" Just before Jesus was crucified he said to the twelve, "Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me." And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?" (Mark 14:18,19.) Someone has said that, with the tendency to apply the word of the Lord to others more than to self, the reply today might be, "Is it that rascal, Lord?"

9. We need to hear impartially. People have a tendency to show partiality to speakers. When someone famous for his ability as a speaker occupies the pulpit, many may come, but when someone not as gifted preaches the truth, many may be conspicuous by their absence. It is said that after two young men heard an accomplished orator preach they came away saying, "What a wonderful speaker!" Later they heard a man with far less ability to speak in flowery terms, but when they left, they said, "What a wonderful Savior!"

10. We need to hear obediently. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall

enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7: 21.) "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5: 8,9.) "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:17,18.)

"THERE" IS GOD'S PLACE

John D. Swatzell

God's Commands to Elijah

"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the Lord came unto him saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." (1 Kings 17:1-4.)

I do not believe that the ravens would have fed Elijah anywhere except "THERE, at Cherith. Notice: God did not allow Elijah to wander around; He did not allow Elijah to choose the "place of his choice." Cherith was the "there" of God's will for Elijah. When God said "there" Elijah had no choice!

"And the word of the Lord came unto him saying, Arise get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: Behold I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." (1 Kings 17:8,9.)

Again, I do not believe that the widow woman would have appeared anywhere else except "THERE."

"THERE" is God's place! A reading of this entire account will reveal that "there" is the (1) Place of God's Will, (2) Place of God's Purpose, (3) Place of God's Power. In both instances, God's will was made known (v. 2, 8); God's Purpose was revealed (v. 4,9); and God's Power was effective (v. 6, 10ff). The arrangements were strange perhaps (fed by ravens, sustained by a barrel of meal and a cruse of oil that did not run out), but the plan worked, as it always does when it is God's "there."

"There" Is Not Just Anywhere

No place is "just as good" when God says "there"! There is a need for a suitable application of this principle in our modern day. Many people, in fact the majority of people, believe that regardless of what God says about "there," that they have a right to a place of their own choosing and ways of doing to their own liking. If you do not believe this, then just read your Bible and observe man's actions in religion! We are not told whether Elijah was pleased, humanly speaking, with the arrangements God made for his care, but we can note that God did not consult Elijah on the matter! God simply told him "there." Elijah was not allowed to advise God, and neither are we! If we want God's blessings, we must be "there"—God's place of Will, Purpose, and Power!

"There": God's Will

God has a "there" for us today. As God told Elijah what He wanted him to do, He has also told us what he wants us to do. We are to do the "Will" of God. (Matt. 7:21-23.) It has been revealed in an understandable way, and He expects us to understand it. (Eph. 5:17; 2

Tim. 2:15.) This revealed Will (Eph. 1:9a), was directed by no man, but rather by God Himself. (Eph. 1: 11b.) This Will is now in written form, our Bible. (Heb. 1:1-2; John 20:30-31.) This is an unchangeable Will (Gal. 1: 8-9; 2 John 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19.) Therefore, as God's Will (Bible) reveals a "there" for us today, let us hear and receive it for exactly what it is: God's Will.

"There": God's Purpose

When God revealed His Will to Elijah, He revealed His place of purpose, Cherith, Zarephath. God has revealed to us the place of His purpose for us: that place is "in Christ." (Eph. 1:10-11a; 3:11.) God has told us that the "there" of blessings and provision is now "in Christ." We reach this place of blessing as we comply with God's directions (as did Elijah), and follow His commands. (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:17; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23b.) Thereby we enter Christ, are added to the church, the body over which Christ reigns, being Himself the Saviour of the body, the church. "THERE" is God's place. We are no more at liberty to have a "choice", as to a place other than "there," than had Elijah!

"There": God's Power

The power of God was not manifested until Elijah, after hearing God's Will, did according to God's Purpose—going to Cherith and to Zarephath. Then, and only then, did God reveal the blessings of provision according to His Power. Today, when the Word of God is obeyed (Rom. 1:16; 2 Thess. 1:7-9), we too receive what God has promised (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16; Heb. 5: 8-9), the blessing of remission of sins, and by His power we are translated into the Kingdom. (Col. 1:13; John 3:3-5.)

"THERE" IS GOD'S PLACE!

"There" is the place of God's Will, Purpose, and Power, and no where else! Do not try to bargain with the Lord. "There" is God's place, and you cannot please God anywhere but "THERE."

DISPENSE THE "LIVING WATER"

W. A. Moody

"Give me to drink"! Jesus requested of the woman of Samaria as He sat tired and weary on Jacob's well near Sychar.

Thus Jesus began their conversation on "Living Water," on "Worshiping in Spirit and in Truth" and on how He was the Messiah called Christ. He also told her that she had had five husbands and that she was not married to him with whom she then lived. (John 4:5-42.)

Carrying "Living Water" instead of that from Jacob's well, the woman of Samaria left her waterpot, went her way into the city and told all to the Samaritans, many of whom believed because of her saying, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (vs. 29, 39.)

Many more believed after hearing Jesus and they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." (John 4:42.)

Converse with even your casual acquaintance about the "Living Water" which becomes within one "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Perhaps he will confess Christ, too! Give opportunity for others to drink of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness by preaching the Gospel to them. (Zechariah 13:1.) "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10.)

About 3,000 took of the "Water of Life" freely after Peter told them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"! (Acts 2:38-41.)

The Pathway Of Divine Favor

Curtis E. Flatt

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." (Psalm 40:1-3.) This paragraph from the fortieth psalm has had diversity of explanations, but the simplest and most logical explanation is that this was David's description of his being brought into divine favor. The various things which he mentions are the very same things which are involved in any man being brought into divine favor in the Christian dispensation. Let us make the comparison in this study.

The Awakening

The psalmist came to himself. He awoke. He recognized that he needed God. In verse one, we are told of his cry unto the Lord.

This is the beginning of being brought unto God even today. The sinner must come to recognize that he is a sinner and that because of that he is separated from God. He must awake to his need and cry unto the Lord as did Saul of Tarsus when he said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6.) Until the sinner awakes to his condition and to his need of God, there is no way he can be brought into divine favor.

The Deliverance

When the psalmist cried unto the Lord, the Lord heard him and delivered him. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay." (Psalm 40:2.) Of course this is figurative language. However, it is too apparent to mistake. The Lord still delivers people from the horrible pit and the miry clay of sin. Of course, the manner in which this is done differs from God's way for his people under the Law of Moses. Nevertheless, it is God, rich in mercy, who saves. (John 3:16.) But how does God save man? Does he operate in some vague, mysterious way, impossible to be seen or understood? No! He saves man from his sins by providing the life-line—the gospel of Jesus Christ his Son. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek," (Romans 1:16.) While it is the Lord who delivers man from his sins, the man who wants this deliverance is required to do some things. He must hear and believe what is contained in the gospel which saves. (Heb. 11:6.) He must repent of his sins. (Acts 17:30.) He must confess his faith in Christ as God's Son. (Romans 10:9, 10.) He must be baptized for the remission of his sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16.) When man does this, he is still an unprofitable servant. He still must depend upon the Lord to deliver him from his sins. He can't do it for himself. But this does not mean that he is excused from doing what God tells him to do.

Security Provided

When the Lord delivered the psalmist from the miry clay, he set his feet upon a rock. (Psalm 40:2.) He made him secure. No longer did he stand in miry clay where once he stood.

In these last days, the Lord, when he delivers man from sin, sets him upon a rock—a place of security. He is made secure upon that wonderful foundation of truth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Firmly implanted upon this rock, the Christian is secure. He need never fear. If he continues to do his part—if he remains faithful in Christ as he is required, he can speak with the assurance of the apostle to the Gentiles: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1:12.) "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.) Thanks be to God for such security!

Walk Established

The psalmist, when made secure, had another thing done for him. His goings were established by the Lord. He might have been easily caught again in the miry clay but for the fact that the Lord established his going—that is, told him the way to go. The Christian, too, might be caught again in the miry clay of the old way were it not for the fact that he has his walk and way established for him by the Lord. Such statements as Titus 2:11,12 clearly define this: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." He has established our going, too.

Worship Established

When David came into divine favor, he was not only blessed by having his goings established for him, but he also was blessed by having a worship established for him, pleasing in the sight of God. Notice verse three. "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God ..." For those in divine favor in the Christian dispensation, God has also established a worship which suits him. In First Corinthians we find this set forth. When the Lord's people came together, they ate the Lord's Supper. (11:20-29.) They also sang and prayed and had God's word taught. (14:14-19.) They were likewise instructed to give of their means according as they had been prospered. This is what God authorized as worship. In 1 Corinthians 14:25 this is called worship. Since it came from God, it must be pleasing unto him, even though it seems not to be pleasing to many. Those in divine favor are happy to engage in these activities and to be contented with them.

Further Results

When the psalmist came into divine favor he was blessed with all these things being provided for him. But in addition, there were other results which followed. "Many shall see it, and shall fear, and shall trust in the Lord." (Psalm 40:3.) Other people are blessed when one comes to terms with God, The same thing is true today. Others benefit when people become Christians and remain faithful. There is great power in Christian example. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14-16.) What a wonderful thing it is to follow the pathway that leads to divine favor!

READ THE LONG PSALM

Irven Lee

The Bible is the word of God. It is THE "law by which we are to live and worship. This living and powerful word is complete for modern man as it was for men of the first century of the reign of Christ. Many believe it. Many deny it. This is an important difference in the Christian and the non-Christian.

Those of us who profess to believe the Bible to be the will of God should act as if we believe. If it is His counsel we should be very eager to know what it says, and we should be zealous to apply it in our daily conduct. Faith and ignorance are not compatible. If there is great faith and reverence, knowledge will follow as night the day. If there is great respect for His will, acceptable worship and proper conduct will also be certain to follow. One of the best ways to combat false doctrine and indecent behavior is to build faith in the revealed will of God.

Toward a Proper Attitude

The entire one hundred nineteenth Psalm is dedicated to building our respect for the judgments of the Lord. Read, respect, and meditate on this chapter, and it will make you better. Would you like to take time out now to read this longest chapter in the Bible? Every verse in it deals with this idea of regard for what God has said.

The long psalm is divided into twenty two segments with eight verses in each grouping. Each group is headed by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Most of us are unable to see how the writer emphasized each Hebrew letter in its segment, but from our English translation we can see how the writer sought to help us see that we have a great treasure in these precepts.

Identifying Words

The psalm speaks of the law of the Lord as being His testimonies, ways, precepts, statutes, commandments, and righteous judgments. We are to walk in His ways, keep His testimonies, love His law, learn His righteous judgments, meditate on His precepts, delight in His statutes, and lay up His word in the heart that we might not sin against Him.

The Profitable Word

Those who walk in His ways do no iniquity so it is the great protection from sin. We are not to be ashamed of His law because there are wondrous things therein, if we would but open our eyes to see them. We have reason to delight in His word, and to rejoice in His testimonies as much as in all riches. The word has the power to turn one away from covetousness, vanity, and fear. His righteous judgments give us the answer to the tempter, and the way to find His mercy. It brings comfort.

Declare His Ways

What should we do with His word? We should keep it continually for ever and ever, and

we should talk of His wondrous works. If we find it so practical and useful to ourselves, we should declare it as the freewill offerings of the mouth. The entrance of His words gives light and understanding, so it is only natural that we would want others to share in the understanding offered in His exceeding broad commandments.

Is There Something Wrong?

If horror has taken hold of the people it is because of the wicked that forsake His law. Those who deal perversely should be ashamed, because the good judgment and knowledge are in His word so that men need not walk in darkness. The proud may hold the man of God in derision, but we should never decline to keep His law. If we entreat His favor, He will be merciful according to His word. He will be surety for His servant for good. We know the Lord is good and does good, even if the proud forge lies against us, so our lips should utter praise and our tongue should speak of His word.

There Is Room for Hate

If we esteem all His precepts to be right and see that it is through them that we get understanding, it is in order that we hate every false way. Those that fear Him and have knowledge should turn unto Him as their hiding place and shield. Love for the law and hate for lying belong in the same heart. The testimonies which He has commanded are righteous and very faithful, so one who loves this law would not want it perverted.

Prayerful Attitude

Since men go astray as sheep it is proper for man to cry unto the Lord for help. It is good for man to say: "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, and let thy judgments help me." Please notice how many verses in this great psalm have appeals to God for help similar to the expression in verse 149. "Hear my voice according to thy loving kindness: O Lord, quicken me according to thy judgment." The psalmist would promise to keep His precepts and then say: "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes." Prayer is very much in order in this matter because this righteousness is everlasting righteousness, and His law is the truth. Eternity is involved.

The Questions Have Been Answered

"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." (Verse 89.) We live in a confused world with many points of controversy. The Bible teaches the truth on every issue. We need to search the scriptures to see. How wonderful it would be if there were some way to persuade all to approach God in a prayerful spirit saying: "Teach me good judgment and knowledge. "I think," "They do," and "My preacher said" cease to be authorities when we come to realize that His word is settled in heaven.

"HE COMETH TO THE LIGHT..."

Eugene Crawley

Light and darkness are contrasted a number of times in the word of God, as are those who follow each. It is a contrast rather than a comparison, because there is no likeness of the two. One is opposed to the other, and the one loving one also hates the other. The person who loves truth hates darkness (error): "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psa. 119:104); and the one who loves darkness hates light: "For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light . . ." (John 3:20.)

Jesus had somewhat to say about this throughout his earthly ministry. He made it very plain in regard to those who loved the truth (or light), as well as those who loved error (or darkness) when he said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds maybe made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:19-21.) From this we can plainly see why some love darkness, and refuse to come to the light. Those who do evil, who walk in darkness, and engage in that which is not the truth, love the cover of darkness, and refuse to come to the light.

When one refuses, or is even reluctant, to come to the light, to have the light of God's word turned upon him and his teaching, it is evident that he is afraid of reproof, and fears (or knows) that his teaching will not stand the test. On the other hand, that person who loves the truth above all else, and wants nothing else, COMETH TO THE LIGHT, for he has nothing to fear. For even if he is wrong, he needs, and wants, to know it; whereas when he is right everyone needs to know it; thus he cometh to the light, and does so continually that he may continue to be right.

The conclusion then must be that those who refuse to COME TO THE LIGHT, are not willing to defend publicly their actions or teaching, well know that they cannot stand the light of God's word lest they be reprov'd. This should be cause ENOUGH for those who find themselves among such, to come out from among them, COME TO THE LIGHT, come to that which does not fear investigation, and STAND UPON THE TRUTH, AND FOR IT.

Truth prospers when it cometh to the light; error does not; and thus must remain in darkness, under cover, and be kept quiet. Which do you love: LIGHT OR DARKNESS? Will your teaching and practice stand the light of God's word? Are you willing to come to the light, and allow your works to be made manifest??? "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." (Eph. 5:13.)

* * * * *

When Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he summoned to his side his man in waiting and said, "Read to me out of the Book." "Which book?" answered his servant. "There is only one Book," was the dying man's response—"The Bible!"

THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Earl Kimbrough

The apostle Paul was without doubt the greatest evangelist who ever lived. His evangelistic jounries, when viewed from the standpoint of conversions and influence, are unparalleled in the history of man. His life and labors in the kingdom of Christ cover a major portion of the New Testament. More than half of Acts is concerned with his deeds, and fourteen of the twenty-one epistles, including the four largest ones, were written by him. The Lord considered the life of Paul as worthy of imitation by others. (1 Cor. 11:1.) But even so he was to be followed only as he followed Christ. Surely if Paul is to be our example his life is an appropriate study. Look at this man's life from four vantage points.

1. There is Paul's life when he opposed and persecuted Christ. Prior to his conversion Paul was a dyed-in-the-wool Jew. He belonged to the sect of the Pharisees which he described as "the most straitest sect of our religion." His zeal for Judaism led him to persecute the church of the Lord. In persecuting the church he was actually persecuting Christ. The Lord asked him the question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4.) Yet, at the very time Paul was persecuting Christ his character was above reproach. He possessed a good conscience. (Acts 21:1.) He did what he honestly thought was right. (Acts 26:9.) He was earnestly seeking to please God in his life. (Acts 22:3.) He was blameless "as touching the law." (Phil. 3:6.) And his persecution of Christ was done in ignorance and unbelief. (1 Tim. 1:3.) But none of these things, nor all of them together, could make him acceptable with God. There are those who would excuse men in their conduct, regardless of what it is, if they acted upon the principles Paul did prior to his conversion. But his good conscience, sincere desire to do right, and steadfast efforts to please God were not enough. And his keeping the law of Moses could not save him. (Gal. 2:16.) Nor could he plead ignorance and justify himself upon that basis. He was fighting against God all this time and he later referred to himself, concerning this period of his life, as "the chief of sinners." (1 Tim. 1:13.)

2. There is Paul's conversion to Christ which changed his life. The one thing Paul did not have during his life as a zealous Jew was the one thing he needed most. It was the only thing that could save his soul and make him fit for heaven. That was the gospel of Christ. This missing link in his life was supplied during one of his jounries to persecute Christians. On his way to Damascus he saw, heard, and talked with the object of his persecutions. He asked Jesus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the answer came, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:6.) Saul did as he was told and three days later was baptized into Christ by a certain disciple named Ananias. (Acts 9:17,18.) Three changes were made in Paul's life by his conversion. (1) His heart was changed from unbelief to belief. "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." (Acts 9:20.) He did not believe this when he left Jerusalem a few days before. (2) His manner of life was changed by repentance. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of life. Paul turned at once from a life of opposing Christ to a life of preaching and living for Christ. (3) His relation to Christ was changed by baptism. He was baptized for the remission of sins. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) Baptism brought him into Christ, i.e., into union and fellowship with Him. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3.)

3. There is Paul's life as a preacher of the gospel. The reason the Lord appeared to Paul is evident from His instructions to Ananias. "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." (Acts 9:15.) Paul was to be an apostle, a special witness and representative of Christ in making His will known to man. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and began at once to preach Jesus as the Son of God. (Acts 9:17,20.) His preaching turned the world upside down. (Acts 17:6.) He shook the mighty Roman Empire to its very foundations. Yet he professed that the power was not in himself but in the truth which he proclaimed. (1 Cor. 2:1-5.) He never compromised the truth, although he did everything within his power, within the limits of truth and right, to lead men to Christ. (1 Cor. 9:20-22.) His preaching was powerful, not because of personal magnetism or charisma, but because the word he preached was powerful. He moved men, not by deathbed tales or emotional rhetoric, but by the truth of God.

4. There is Paul's life of suffering for Christ. He suffered much for the gospel of Christ. He doubtless suffered more in defense and propagation of the truth than any man who ever lived. He certainly suffered far more than we are called upon to suffer for Christ today. (Acts 9:16; 2 Cor. 11:23-28.) Yet, the most remarkable thing about his suffering is not the abundance of it, but the attitude he maintained in his suffering. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. 4:11.) About six of the last ten years of Paul's life were spent in prison. He used this time, not to complain about his condition, but to worship God and to teach His word. At least five of the New Testament epistles of Paul were written while he was a prisoner. Even in death Paul was a patient sufferer for Christ. When the end was in sight and the shadow of execution hung over him, he could say: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.)

Is there any surprise that the life of such a man is worthy of imitation? Did a more dedicated Christian ever live? In every facet of his life in Christ Paul manifested a faith, a loyalty, and a devotion to the kingdom of Christ that all but defies human comprehension. He is a source of strength and encouragement to all who would live for Christ today. We should willingly follow him as he followed Christ. But no man can follow him as he followed Christ unless he begins where Paul began. One must believe that Christ is the Son of God, repent of his sins, confess his faith in Christ, and be buried with Him by baptism for the remission of sins.

THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS—Part II

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

Some Perversions of Truth

There are several fundamental doctrines in religions of our land which, although FALSE as they are represented in denominationalism, ARE BIBLE DOCTRINES. In other words, what we hear concerning those Bible subjects are PERVERSIONS OF WHAT INSPIRATION REALLY TEACHES.

We hear much about "salvation by faith only," which is FALSE, while it is certainly true that we are "justified by faith." Another prominent doctrine is that man is saved "wholly of the grace of God." Salvation IS by the "Amazing Grace" of God, but man appropriates the blessings of that grace by OBEDIENCE. Then, there is the doctrine of "The Security of the Saints" (The Impossibility of Apostasy). In the March issue of this paper we set forth an abundance of inspired evidence that IT IS POSSIBLE for a child of God to so sin as to be eternally lost, and that we who have been "born again" must "watch" and be "stedfast," for we DO NOT NOW POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE!

Salvation Can Be Secure

However, as we stated in the last paragraph of that article, I DO believe the Bible teaches "The Security of the Saints"; that I CAN secure my eternal soul's salvation; and now in this article I would like to share with you BIBLE EVIDENCE that this is true. If you are a child of God—in spite of the fact that you can be lost in eternity if you are careless—you can have heaven as your eternal reward, if you CARE enough to give heed to the following scriptures.

The first passage I want to call to your attention is that which we last considered in our previous article—2 Peter 1:1-11. Peter says that it is possible for the child of God to "make (his) calling and election sure," and then shows HOW this may be accomplished. He must "give diligence" in his faith to supply virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. He adds that "if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"! The child of God who wants to keep from falling must diligently pursue these characteristics as long as he lives.

In Romans 8:1 we are shown that the person IN CHRIST will not be condemned IF he walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit. In the book of Galatians, chapter five, verses nineteen through twenty-three, we have recorded the "works of the flesh" and the "fruits of the Spirit." The Christian is free to walk after either. By choosing to produce in his life the "fruits of the Spirit," he strives toward the "security" of his soul from condemnation.

The Hebrews writer, in chapter twelve, verses one and two, urges the Christian, having entered the race, to lay aside every hindrance, that he might "run with patience (steadfastness) the race" set before him. The apostle Paul told Timothy (2 Tim. 4:6-8) that he confidently looked for the "crown of righteousness" because he had "fought a good fight, finished (his) course, and kept the faith." Earlier in his life he wrote to the Philippians acknowledging that he had NOT "laid hold" on eternal life, but that the "one thing" he was

determined to do was to "press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In other words, with Paul there was one consuming interest —being faithful, to the saving of his soul.

This same peerless apostle wrote many words of exhortation to others, that they do likewise. To Timothy he urged, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." To the Corinthians he wrote, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The beloved apostle John was instructed of the Lord to write, "Be thou FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10); and he, in one of his short epistles (1 John 5:4), encourages us to faithfulness with, "... and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Christians Can Be Victorious

The life of the Christian is not only a "race," which we must "run with patience," but it is a BATTLE—with Satan and his forces. Neither is it a little "skirmish," but a "life and death" struggle to the end of life here! In view of this the apostle Paul urged the Ephesians (6:19ff) to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God (loincloth of truth, breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with preparation of the gospel, shield of faith, helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit) that (they) may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." He left no doubt in their minds that this would be a struggle ("having done ALL to stand"); but he assures them that they CAN "quench the fiery darts of the wicked"; that they CAN, with the help of the Lord, be VICTORIOUS!

You who have not obeyed the gospel (have not begun the race; joined in the battle) we urge to do so, by exercising your faith unto repentance, a confession of Christ and being buried with Him in baptism; and all this "from the heart." (Rom. 6:1-18.) Then you must, along with those of us who have already begun the race, "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ..." May we all "give diligence to make our calling and election SURE"!

Thoughts For Young People

Robert E. Waldron

We have all heard about the intellectuals and rebels of college. Who is not familiar with the long-haired beatniks, or hippies as they are called now? This study is about problems that young people of today face from this avenue.

It is surprising to learn that many of these young men and women who are rebels seemed quite normal before they went to college. What then transformed them into glorified tramps, honor members of the beat generation? What are the explanations for their behavior?

Answers in the Bible

As a Christian, I believe the Bible. If this were not so, I would not be preaching. The Bible is the inspired record of the accumulated and inspired wisdom of the past ages of man. Four thousand years of wisdom are not to be dismissed lightly. There is something to it. Flimsiness does not stand the test of forty centuries. I say these things to make the point that the Bible can furnish the explanations to the questions I have raised. I would not waste your time with drivel and nonsense; therefore, my ultimate appeal is to the Bible.

There is a chance that, if you are a young person, you may be sucked into the whirlpool that engulfs many of these young people. That is why I want to point out a few things to our young people for them to think about. It might be good if we would address ourselves to them.

Kinds of Rebels

Did you realize that there are kinds of rebels? Albert Einstein was a rebel. Billy Mitchell, the father of the air force, was a rebel, and our own Lord was a rebel. These men, however, are not to be compared to the self-styled rebels of our day.

Young rebels of today are of basically two sets: constructive and destructive. I hope that you, and I, and everyone will be a constructive rebel. We can do this by attacking our problems, new and old, with gusto, speaking out against dishonesty, lying, cheating, and the many sins of our existence. This kind of rebellion has furnished the fuel for all the progress man has seen.

The other kind of rebel has his ancestors too: Barabbas, Attila the Hun, and of more recent years, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and many others. They, like the constructive rebels, have provided fuel, but their fuel, instead of furthering progress, has burned it up, destroyed it, and set it back.

Today's Rebels

The rebels of our day range from communists, through the LSD crowd, to the long-haired hippies who preach a vague concept of what they call love. When you set foot on your college campus, you will meet nearly all of them. They claim to be different, non-conformists, yet their costumes are the most easily described of any. Absolutely essential is

long, uncombed hair. Sunglasses or steel-rimmed glasses accent their profile. A scraggly, or luxuriant beard, as their capacity will allow, is an essential. Then levis rolled up a few turns, or better still torn off. A shirt with the sleeves ripped out, or a t-shirt and scuffed, worn-out sneakers almost complete the costume. Spread a thick layer of worked in grime over the entire hippie, clothes and all, and you have the classic social rebel.

Why?

Let's ask what causes these young people to act this way. First of all, most of them come from an abnormal family life where they did not learn what it was like to be a good man because their father wasn't one. The same thing is true of girls and their mothers. Secondly, they almost all are the product of a lack of solid Bible training. They have no strong faith to which to cling nor any code of morals upon which to stand. Thirdly, many of them discovered that they did not have all the answers. Unless you are prepared for it, this discovery can be quite a shock. No one has nor can have all the answers. If he did, he would be all-knowing. I've never met anyone like that. I have read of someone like that—in the gospel account.

There is, however, a more dangerous class of rebels. These are the well-dressed, fast-talking, intelligent rebels of our day who are taking the older generation apart because there are wars and famines in the world. These young people carry banners and advocate this, that, and the other. They use some terms that sound innocent, but they mean the same thing as some older terms. Free love is fornication and is about as noble as the love life of a troop of baboons. Freedom that they advocate is anarchy. But there are some questions that they pose for the older generation and vehemently demand answers. Let's look at them in the next issue of this paper.

* * * * *

WHICH WAY ARE WE HEADED?

If we are trying to go to heaven and take everybody with us we can, we will have to place truth above the desire for peace and progress.

Truth must have priority over friendship: Differences are unpleasant. There is no excuse for them unless they in some way affect our reaching our destination. Truth is more important than friendship. It is not a friendly act to compromise the truth. Love for friends demands that love of truth be put first.

Truth must have priority over courtesy: John sets the limitations of courtesy where truth is involved: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 10-11.)

Truth must have priority over peace, unity, fellowship: These are most desirable. We have preached millions of sermons on "Unity." It is sad we cannot enjoy more of it. But these things are results not goals. They follow conformity to the truth as naturally a night follows day or as water runs down hill. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." If we get it any other way, it is not the genuine article. Would it not be wiser to preach more on loyalty to God and his truth, and let the peace, unity and fellowship come in their natural order?—W. E. Brightwell.

"FOR CHRIST SENT ME NOT TO BAPTIZE"

It is amazing to see what people will do when their doctrines cannot be supported by the word of God. In giving the great commission Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16.) Sometimes people who do not want to recognize baptism as being essential to salvation array scripture against scripture by asking, "What about the thief on the cross? He was saved and was not baptized." In the first place, the scripture does not say whether he was or was not baptized. To say that he was not is pure assumption. In the second place, the words of Christ spoken to the thief may not necessarily mean that he was saved. In the third place, granting that he was saved, he still would not constitute an example of conversion for us. He lived at a time when Christ could speak directly to him as he did to the man sick of the palsy, and the sinful woman, and forgive their sins. (Luke 23:42; Luke 5:18-26; Luke 7:36-50.) We live under the last will and testament of Christ. (Heb. 9:16,17.) After his death on the cross Jesus gave his great commission in which he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16.)

In another effort to repudiate baptism as being essential to salvation people often refer to 1 Cor. 1:17, wherein Paul said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Then the argument is made that baptism is no part of the gospel. It is strange that one might belong to a church whose name is associated with and based upon baptism and at the same time make great effort to show that baptism is no part of the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. It is also saddening to see people misrepresent and misinterpret the word of God in their efforts to justify a false doctrine.

I. What is the meaning of 1 Cor. 1:17?

Read the passage in its context, 1 Cor. 1:10-17.

It is evident from this scripture that division existed at Corinth. Some said they were of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas, some of Christ. Paul, wanting no part in that division, said, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel..."

Verse 17 is an elliptical sentence. "Christ sent me not to baptize (only), but (also) to preach the gospel." A parallel statement would be John 12:44, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me (only), but (also) on him that sent me."

Baptizing people was commanded. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:18, 19.) Paul labored under this commission. When he taught the gospel, and people became learners, or disciples, he was

commissioned to baptize them. The gospel is made up of facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed. Baptism is one of the commands to be obeyed. (Acts 10:48.)

If Christ did not send Paul to baptize, Christ repudiated his great commission. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16.) If Christ did not send Paul to baptize, Paul disobeyed Christ, for he did baptize. He says that he baptized Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas. If Christ did not send Paul to baptize, Paul was unfaithful. Faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord. (Rom. 10:17.) Abel offered his sacrifice by faith; Cain did not. (Heb. 11:4.) Abel did what God told him to do; Cain did not. In 2 Tim. 4:7 Paul said that he "kept the faith." Paul, therefore, was faithful. He did what Christ told him to do. Under the commission of Christ he preached, and he baptized.

The fact is that instead of 1 Cor. 1: 17 showing that baptism is not essential to salvation, the passage shows the extent to which the apostle Paul recognized the importance and essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins. The 18th chapter of Acts shows that Paul reached Corinth alone—before his travelling companions, Silas and Timothy arrived. He did not wait until their coming to preach the gospel to the Corinthians, nor did he await their coming to baptize those who wanted to obey the gospel. When his helpers arrived, or when others were available, they could administer the baptism. Scholars plainly recognize this to be the meaning of this passage of scripture.

Alford: "It is evident that this is said in no **derogation** of Baptism, for he did on occasion baptize,—and it would be impossible that he should speak lightly of the ordinance to which he appeals (Rom. 6: 3) as the seal of our union with Christ."
—**Greek Test.**, Note on 1 Cor. 1:17, Vol. II, p. 478.

Barnes: "**For Christ sent me not to baptize.**" That is, not to baptize as my main business. Baptism was not his principal employment, though he had a commission in common with others to administer the ordinance, and occasionally did it."—**Notes**, on 1 Cor. 1:17.

Calvin: "Two things, however, must be noticed here. The **first** is that the Apostle does not here absolutely deny that he had a command to baptize, for this is applicable to all the Apostles: **Go and baptize**; and he would have acted rashly in baptizing even **one**, had he not been furnished with authority, but simply points out what was the Chief thing in his calling. The **second** thing is that he does not by any means detract here, as some think, from the dignity or utility of the sacrament. For the question here is, not as to the efficacy of baptism, and Paul does not institute this comparison with the view of detracting in any degree from that; but because it was given to few to teach, while many could baptize; and farther, as many as could be taught at the same time, while baptism could only be administered to individuals successively, one by one, Paul, who excelled in the gift of teaching, applied himself to the work that was more especially needful for him, and left to others what they could not conveniently accomplish."—**Com, on 1 Cor.** 1:17, p. 72.

Tertullian: "But they roll back **an objection** from **that** apostle himself, in that he said, 'For Christ sent me not to baptize;' as if by this argument baptism was done away! For if **so**, why did he baptize Gaius, and Crispus, and the house of Stephanas? However, even if Christ had not sent **him** to baptize, yet He had given **other**

apostles the precept to baptize. But these words were written to the Corinthians in regard of the circumstances of that particular time; seeing that schisms and dissensions were agitated among them, while one attributes **everything** to Paul, another to Apollos. For which reason the peace-making apostle, for fear he should seem to claim all gifts for himself, says that he had been sent 'not to baptize but to preach.' For preaching is the prior thing, baptizing the posterior. Therefore the preaching came first: but I think baptizing withal was lawful to him to whom preaching was."—**On Baptism**, Chap. XIV., **Ante-Nicene Fathers**, Vol. III., p. 676.

II. Is baptism in water essential to salvation?

Here is the testimony of Christ. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16.) Here is the testimony of Peter. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.) "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 3:21.) Here is the testimony of Ananias. "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) Here is the testimony of Paul. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:17,18.) "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." (Rom. 6:3,4.)

The form of doctrine to be obeyed from the heart in order to be free from sin is baptism, the form of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Why then would Paul array himself against himself? Why would he say in one letter that baptism is no part of the gospel and in another that it must be obeyed from the heart for freedom from sin? Paul does not array himself against himself, nor must any man place such an interpretation upon the teaching of Paul that would repudiate what he really said, or that would cause Paul's teaching to contradict his teaching. However, when men refer to 1 Cor. 1:17 and try to have Paul saying that baptism is no part of the gospel (which he certainly did not say), they have placed the great apostle in the unfavorable light of contradicting himself, and arraying himself against himself.

Except ye Repent!

Curtis E. Flatt

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." That was the striking condemnation which Jesus made of his people as recorded in Luke 13:3. A little later, when the great commission was given, repentance was one of the requirements for the remission of sins. (Luke 24:46, 37.) When the apostles began to execute this commission, repentance was one of the things they preached as being necessary to obtain remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) The apostle to the Gentiles taught: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30.) Not only is repentance required to obtain remission of past sins, but repentance is also required of the Christian who sins, if he wants remission of his sins. (Acts 8:22.) These scriptures, together with others, show that men must repent or perish.

The Difficulty of Repentance

It is one thing to admit that repentance is necessary to obtain forgiveness. It is another thing to repent. Men find it most difficult to repent of their sins. It is comparatively easy to persuade men to confess their faith in Christ and to be baptized for the remission of their sins once they have repented. However, so few of us are willing to face up to the requirements of repentance. It has long been that way. One of the hardest sayings of Jesus was to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum because they would not repent. (Matthew 11:20-24.) But notwithstanding, if a man dies without having repented of his sins, there is no blessing promised for him in all of God's book.

What Is Repentance?

Since repentance is such an important thing and such a difficult thing, all men should want to know what repentance is. Many people do not know. Repentance is not what some think it is. A feeling of conviction of sin is sometimes thought to be repentance. However, in the second chapter of Acts, when the Jews heard and believed the gospel, they were convicted of sin and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Notwithstanding the fact that they were convicted of sin, they were still told to repent. Hence, a feeling of conviction of sin is not repentance even though it may be a necessary prerequisite leading to repentance. Then, fear is sometimes evaluated as repentance. Fear can lead men to repentance, but fear is not repentance. In Acts 24:24, we learn that Felix even trembled at the preaching of Paul but still needed to repent. Sorrow, also, which is felt keenly is often thought to be repentance. Sorrow can lead to repentance, but sorrow, even of a Godly sort, is not repentance. Esau, it is said, "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Hebrews 12:17.) As important as Godly sorrow may be, it is not repentance. With others, a reformation of life is thought to be repentance. Reformation of life is a product of repentance, but it is not repentance. A man may reform his life for various reasons without even thinking about repenting, and just because a reformation has taken place does not necessarily mean that repentance has taken place.

Repentance is a change of will or a change of heart. In Matthew 21:28,29, it is said that a certain man had two sons, and he said to one of them, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." He said, "I will not." But the Bible then says: "But afterward he repented and

went." He repented. He changed his mind—his will. This resulted in a reformation of life. The prodigal of Luke 15 illustrates this. He came to himself. He changed his will. He had a change of heart. He said: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." (Luke 15: 18.) He repented. In Matthew 12:41, Jesus said that the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. What did they do? In Jonah 3:10 we learn that they turned from their evil way. They had a change of will. This is called repentance.

What Leads Men to Repentance?

A number of things can lead men to repent of their sins. Some repent when they are impressed with the goodness of God—when they learn the story of Jesus and how God so loved the world that he gave Jesus to die for all. Romans 2:4 states that the goodness of God leadeth men to repentance.

Fear is another thing that can lead men to repent. Jonah used this to persuade the people of Nineveh to repent. Jesus used this to induce his people to repent even in the text we used as an opening text in this article. Many people have been led to repent because of their fear of condemnation.

In 2 Corinthians 7:10 we learn that Godly sorrow worketh repentance also. Being sorry is not repentance, but it does lead men to repent if they are sorrowing over their sins against God. Thus a number of things can lead men to repent of their sins.

Repentance, then, is a change of heart or change of will which is brought about by any of the above mentioned motivations. This results in a reformation of life. This reformation can be easily seen. It results in the cessation of those things which are evil and in the practicing of those things that are right as revealed in the Bible.

Heaven's door will never open to those of us who will not repent of our sins. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE WAY

Mike Creel

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding." (Prov. 3:13.)

The simplicity and effectiveness of the New Testament Church contrasted with the modern concept of Christian religion, being in a state of confusion, division and utter chaos, is astounding. Jesus of Nazareth, a Jew, the son of a carpenter, by his simple teachings during a brief three year period, influenced the entire world more than the wisest of men, mightiest of military leaders, or most complex of scientific works. He came "to seek and to save the lost," (Lk. 19:10); therefore, to the lost He went. He taught them the truth of God in parables which they could understand. (Matt. 13:13.) These parables, full of deep meaning, are written for our learning. The idea that only the "well-educated" can understand the Bible is a misconception propagated many years ago even until now by those who delight in the praise of men for their "understanding." "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is," was commanded to everyone. (Eph. 5:17.)

The Simple Gospel

The chosen apostles of Jesus went forth after his ascension preaching one doctrine, converting souls, and giving this ministry to others to do likewise. (Acts 2; 2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Cor. 1:10.) In doing this Jesus said others would believe in Him. (Jno. 17:21.) Unlike many religious teachers of today, Paul's "preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:4); but he preached that Jesus was the Christ (2 Cor. 4:5), which according to the wisdom of men was foolishness. (1 Cor. 1:18-25.) Paul was not, however, ashamed of the simple Gospel, for he knew that it was God's power to save men's souls (Rom. 1:16); and he had an undying desire to give the plan of salvation to the lost.

False Teachers

Anyone can understand the Bible so as to obey its commands and be saved. If this were not true God would be a respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34-35.) "Many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 Jno. 4:1), "who shall bring in damnable heresies..., and many shall follow their pernicious ways." (2 Pet. 2:1-2.) They are "deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13), wolves in sheep's clothing so to speak (Matt. 7:15), "...which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned... for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18), "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:30.) They say, "You cannot understand the Truth, let me tell you what it really means; put your Bibles aside." These people may even be part of the "clergy" as Paul pointed out in Acts 20:28-30. Some of the "clergy" in the past have said, "It was not lawful for the lay people to have it (the Bible) in their mother tongue." (William Byron Forbush, Fox's Book of Martyrs, p. 176-184.) William Tyndale (1490-1536) responded to this by asserting that the "clergy" intended to keep the world in darkness, that "they might sit in the consciences of the people through vain superstition and false doctrine, to satisfy their ambition, and insatiable covetousness, and to exalt their own honor above king and emperor." (Ibid.) He further denounced the "Church

leaders" and determined to "cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more Scripture than he (the Pope) did." (Ibid.) He therefore translated the New Testament and part of the Old Testament into English for which he was burned at the stake.

Surely everyone can understand God's will for them as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Certainly the Church again can be effective in today's world as in the days of Peter, Paul and Philip. The divisions, and chaos can be eliminated by a return to the old paths in religion, by the recognition of the supremacy of the Bible and inferiority of the judgments and opinions of man with respect to religion.

Our plea is for unity and simplicity based on Bible doctrine which yields Bible worship and Bible Christianity. We are just Christians following only the Bible.

FAITH SHIELDS FROM FEAR

W. A. Moody

Is your confidence placed in the Word of God when you fear and are troubled?

Fear fell on Zacharias, the priest, whose lot was to burn incense in the Lord's temple at Jerusalem. He saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar. (Luke 1:1-12.)

Unable to quite believe what the angel told him, Zacharias asked, "Whereby shall I know this?" He thought that he and his wife, Elisabeth, were much too old to be having a baby boy born to them now!

The angel had even said, "Thou shalt call his name John. " And "many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord." Being "great" meant four things: John would not drink wine or strong drink, he would be filled with the Holy Ghost, he would turn many Israelites to the Lord their God, and he would, in the spirit and power of Elijah, prepare people for Christ's coming by turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. (Luke 1:13-18.)

Of course, this could not have happened to finer people. This priest and his wife were righteous before God and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Luke 1:6.)

Then the angel revealed himself to the priest. He was Gabriel, the one who stands in the presence of God. He answered Zacharias, "Thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed." (Luke 1:19-20.)

Neighbors and kinsfolk were surprised after the baby was born because Elisabeth named him "John" instead of "Zacharias" after his father. Upon being asked about it, the old priest, yet unable to speak, wrote: "His name is John!" Immediately, his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed and he spoke the praises of God. (Luke I: 13, 58-64.)

God had sent Gabriel with the glad tidings about the birth of John who would make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (Luke 1:17.) And the words were fulfilled in their season even though Zacharias feared, was troubled and could not quite believe them at first.

The Lord can perform His will in your life as He did in the lives of Zacharias, Elisabeth and John. Your faith in His Word will shield you from worldly fears as you walk worthy of God who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory! (1 Thess. 2:12.)

* * * * *

Sin causes the cup of joy to spring a leak.

The Narrow Way

R. Elmo Hazelwood

Jesus said: "...strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14.)

The two words describing the way to life are: STRAIT and NARROW. STRAIT means strict, scrupulous; rigid. NARROW means of little breadth, not wide or broad. This is not the popular way. "...wide is the gate, and broad is the way and many there be which go in thereat." (Matt. 7:13.) Jesus, having perfect knowledge and wisdom, and knowing what was in man, made a way which fits all man's needs for both here and hereafter, and still is very specific and narrow in his instructions.

Discipline Required

The narrow way is the sure way to happiness, now and forever. Self-control and discipline are its watchwords. But even in the present world, is a goal accomplished without discipline and rigorous self-control? No! Listen: Dr. Charles William Mayo—grandson of the original Dr. Mayo wrote: "Some people have asked me if it upset me when father (Charles) or Uncle Will came into the surgery to watch me work. I'm amazed at the question, really; being upsettable is not a very good trait in a surgeon. I not only was indifferent to visitors but also to my own fatigue or hunger. I could operate from seven-thirty in the morning until three in the afternoon without stopping to rest or eat (7 ½ hours), and then I'd make rounds of my patients. When I was finished, the feeling of being fresh and alert would vanish and I'd realize I was a desperately exhausted and hungry man. But I had felt as stimulated and ready for the last operation as I had for the first."

Paderewski, the world famous Polish pianist practiced eight hours a day. At times he played until his fingers bled.

The young man in 1954 who broke the four-minute-mile record ran until he fell on the sandy beach, and as soon as he could he stood up and ran some more—this was his way of training.

Almost without exception, champions have had to confine their lives to narrow limits. Whether he is a master at chess, cards, golf, skating, shooting, or running, he walks a narrow, and often lonely way. His goal when achieved, is sweet for a while, but it is only for a little time and his corruptible crown fades quickly away.

The narrow way which Jesus describes, is often lonely and comparatively unoccupied. The crowds are on the other, broad way.

Cost and Rewards

Now, let us count the cost and the rewards:

The cost of walking in the narrow way means self-control, discipline and submitting our will to God's will. It means "hungering and thirsting after righteousness." It also means being

persecuted because we "speak where the Bible speaks, and keep silent where the Bible is silent." It means that some of our enemies will be they of our own household. (Matt. 10:36.)

The rewards will be permanent; they will last forever. Rev. 2:7: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Two Ways Foretold

God inspired Isaiah to write about the broad way, and the narrow way, hundreds of years before Jesus established the narrow way. Isaiah 35:8 (ASV): "And a highway (broad way) shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for the redeemed: the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon; they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy."

Note how the prophet's way is like Jesus' narrow way—the way that leadeth unto life—the Christian's way to heaven.

Isaiah said, "...it shall be called the way of holiness." HOLY means: "set apart and dedicated to the service or worship of God." This describes a Christian in that "way."

The way of holiness means also that it is a way that comes from God, who is holy—"perfect in righteousness and divine love; infinitely good: worthy of complete devotion and trust; commanding one's fullest powers of adoration and reverence." (Webster.)

"The unclean shall not pass over it . . ." That soul which is contaminated by sin, who lives after the flesh, will not be in that way.

"It shall be for the redeemed..." REDEEM: "To buy back. Repurchase. To liberate (as from slavery or captivity) by paying a price: ransom... To release from blame or debt: clear, justify." (Webster.)

Jesus shed his blood to "buy us back" from the devil and sin. When we obey the gospel, we are redeemed, made free from sin, and are in the way of the redeemed. This is what Isaiah spoke of in anticipation.

"The wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein." The prophet, still talking about that way, is especially emphasizing the simplicity of the gospel way.

The wayfarer—the man who is just passing by— can have that way explained to him in a few sentences; and look at the next expression: "... yea, fools, shall not err therein." The simple minded shall not make a mistake in understanding the gospel way of salvation.

The Simple Gospel Plan

Here is how simple it is: First we must HEAR the gospel. Rom. 10:14: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Next they must

BELIEVE. Mk. 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Hob. 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He must REPENT. Lk. 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." CONFESSION must be made. Rom. 10:10: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." BAPTISM comes next. Acts 2:38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

When, in this simple way, we obey the gospel, then we are made free from sin, we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus, this puts us into the "narrow way," set apart and dedicated to the service and worship of God.

Failure is the line of least persistence.

"GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD"

Earl Kimbrough

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jno. 3:16.)

This verse is probably more widely known by people generally and more frequently referred to in sermons than any single verse in the Bible. Yet, no verse is more abused and misused. It is relied upon as a proof text of salvation by "faith only," as well as other erroneous doctrines. To so use this verse is to miss the point of its teaching and to make it contradict the plain teaching of the New Testament regarding salvation. In order to see what John 3:16 does teach it is good to consider each of its component parts.

1. "For God so loved the world." The word "world" here denotes the human race. It embraces those for whose sins Christ died. (Jno. 1:29.) The love of God extends to all men. Every race, nation, and class is included. "Go ye into all the world," Jesus commanded His apostles, "and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.) This shows that God considers man as worth saving. We do not understand all that is involved in God's love for sinful man, but by faith we accept it as so. This great love of God may exist because man is the offspring of God. (Acts 17:28.) It may exist because man is made in God's image. (Gen. 1:26.) And it may exist because man is God's creation. "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." (Job 12:10.) But whatever the cause there is something within man or something about man that causes God to consider him worth saving.

God's love for man exists in spite of man's sinfulness. Of course, God did not make man sinful. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccl. 7:29.) But all accountable men sin and, therefore, are sinners before God. (Rom. 3:23.) God's love for man does not embrace man's sin. God hates sin, yet He loves the sinner. God's hatred for sin and sin's incompatibility with His holiness make it impossible for God to fellowship man in his sin, but God's love for man is so great that it exists in spite of man's sin and has moved God to make possible man's redemption from sin. Herein lies the greatness of God's love for man.

2. "He gave his only begotten Son." Jesus was both human and divine. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)full of grace and truth." (Jno. 1:14.) The Word (divine) became flesh (human). He is described as "the only begotten of the Father." This "indicates that as the Son of God He is the sole representative of the Being and character of God." (Vine.) The reason for God's giving His Son was to save man from sin. At the time of His birth it was announced that Jesus came to save His people from their sins. (Matt. 1:21.) He later declared His mission, saying, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10.) He accomplished this by means of His death on the cross. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3.) His death was sufficient to satisfy the demands of God's justice to the end that all men could be saved. He tasted death "for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) He alone is the Savior; there is none other. (Acts 4:11, 12.)

3. "That whosoever believeth in him." While the death of Christ is sufficient to save all men, only those who "believe in" Him will be saved. This is the condition of salvation which must be met by men. But to believe in Christ means more than to accept the facts about Christ as being true. We believe there is a devil, but we do not "believe in" him. To "believe in" means to place confidence in, to trust. This is what the Lord requires of those who would receive the benefits of Christ's death. And "believe in" means more than "faith only." That man is not justified by "faith only" is evident from James 2:20-26. The man who "believes only" does not possess a saving faith, for saving faith moves man to show his trust by doing what the Lord commands. Abraham showed his saving faith by obeying God. (Heb. 11:17.) He was justified by faith, but not by "faith only." (Jas. 2:24.) He was justified by an obedient faith.

What then does "believe in him" involve? (1) It involves belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. (Jno. 8: 24.) (2) It involves repentance of sins. (Luke 13:3.) (3) It involves confessing Christ as God's Son. (Rom. 10:9,10.) (4) It involves baptism for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) And (5) it involves being faithful throughout life. (1 Jno. 1:7; Rev. 2:10.)

4. "Should not perish, but have everlasting life." The believer has a twofold blessing. He is exempt from perdition. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death." (Rev. 2:11.) He receives eternal life. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:46.) Eternal life is received in the world to come. (Matt. 10:30.) The believer has life with Christ now, but he has it conditionally. It is conditioned upon continued faithfulness. One can become unfaithful and lose all he has in Christ. (Heb. 3: 12.) The believer has eternal life now only in promise and in hope, not in actuality. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." (1 Jno. 2:25.) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Tit. 1:2.) The Christian's "lively hope, "to which he was begotten through the gospel of Christ, is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." And it is a salvation "ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:3-5.)

Eternal life required the death of Christ by which the atonement for man's sins was made. On the part of man it requires a trusting, obedient faith in Christ. God's love through the gift of His Son makes possible man's salvation. Man's obedient faith makes him a recipient of salvation. Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34,35.)

SOME THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (Part Two)

Robert E. Waldron

We want to consider in the concluding remarks to our young friends some of the questions that are often posed by them to the older generation.

1. Why did you allow wars to come about? Well, in the first place, nobody asked my permission to start with. Not a single government official of any country has ever asked my advice or consent on starting a war. In the second place, wars are not generally desired by the common people. We would rather not war, but to blame the common people for wars is nonsense. The first thing you need to learn about life is that there are forces and things in which we will necessarily be involved and which we are powerless to prevent. War, death, depression, and many other things are examples of what I am talking about. You and I have heard our elders talk of the terrible depression that struck in 1929. Do you suppose that they wanted that to happen? Could they have stopped it by running into the street and burning up Wall Street? Some men even committed suicide, but the Depression lived on. These things will come, and when they do, the common man can do little to stop them. Then too, the younger generation will find itself the mark of its own condemnation when it has become the older generation, because "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars." Thus when the younger generation has become the older generation, there will still be wars, depressions and famines.

2. A second issue is supposed to be against the Establishment. Most people probably do not know what the Establishment is any way, including the young rebels who protest against it. The Establishment is the power structure, whether in government, education, or any other realm. It is perfectly reasonable and legal to protest what our government does, but there is a right way and a wrong way to go about it. The vote is the proper way. A petition is certainly honorable. Destruction of our democracy is certainly not the way to do it. There have been more progress and advances in this country than in any other nation. Such progress is not due only to the wealth of our natural resources. It is due to the principles that serve as the foundation for our society.

Remember that when we destroy, we will have to build something in the place of what is destroyed. If rebels and anarchists destroy our government, what kind would we put in its place? Would we prefer the instability and violence of anarchy when each man makes his own rules? His authority is his guns. Perhaps a dictatorship would be preferable. I am sure that the inhabitants of Red China, Cuba and various other dictatorships could tell us many delightful things about life under a dictator—secret police, torture chambers, political purges, starvation, strangulation of the spirit. No, there would be no point in killing our form of government. When a loved one is sick, we do not take him out and shoot him. We take him to the doctor. Surely there are corruptions in our government, but destruction is not the answer. Correction through voting, petition, and amendment is the way which was provided in the beginning of our nation by some of the best political minds that ever existed.

3. What about rights? Well, our constitution provides them, but the constitution is only so many words unless we obey it. It has been said that one man's rights end where the next man's nose begins. This means that the exercise of freedom must be prescribed by law in order that each might have his rightful share of freedom. There is no group which contradicts

its principles more than the social protestors. They loudly proclaim their fight for personal freedoms and then lie down in the streets so I cannot get where I am trying to go; they pile down in the lobbies of government buildings, so that their fellow citizens cannot get in; they disrupt the college and university administrations and keep fellow students from getting the education which they have paid for and deserve. They march down highways forcing others to detour and to finance their protection. It is therefore hard for me to pay much attention to their hollow cries for personal freedom when I see how they trample mine in the dirt. It is hard for me to hear what they say, when what they do thunders so loudly in my ears. So, remember that your freedom is not to infringe upon another's freedom, for then your freedom becomes imposition.

4. What about the loss of identity? This question has reference to the fact that everybody is becoming a statistic, a number. Numbers are assigned to credit cards, income tax returns, telephones, and so forth. The cry is "I don't want to lose my identity." This cry is a little ridiculous. It may be that my mentality is not the kind that would cause me to worry much about my identity, just as I have never shared Descartes' concern with whether I exist or not. Perhaps the protestors would rather not keep any records in our society. Why can't they figure out a better way to keep up with 200 million people?

Your identity has pretty well been formed by now. One's identity is really his knowledge, his faith, and his conscience all rolled together. If one has not received proper knowledge, does not believe anything, and is conscientious about nothing, how can he have an identity? This is why those who cry out against the loss of identity are those who don't have much of one to begin with, and, instead of trying to form one, they retreat into the impersonal, unrealistic philosophies of oriental countries.

Young people, if you want knowledge and wisdom, remember, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Proof: Observe the life of the hippie as contrasted with the life of a Christian. The Bible is the place to start. If you want faith, the Bible is the place to start. If you want conscience, train it correctly.

Keep in mind: One must be student before teacher, servant before master, soldier before commander. Go, study, learn wisdom. Then when you are ready, set about to correct the problems of our day. Don't be drawn into the violent and senseless protest and rebellion of today.

In closing, let me remind you of a few things, the truth of which you will immediately see, for young people are amazingly perceptive. 1. It never helps merely to stand behind a pointing finger and yelp your complaints. 2. When you infringe upon someone else's rights, you can expect trouble, and rightly so. 3. When you criticize the older generation, remember that they too have a right to criticize you and your behavior. Criticism is not exclusive.

There are two sides to progress—destruction and construction. It takes wisdom to know what to destroy. It takes wisdom to know how to build. Wait, learn, and grow until you are well-equipped to go about trying to better the world.

As long as the world stands, the family, the government, and the church will be necessary. Do not destroy these things, because these are the characteristics that keep us from being animals. Remember that you are a living soul and without faith in God and service to Him, you can not be happy in this life and certainly not in the one to come.

THE OLD MAN WHO WANTED A MOUNTAIN

John D. Swatzell

I know of an "old" man who wanted, above everything else, a mountain! It all began when he was 40 years old. He saw a mountain and wanted it, but did not get it. Some 45 years later, when he was 85 years old, he had not yet forgotten that mountain, and we hear him say: "... give me this mountain..." (Joshua 14:12.) Please let me share with you this event in the life of Caleb.

Background Story

At the particular moment Caleb spoke these words, he was miles and miles away from that mountain, yet he speaks of it as if he were standing within its shadow. Caleb remembered well the day he had seen this mountain. He and eleven others had been sent out by Moses to scout the land with a view of finding a home for the children of Israel. Caleb was impressed with what he had seen; however, his companions were discouraged. They saw a mountainous country filled with giants and walled cities. They reported their fears to their leader. Caleb saw the same mountain, people and cities and did not deny the presence of the challenge; but he saw, in addition to what his companions saw, God, and that made all the difference in their reports! Caleb said: "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13:30.) The fears of his companions won out, and the people turned back to become a lost generation because they lacked courage and faith in God to tackle something seemingly hard! Caleb had to turn away with them, but it was with God's assurance that someday he would return and the mountain would be his.

Forty-five years came and went before that generation of people died out in the wilderness and the last major drive was over in the fight for the land. At last, the children of the lost generation were able to settle down in the promised land. As the division of the land was made, there was no question in Caleb's mind as to what he wanted! He recalled the former years, the spies and their report, and then added these words: "Now, lo, I am this day four score and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me ... Now therefore give me this mountain..." (Joshua 14:10-12.)

The wonder of it all! A man, 85 years old, not retired or retiring, not resting on his laurels, not wanting to enjoy a life of ease. **HE WANTS TO GO BACK WHERE THE GIANTS ARE! HE WANTS TO GO BACK TO THE WALLED CITIES AND ROUT THE REMAINING ENEMIES.** (Joshua 14:12.) Take your Bible in hand and read Numbers 13, 14 and Joshua 14. You'll enjoy this story! There is something wonderful in it just for you!

This story needs retelling to many of our young people today. Some (not all) have a tired fatalism. They see the overwhelming odds and giants and walled cities in 1970 and become resigned to them. They are licked before they even get started in the Lord's work! The Lord wants people today who are bold enough to say, "We are well able to overcome it." Caleb brought the report that was in his heart, not necessarily the one that would please Moses or the people! We need people today who will speak out against defeatism and go out to possess that which God has promised!

The story needs to be told to our older folks. If you never did get your mountain in your

youth, perhaps God will give it to you now in your old age as He did Caleb! Suppose that mountain you wanted was to teach others the Way of Truth ... what better way than by example? Perhaps your age will help you do this instead of hindering you! Don't get too old to attend services or invite people to services. Dust off the memories of yesteryear and see just what mountain you wanted!

The church needs to hear the story of Caleb. Fainthearted, impotent actions like the other spies will never please God. Is the church afraid to tackle the seemingly impossible? Is it rising above the average of Bible studies and worship periods? Our prayers echo the plea of spiritual growth and power... FOR WHAT?... the routine? God gives according to our needs (not wishes); we grow through exercise. A frank statement of the objectives of the church would surprise most of us. What are we trying to do? Balance a budget, keep the attendance up to or above last year's, offset the out of town moves by those placing membership or baptism by generation??? Very few of the churches are seeking out their mountain! Many would run from it if they ever saw it. Are we intent upon security for ourselves, cool air, carpets, buildings, or the conversion of the non-Christian? Are we confused, bewildered about the direction?

Many preachers need to hear the story of Caleb. Most of us had our eye on a particular mountain when we first began preaching. Did the ease and comfort of the "preacher's study" erase the mountain we asked for..., what was it? ... a desire to return to a small rural town to teach the people? ... or was it a big city without a church? ... but anyhow, the giants, the troubles or something kept us from doing it. What about now? Caleb STILL had his eye on his goal after a lapse of 45 years! Frankly, I am concerned! So very few experienced, older preachers are attempting anything more than regular work with an established congregation. Most will smile and say, "Let the younger boys do it... I've done my share ... I've got to slack up some." We need older preachers willing to say, "GIVE ME MY MOUNTAIN" . . . "I'LL CLEAR THE GIANTS OFF OF IT" ... "I'M NOT TOO OLD!" Preacher friend, relive your start in preaching..., what mountain did you have in mind? Did you settle for a molehill instead of your mountain?

The story of Caleb needs to be heard by those who are not Christians. God had made promises to those people long ago that they could have the land, but they doubted Him. God promises salvation to those who do HIS WILL today. For every one who believes it, there are ten or more to discourage him, Fear discourages the simple from following God's will now just as it did in the long ago. Friends or associates many times discourage one from doing what God has commanded.

The world needs more people like Caleb. Those who see that whatever God has promised can be done. Those who see that a few years do not disannul the promise of God. "GIVE ME MY MOUNTAIN!"

"ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN"

"Almost" is a very sad word. Cain did almost what God told him to do. He offered a sacrifice but not the kind of sacrifice God required, and God rejected his offering. (Gen. 4.) Moses did almost what God told him to do. At Kadesh when the people murmured so against Moses because of a lack of water, God told Moses to take his rod, gather the congregation of Israel together, have his brother Aaron with him, and speak to the rock. Moses did everything that God said except speak to the rock. Instead he smote it twice and said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Water came forth, but God said, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Num. 20:1-12.)

The rich young ruler almost qualified for eternal life. He had kept the commandments of the law from his youth, but Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." But he was sad at the saying and went away grieved, for he had great possession. (Mark 10:17-22.) The five foolish virgins made almost enough preparation but not complete preparation. While they were gone to get oil, the bridegroom came, the door was closed, and when they returned, it was too late. (Matt. 25:1-13.)

King Agrippa, before whom Paul stood while on trial, was almost persuaded to obey the gospel. To Paul he said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28.) Let us notice this statement carefully.

1. "ALMOST" defeats the doctrine of salvation by faith only. Paul had just said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." (Acts 26:27.) He already believed, but believing alone did not make him a Christian. Certain rulers believed on Christ and yet, because of the Pharisees, would not confess him. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12:42,43.) Though they believed, they were lost, for Christ said that if we do not confess him before men, he cannot confess us before the Father in heaven. (Matt. 10:32, 33.) The faith that saves is the faith that leads one to obey. When Moses failed to obey God's word exactly at the waters of Meribah, God said, "Because ye believed me not..." (Num. 20:12.) The devils believe, and tremble, but their faith alone does not save.

2. "THOU" defeats the doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. There is the idea that in conversion the Holy Spirit operates directly upon the heart apart from the word of truth to convict and to convert. There is no support of this idea in the scriptures. To the contrary, the "thou" in this passage represents a man, the apostle Paul, who proclaimed the word to Agrippa. If anyone had an opportunity to be converted by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, it was the apostle Paul himself. Though the Lord spoke to him on the Damascus road, he did not tell him that he was saved, but rather told him to go into Damascus and there it would be told him what he must do. After three days a man, Ananias, a disciple of Christ, came to him and told him what to do—"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be

baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.) When one is saved, it is not by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, apart from the word, but by hearing the gospel, believing the truth, repenting of one's sins, and by being baptized for the remission of sins. (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47.)

3. "PERSUADEST ME" defeats the doctrine of mourner's bench salvation. There is the idea that God must be persuaded to save man, that the sinner must plead and beg and implore God to be merciful and forgive. If this should be the case, then God would be a respecter of persons, for some feel that they are successful in their persuading, while others may feel that God has not heard their cries. The fact is that God does not have to be persuaded to save man, but man has to be persuaded to obey God. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9.) Paul says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. 5:11.) And again, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5: 18-20.)

4. "TO BE" defeats the doctrine of "getting religion." The religion of Christ is not something that one gets, but rather something that one does and practices. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven ... Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." (Matt. 7:21,24.) Jesus also said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) Jesus himself set the example in doing. When Luke wrote the book of Acts, he began his treatise with these words: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach." (Acts 1:1.) James shows that the religion of Christ is not a matter of getting but of doing. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1: 26,27.)

6. "A CHRISTIAN" defeats the idea of there is nothing in a name. The scriptures tell us that remission of sins is in Christ's name. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47.) Salvation is in this name. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) We are to glorify God in this name. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." ("in this name," Am. Standard Version.) (1 Pet. 4:16.)

7. "A CHRISTIAN" defeats the idea of denominationalism. Agrippa was not almost persuaded to be a Mormon, or a Baptist, or a Methodist, ora Pentecostal. He said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.?" Wearing of different religious names causes and perpetuates division, which is contrary to God's will. Paul said, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." (1 Cor. 1:13.)

There is no evidence that Agrippa ever became fully persuaded to be a Christian. This would mean that he passed from this life, even though he had such great and wonderful opportunity to do God's will, without hope, lost forever, with only the prospect of suffering throughout eternity. How many today are making the same mistake that Agrippa made in the long ago?

"Almost persuaded," harvest is past!

"Almost persuaded," doom comes at last!

"Almost" cannot avail;

"Almost" is but to fail;

Sad, sad, that bitter wail—

"Almost—but lost!"

THE BIBLE

Cecil F. Cox

The Bible is indeed the Book of books. Many books have been written. Solomon said, "... of making many books there is no end; and much study is the weariness of the flesh." (Eccl. 12:12.) Yes, the libraries of our nation and world are full of books. But no book is of greater value and importance than the Bible.

Attitude of Noted Men

Many noted men in our nation's history have given statements which reflect their attitude toward the Bible. Let us look at a few of these. Some today have the idea that a man is either an ignoramus or a fool or both, if he believes the Bible. These quotations along with many Bible passages should lay this notion to rest.

1. Thomas Jefferson said, "I have always said and always will say that the studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better fathers and better husbands ... The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty."

2. John Quincy Adams said, "So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society."

3. Abraham Lincoln said, "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible."

4. Woodrow Wilson said, "The Bible is the word of life—it is a picture of the human heart displayed for all ages and all sorts and conditions of men—I am sorry for the men who do not read the Bible everyday. I wonder why they deprive themselves of the strength and pleasure."

4. Calvin Coolidge said, "There is no other book with which the Bible can be compared, and no other reading that means so much to the human race."

5. Robert E. Lee said, "This book is a book in comparison with which all others in my eyes are of minor importance, and in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me strength."

The following story is told of Walter Scott: "When Scott was on his death bed, he said to his son-in-law, 'Bring me the book.' 'What book?' asked his son-in-law. Scott replied, 'There is but one book!'"

There is a question that I would like for each one to ask himself. The question is, "What is my attitude toward the Bible?" We must be impressed with the fact that my salvation does not depend upon what Abraham Lincoln or Robert E. Lee said about the Bible. My salvation will depend upon my attitude toward the Bible and the use I make of it in my life.

Bible Tells Its Value

In the Bible itself we find many statements which tell of the value and importance of the word of God. In Ps. 119:72 we read, "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." In the 127th verse of the same chapter we read, "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea above fine gold." Again in the 119th Psalm and verses 129 and 130 we read, "Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." In Hebrews 4:12 we find written, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." In Acts 20:32 Paul speaking says, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

On and on we could go reading passage after passage which give evidence to the value and importance of the Scriptures. In this age of modernism, skepticism and infidelity it is important that we examine our attitude toward the Bible.

What Is Our Attitude Toward It?

Our attitude should be that it is—

1. The word of God, verbally inspired. The Scriptures did not come

to be by the wisdom of man but they came to be by men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:20,21.) Paul said, "Which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:13.)

2. Complete and the only revelation of God. We need not look for latter day revelations of God's will. There will be none. When God spoke through His Son Jesus Christ, that ended the matter of God making known His will. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in the last days spoken to us through his Son, ..." (Heb. 1:1,2.)

3. Authoritative. In 2 John 9 we read, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Paul emphasized the authoritative nature of God's word to the Galatians by saying to them, "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8, 9.)

God help us all to have the attitude of the psalmist, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day." (Ps. 119:97.)

ANOTHER LOOK AT ACTS 2:38

Robert E. Waldron

Anyone with the slightest association with churches of Christ knows something about Acts 2:38. The entire chapter of Acts has served as the text for sermons on the plan of salvation now for 150 years since men went back to the Bible. Its favored position as a text on the way of salvation has enormous basis. First, because every condition for salvation is set forth in the passage itself except the necessity of confession. Though faith is not specifically mentioned in the passage, its presence is so clearly implied that there is no question about it. Second, because of the power and clarity of the passage, it lends itself easily to a powerful exposition for the gospel plan of salvation. Let us focus our attention on Acts 2:37,38, for in so doing, we shall learn the truth about four items essential to man's salvation—hearing, faith, repentance, and baptism.

"Now when they heard this ..." (Acts 2:37.) From this passage it is easily inferred that preaching was done that day and that people heard it. The role of hearing in salvation is a very natural and logical one. If one does not hear, how does he learn? How does he believe? If hearing is such a natural part of this plan, why emphasize it? It is because there are those who do not wish to hear. Hearing is also emphasized, I believe, because Christians need to recognize their responsibility in seeing that there is something to hear—namely, the gospel. The Lord commanded that the gospel be preached. He stated that those who believed it and who were baptized would be saved. The gap between preaching and believing is spanned by hearing. The people on Pentecost heard deliberately and thoughtfully.

The matter of order. Before proceeding further, it must be admitted that there is a particular point of emphasis in this study. Of course, it is beneficial to learn more of faith, repentance, and baptism. Our point of emphasis, however, is the order of these actions. Does faith precede repentance or vice versa? It might interest many people to know why there is any question about the order of faith and repentance. Preachers of many different faiths have contended for the proposition that man is saved by faith alone. In discussion, however, it was soon discovered that the word "alone" eliminated God, repentance—in short, everything but faith. Therefore, men found that it was easier to defend propositions similar to this: "Man is saved by faith, at the point of faith." This idea still left the problem of repentance. If repentance comes AFTER faith, then according to denominational dogma, man is saved without it since he is saved by faith, at the point of faith. If one is saved before he repents he is saved without repentance. Because of this difficulty, many adopted the simple tactic of claiming that repentance comes before faith.

We find two words translated "faith" in the KJV. They are elpis and pistis. Elpis properly means, hope and is not the same as the faith commanded by Jesus (Mk. 16:16), and without which the writer of Hebrews says we cannot please God. (Heb. 11:6.) Pistis is the word translated faith most often. It is found at least 239 times in the New Testament. Cognate words (verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc., of the same root) add at least 300 more appearances. Pistis is defined as "conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the N.T. of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things." In 1 Thess. 1:8 we find the expression "faith to Godward." This means "faith by which ye turned to God." Faith then, is basic and fundamental. All further obedience is based upon it. No deliberate obedience precedes it. Even hearing is not a deliberate act of obedience before

faith. One can not obey him in whom he does not believe. If a man feels a duty or a necessity to hear God, it is because he believes in God and that he must hear him. Faith is fundamental.

Concerning repentance, we find two words translated "repent" in the KJV. Metamelomai is one and metanoeo is the other. Metanoia from metanoeo is translated "repentance." Obviously, these two words are somewhat synonymous. The distinction between the two seems to be that metanoeo is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral action and issues. Bullion shows the derivation of metanoeo as meta denoting change and noeo, to think; hence to change one's opinion, to think differently. He also shows the etymology of metamelomai to be meta denoting change and melomai, to be concerned; hence a change of that which concerns one, to alter one's purpose. Alexander Campbell expressed the idea involved in repentance as "reformation." He also pointed out that metamelomai intimates mere regret or concern for something done and not, necessarily, a change of affections. It is never found in connection with faith, or any of the gospel facts reported in the gospel record. In no place is it found as a command. There is some idea however of a change of heart involved, because this word is found describing the son who, being asked by his father to work in the vineyard, said "no" but afterward repented and went. (Mt. 21:29.)

Repentance which is enjoined upon the alien sinner is reformation of the heart and affections which results in a change of life also.

We have labored on definition to show that by the very nature of faith and repentance, they should occur in just that order. What motive is there to repent unless one believes in God, in his own sinfulness, and in the loving-kindness of God?

One of the most powerful and clearest arguments for proving the correct order of faith and repentance is Acts 2:37,38. In v. 37 we find that when the people heard this (Peter's preaching), they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Let me ask why these men would present such a question to Peter and the eleven if they did not believe (1) that they needed to do something, (2) that the apostles could tell them what to do, (3) and that by doing what the apostles said they could be saved. The man has not been born who can show or who would even try to show that these men were not giving evidence of their faith when they asked the apostles for help. Additional evidence of their faith is seen from the fact that Peter did not tell them to believe. If they had not believed and yet had asked what to do, it is unthinkable that Peter would fail to tell them to believe. Indeed, if Peter had been preaching the popular plea, he would have told them, "Repent and believe everyone of you." He did not say that. He said, "Repent ye and be baptized everyone of you ..." No one can satisfactorily explain why Peter left out faith unless it was because they had already believed and Peter knew it. This truth demonstrates the following order: v. 37—faith; v. 38 —repentance and baptism. Therefore we know that faith in Christ precedes repentance and that man is not saved by faith at the point of faith.

Repentance and baptism—inseparable. Our next point is that repentance and baptism is for the same thing—remission of sins. Aside from the fact that Thayer says eis here means "unto, in order to," there is the grammatical fact that repentance and baptism are joined by a co-ordinating conjunction. This means that what is grammatically applied to one is applied to both. Therefore, whatever "for" means, whether "because of" or "in order to," it means the same with reference to both. Then there is the philological fact that repentance can not be "because of" the remission of sins. The very definition of the word forbids the meaning of

"because of." Then there is the logical fact that if repentance is "because of" the remission of sins, then it has to be preceded by the remission of sins. Putting these facts together have this resultant absurdity. Denominationalism has baptism in Acts 2:38 "because of" the remission of sins. However, if baptism is "because of," then repentance is "because of" due to their co-ordination by the conjunction "and." If repentance is because of the remission of sins. then the remission of sins occurs before repentance, and, since repentance comes before faith, then clearly the remission of sins comes before faith. We have this order: 1. salvation, 2. repentance, 3. faith. Clearly such is illogical, unscriptural, and erroneous.

The clear and simple order presented here is faith, repentance, baptism, and remission of sins. If "for" does not mean "because of," and the above argument shows it does not, then it must point forward and has the idea of "in order to." If you would be saved from your sins hear the gospel, believe it, repent of your sins and be baptized in order to have your sins forgiven.

Now, and Yet

Curtis E. Flatt

God's children enjoy so many blessings in God's family now. The Bible makes many statements which show this to be so. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1:3.) Since God hath blessed his people so, many have erroneously assumed that these possessions are absolute—independent of any other action and irrevocable. This is not so. We need to have impressed upon us again and again that the Christian has many things now, and yet he must also put forth effort in order to have these very things.

Salvation

God's people—members of the church—Christians are saved people. They have been saved from their past sins. (Eph. 2:8,9.) The saved people at Corinth were members of the church. (1 Cor. 1:18.) God's people are saved people now, and yet, his people are told to work out their own salvation. "Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12.)

Accepted

God's children are people accepted of God. "To the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. 1:6.) Truly, God's children are those who are accepted of God now, and yet, the same people are told, by example, to labor that they might be accepted of God. "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." (2 Cor. 5:9.)

Elect

God's people are God's elect. They are God's chosen people. (Eph. 1:3,4; 1 Thess. 1:4.) But while God's people are God's elect now, yet his people are told how to make their calling and election sure. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (2 Pet. 1:5-10.)

Made Nigh to God

In Ephesians 2:11-13, we learn that the Ephesian Christians, at one time, were without hope and without God in the world but that they had been made nigh to God by the blood of Jesus Christ. Christians are made nigh to God by the blood of Jesus Christ now, and yet are instructed to draw nigh to God. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." (James 4:8.) See Hebrews 10:22 also.

Eternal Life

The people of God are said to have eternal life. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11,12.) Thus, in some sense, God's people have eternal life now, and yet they are commanded to do certain things that they might lay hold on eternal life. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. 6:17-19.)

Why is it that Christians are said to possess so many of these great things now, and yet are admonished to put forth effort in order to have them? Is it not because every spiritual blessing which man possesses is conditional?

THE DANGER OF DRIFTING

Carl Gilbert

What would you say was the easiest thing in the world? To this question many answers could be considered and many would be good answers. But I believe the easiest thing in the world is to drift. You don't have to do anything—just let yourself go.

Recently I had the privilege of going fishing with a very dear friend from Memphis, Tennessee. We did not catch any fish, but I learned a great lesson while on that trip—a lesson I would like to share with you.

We put our boat in the water and when we started upstream we sighted a small inlet in which we thought we wanted to fish; so we pulled in, put out our lines and relaxed and waited for the catch. But we quickly realized that we were drifting. We had not planned and did not want to drift, but to our surprise we were a good distance from the desired or original spot. We learned that if we were to stay in that spot we would have to put out an anchor (which we did not have), or continuously use the oar. If we wanted to cross the stream we had to paddle; or if we wanted to go upstream, some effort had to be exerted.

The lesson is this: As Christians we are expected to go forward, to press on, and continue steadfast in the will of God. This requires effort; we must bend our backs, put out the oars and pull hard. There is a slogan which is very common to our society. The slogan is "Take it easy." Now this may be a good slogan when applied to some things, but it is a poor slogan for those who want to please God and do things his way. "There are no elevators in the house of success; you must toil up the steps, one at a time." When we become relaxed and pull our oars into the boat, the current will take us down stream.

There is another word for drifting; that word is neglect. It is so easy, but it always carries you down. When a farmer neglects his farm, it becomes what we call "run down," Neglect never builds up anything; it always tears down.

A lot of Christians are drifting down stream. They are not working for the Lord. They are not putting forth any effort; they seem not to be interested in making spiritual progress. But, friends, they are slowly drifting to the terrible end of spiritual apostasy. When we neglect to do the things which God has commanded in the way he has prescribed, we will surely drift down the stream of time to a certain destruction. Some neglect attendance with the Lord's people (Heb. 10:25); some neglect to pray (1 Thess. 5:17); some neglect to read God's word (2 Tim. 2:15); some neglect to work. (Matt. 25:41-45.)

Brethren, let's wake up and go to work for the Lord.

In closing I would like to leave these verses for you to consider. Hebrews 2:1-3: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard;.."

May God help us to live better, work harder and press onward "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14.)

THE GREATNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Earl Kimbrough

It is not at all uncommon to hear men say the church is not essential. When they say this they indicate either a disbelief in what the Bible says about the church, or they misunderstand what it says. Certainly churches founded by men are not essential, but this is not true of the church founded by Christ. The Lord's church, as revealed in the New Testament, is the greatest, the grandest, and the most important relationship in the world. To deny its essentiality is to cast reflection upon God who designed the church, upon God's Son who died for it, and upon the Holy Spirit who revealed it to men. There are a number of reasons why the Lord's church is great.

1. The nature of the church's existence is great. The church was planned by God from eternity. The establishment of the church involved the revelation of "the manifold wisdom of God" which Paul declared to be "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:10, 11.) The builder of the church was Jesus Christ. To Peter the Lord said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." (Matt. 16:18.) In keeping with God's plan, Christ built the church upon a tried and sure foundation. Isaiah foretold it, saying, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." (Isa. 28:16.) That stone is Christ. It was laid in Spiritual Jerusalem, the church. (Heb. 12:22,23.) It was laid after it was tried, i.e., after His death, burial, and resurrection. And not only was the church planned by God, built by Christ, and built upon a tried and sure foundation, the deity of Jesus Christ; but the church was purchased by the blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28.) Every person saved by the blood of Christ is a member of it. (Eph. 5:25-27.) Moreover, Christ is the head of the church. (Eph. 1:22,23.) It is governed and guided by His word, the seed of the kingdom, by which its existence is perpetuated. (Luke 8:11; 1 Pet. 1:22,23.) Thus, the nature of the church's existence is great.

2. The mission the church performs in the world is great. The mission of the Lord's church is the salvation of man from sin. The church itself is composed of the saved. (Eph. 5:23.) Those purchased by the blood of Christ are its members. The work of the church is the salvation of men through the gospel which it upholds in the world. (1 Tim. 3:15.) The church is charged with the mission of preaching the gospel of Christ to sinful men. But the work of salvation does not stop there. The church also endeavors to keep men in a saved relationship with Christ through spiritual encouragement, edification, and growth. (Eph. 4:15,16.) When those who have come to know the Lord through obedience to the gospel stumble and fall, the church must seek their restoration. (Gal. 6:1.) There is no greater mission on earth than the salvation of men. This is the mission of the Lord's church. Surely this makes the church great.

3. The name the church wears is great. There is no name greater than the name of Christ. Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) And Paul testifies, saying, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 2:9.) No name that now is, or ever has been, or ever shall be is greater than the name of Christ. This is the name that is worn by those who belong to Christ. Christ called the church "my church." (Matt. 16:18.) It is, therefore, Christ's church. Local congregations

in New Testament times were not ashamed to be called "churches of Christ." (Rom. 16:16.) Individual members of the church were called Christians. (Acts 11:26.) They not only wore Christ's name, they also rejoiced to suffer for Christ in His name, as Christians. (1 Pet. 4:16.) Nor was this an assumed name on the part of the church. They did not adopt it as expedient, nor as a matter of preference, nor because others forced it upon them. They wore Christ's name because it was God's will that they do so. The Holy Spirit revealed to the church the will of God in this matter. Inspired men rejoiced that they were counted worthy "to suffer shame for his name." (Acts 5:41.) Would the Lord give so great a name to a body of people that is unimportant? Who would so contend?

4. The blessings God bestows upon the church are great. Christians, members of the church, are said to be complete in Christ. (Col. 2:10.) The church is called the fulness of Christ. One must be in the Lord's church to be complete in Him. (Eph. 1:22,23.) All the needs of man in the spiritual realm are freely and fully supplied in the church. Christ and the church are inseparably connected. To be in Christ and to be in His church are one and the same. Paul addressed the Colossian epistle to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ." (Col. 1:2.) These saints in Christ had been called in one body which is the church. (Col. 3:15; 1:18.) Whatever blessings are to be had "in Christ" are blessings that are obtained in the church which is His body. (Eph. 1:3.) It is in the body of Christ, the church, that men are reconciled unto God. (Eph. 2:14-17.) The church is composed of the saved. (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23.) One must be in the church to be saved. Since there is no greater blessing than salvation in Christ, it follows that the church is the greatest body on earth.

5. The destiny toward which the church moves is great. The destiny of the Lord's church is not related to material values. It pertains rather to heaven. (1 Pet. 1:3-5.) The church is the only body of people on earth that will enjoy the blessings of heaven when this life is over. Of course not all members of the church will be saved eternally. Many will fall away and be lost. But the faithful have the promise of eternal reward. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) This crown of life is promised all who love the appearing of Christ and who indicate this by fighting the good fight of faith, finishing the course set before them, and keeping the faith unto the end. (2 Tim. 4:7,8.) When Jesus comes the second time it will be to deliver the kingdom, or church, up to the Father. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." (1 Cor. 15:24.)

One cannot view the nature of the church, its mission, the name it wears, the blessings it contains, and the destiny toward which it moves without being impressed with the greatness of the church. To say the church is nonessential or unimportant to man's redemption is to deny the clear teaching of the New Testament. The greatness of the church does not come from the people who are members of it and who enjoy its blessings, but rather from the great blessings that God in His infinite mercy bestows upon those who through gospel obedience become members thereof, and who through faithful and dedicated service have the hope of eternal life with God when this life is over. Membership in the Lord's church is not restricted to any race or class. But "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.)

TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

I suppose there has never been a time when the young people of our nation, yea, of the world, have been given more attention. In most cases it appears that the masses of young folks are being stigmatized by the behavior of the small minority. I'm sure that most Christians disapprove of the kind of behavior we see publicized so much. At the same time, however, I'm persuaded that a "demonstration," on the part of responsible adults, of real concern for the eternal welfare of "our young people" **BÉFORE** such behavior attracts our attention to youth, not only could prevent much heartache and shame, but could save many eternal souls.

It is with this sincere concern that I beseech the young people (and their parents), into whose hands this paper might fall, to give serious attention to the following:

CONCERNING DANCING—You have reached the age, and live in a time when you are beset on every hand with enticements to dance—"P. E" programs at school, the "Prom," etc. You are looked upon as some kind of "Odd Ball" if you refuse to participate. Among other things, just remember that Christians are supposed to be "peculiar." (Titus 2:14.)

I think the words of a father, who had trained his son aright in this respect, should provoke your serious thoughts. The son had just told his dad and mother that since he was just about to turn eighteen years of age, he was planning to attend the Senior Prom! The father looked at him and hung his head, and replied, "Son, your mother and I have tried to teach you for the past sixteen years what is right and wrong. We've done our best to bring you up as a Christian young man. But you're right, Son, you are a senior. You are almost grown. So if you have decided to attend the Senior Prom, go ahead; but please remember this: If the Lord should come and find you there, please tell Him that you came because **YOU** wanted to, **NOT** because we sent you." The young man said those sobering words shocked him into reality. He immediately decided that he must not go, and has never regretted that decision.

Hear the advice of Professor Louis J. Guyon, owner of "Paradise Ballrooms, " one of Chicago's largest dance halls: "We know that sex is the strongest impulse planted in the human race. You can just picture the effect on a boy or girl of 18 or 20, when this hunger is keenest, when knowledge and experience are lacking in the formation of judgment, of one of these dances which calls for close bodily contact and frequently brings the cheeks together and entwines the limbs. Yet, we find thousands of boys and girls dancing in this very way who do not realize they are doing anything out of the way, and **WHOSE FOOL PARENTS LOOK ON COMPLACENTLY**. This form of dancing (which all other kinds of dancing eventually lead to—cgm)is a menace to the future of our nation. When you are told that youth of both sexes can survive this experience without mental, moral and physical pollution, you know the teller lies... If you can believe youth is the same after this experience as before, then God help your child or your charge, for you are not mentally fit for your responsibility. If you do not believe I have correctly described the modern dances and their effect, you either have not seen them performed or you are wilfully blind to their true character." (via Hickory Heights Bulletin, Lewisburg, Tennessee.)

CONCERNING DRINKING—Alcohol is, without question, one of the greatest causes of physical, moral and spiritual decay! It is one of the greatest wreckers of homes. We are told that now seven out of every ten who take their first drink become alcoholics! It is one of the greatest killers on our highways —50% of all highway fatalities, we are told, are alcohol-involved. More divorces are granted because of drink-caused situations than any other single cause. More children are deprived of normal happy home life because of parents' drinking than for any other cause. In a recent issue of the Reader's Digest we read a shocking report to the effect that authorities now conclude that drinking to any degree does irreparable damage to the brain! And, to think I recently heard of a senior class of high school youths making a trip, where it was estimated later that at least a third of them drank; that more than two-thirds of that class do drink; and that even a larger percentage of the junior class of that same school do drink! On and on we could go with statistics, and then we can add God's warnings of such passages as Lev. 10:9-10; Isa. 28:7-8; Prov. 23:29-35 and Prov. 20:1; and still there are even those who call themselves "Christians" who sanction "social drinking"! Young people, heed Solomon's warning, "Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise"! Don't be deceived into destroying your health, happiness and your soul by strong drink!

The story is told of an eagle and its self-destruction. It was soaring high in the sky, and as it flew almost out of sight, it became unsteady and began to fall. It plunged to the earth near two men. When they went to the eagle, they found him shaking and trembling. In its claws was a rattlesnake! The eagle had caught the reptile, soared into the sky and finally lost the battle when the snake bit it. Now, there it lay—holding onto the very thing that killed it! And so it is with many people today. They have found something from which they hope to derive some pleasure; but like the eagle in the story, they are fighting a losing battle, and are holding onto the very thing that will mean their spiritual death! Young people, in the words of the apostle Paul, "Flee youthful lusts"! Remember that the "pleasures of sin" are for only "a season"! (Heb. 11:25.)

CONCERNING APPAREL —Many young (and old) women wear shorts, low-necked dresses, short tight dresses, tight sweaters and skirts, etc. You young ladies are faced with a problem when you select your clothing. It is a hard decision for you, although you know God specifically commands, "... that women adorn themselves in modest apparel." (1 Tim. 2:9.) You know that Christians are not to try to look like the people of the world; that they are to present their bodies unto God—not to the lustful looks of men. (Rom. 12:1-2.) You know that you are to "avoid every appearance of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22.) (And this is just as applicable to you young men!) When you select clothing you want to be attractive, but you should want to attract the attention of clean-minded young men; the kind you would hope to marry some day. You know that if you wear the kind of apparel described above you will attract attention. People will look at you. And what will they see? Will they see A CHRISTIAN? How could they tell that you are a Christian? And what kind of thoughts would men and boys have when they saw you in such apparel? An answer which often is given is, "Well, it depends upon the type of men who look." And that is right. The evil and vulgar minded are going to see something to whet their immoral appetites. The decent minded are going to be ashamed of what they see and look elsewhere. And where would that put you?? The clothes we wear are tables of contents of our lives. They show to the watching world what we are INSIDE!

YOUNG PEOPLE, let me sum this whole thing up with the words of the apostle Paul, as found in 1 Timothy 5: 22, "KEEP THYSELF PURE"!

ARE YOU PREPARED TO LIVE?

Eugene Crawley

Through the years men have used the expression "getting ready to die," and have made preparation to that end. It's true that conditions are sometimes better, and circumstances easier, when such is done, especially for those who are left. However, such an attitude suggests that this is the end, at least to the one making it, and leads to his making no further preparation. Thus, those who think in these terms, and make such preparation, leave undone the most important part of life—that of preparing spiritually. They do not, then, prepare to live eternally with God.

Truly, it is more a matter of "preparing to live," for we shall live somewhere forever; the spirit of man is an eternal thing. Various passages of inspired Scripture, such as Eccl. 12:7, Matt. 10:28, and Luke 16:19-31, testify to the fact that the spirit does not cease to exist at physical death. There are but two places in eternity for the souls of men—heaven and hell; and most are fully aware of the facts that one is a place of joy and happiness, while the other is a place of punishment. (Matt. 25:41,46.)

Are you preparing to live in the place of punishment? On first thought you may consider this a foolish question; and I suppose that none would purposely prepare for such agony. Nevertheless, if one does not prepare for heaven, to live with God eternally, it means that he will be cast into hell. Actually then, if one is not preparing for heaven, he is preparing (though possibly unconsciously) for the eternal destruction that awaits the disobedient and unfaithful.

To prepare to live with God, we must do His will while on earth; and this is contained in His inspired word, the Bible. It should behoove each of us then to study His word, understand His requirements, and in faith obey Him.

Are you prepared to live with God? If not, this should be of vital concern to you. You can prepare by obeying His commands to believe in Christ Jesus, repent of sins, confess faith in Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in his name for the remission of sins. (John 8:21,24; Acts 16:31; 17:30, 31; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38; 22:16.) If you will do these things, the same God who saved such in the first century will also save you and add you to the same church to which He added them. (Acts 2:41,47.) You must then continue this preparation to live with Him by faithful service in His kingdom—worshiping Him in spirit and in truth (Jno. 4:24), and working that which He has authorized (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), being faithful unto death (1 Cor. 15:58;.Rev. 2:10.)

Don't endanger your soul's welfare eternally by putting off your obedience to the truth. There is danger and death in delay, but salvation, happiness, and hope in doing the will of God. **PREPARE TO LIVE!!**

A TEST OF OUR CONVICTION

When Andrew, Peter's brother spent some time with Jesus, he was convinced that Jesus was the Christ. The reaction of Andrew was to find his brother and tell him. "He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. (John 4:40-42.) When Philip was convinced that Jesus was the Christ, his reaction was to tell others. "Philip findeth Nathanael and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (John 1:45.) These examples would indicate to us that when we have found Christ—now through obedience to the gospel—we will immediately make effort to tell others. These examples would further indicate that if we are not constantly zealous to tell others of Christ, we ourselves have not been truly convinced of who he is and of the vital need of every soul to be brought to him.

"HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE"

Wisdom is of great value. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." (Prov. 3:13-15.) "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her." (Prov. 4:5-8.)

One who wins souls is wise. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." (Prov. 11:30.)

I. He is wise in recognizing the value of a soul. Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36.) A soul is indeed valuable because it bears the image of GOD. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Gen. 1:26.) It is valuable because it cost so much to redeem it. It cost the precious blood of Christ, the Son of God. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2: 5-8.) "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21.)

The soul is valuable because when it is lost it is irreparably lost. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9: 27.) When one dies out of Christ, there is no blessing. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord..." (Rev. 14:13.) When a soul is lost, and death comes, there is no way to reclaim it, for its destiny is eternal. "And these (the lost) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:46.)

II. He is wise in recognizing lost souls. Who is lost? All who fail to believe in Christ are lost, for Jesus said, "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8: 24.) All who fail to repent are lost. Jesus further said, "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3.) People who do not confess Christ are lost. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10: 32,33.) People who are not baptized are lost. As Jesus made faith essential to salvation, so he made baptism, for he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) Speaking as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance, Peter in telling people what to do to be saved on the day of Pentecost said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.)

People who transgress God's laws, and people who fail to keep his righteous commandments are lost. (1 John 3:4; 5:17.) People who do his will for a time and then turn back are lost. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Peter 2:20,21.)

Jesus came to "seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10.) Every way he turned he could see lost people, but he had to seek out those who were lost, who were willing to recognize their lost state, and who wanted to be saved. One who is wise recognizes the lost and seeks to save them by taking them the gospel of Christ.

III. He is wise in knowing the power of God's word. He knows that there is power in the gospel to save all men from every sin. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1: 16.) "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) When Paul came to the wicked city of Corinth, he was determined to know only Christ, and him crucified—to preach the gospel of Christ. There was sufficient power in it to do the job. After enumerating various sinners, Paul said, "And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) Later in the same epistle Paul said, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved." (1 Cor. 15:1,2.)

IV. He is wise in knowing that the lost can be influenced for good, can be made useful, fruitful members of the church, can be turned from darkness to light. Jesus said, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." (John 4:35.) Two shoe salesmen from the same company were sent to Africa. One was very discouraged, and wrote the home office, "Possibility of sales is very poor. People go bare-footed here." The other was very optimistic, and wrote the home office, "Possibility of sales is great here. Everybody needs shoes." The winner of souls is wise because he can see the fields white unto the harvest and the great possibility of turning the lost to Christ.

V. He is wise in doing what the Lord has told him to do. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.) "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14.)

VI. He is wise in making possible the salvation of his own soul. In his winning of others he is helping to bring about his own salvation. It is said that a man in crossing a mountain pass in the dead of winter had gone as far as he could go in the deep snow. Completely exhausted, he stumbled and fell. Being unable to take another step, he was only moments away from death by freezing. But when he fell, he realized that he had fallen upon some object. The object turned out to be another man who had reached the same place and had fallen in exhaustion. In his efforts to revive the freezing man he stimulated and warmed himself. In saving another he saved himself. The soul-winner is wise in that in taking the

gospel to others, in helping to save others, and thus in doing God's will, he actually is helping to save himself.

"And he that winneth souls is wise." (Prov. 11:30.) —BN

"WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?"

Men have given various answers to this question asked by the disciples of Christ. (Matt. 19:25.) The atheist answers, "No one. Man is not lost. There is no sin, no condemnation, no hell, no heaven, for there is no God." Actually, there is far too much evidence of the existence, power, and wisdom of God to accept the atheist's answer. The opening statement of the Bible rings with incontestable authority—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Ps. 14:1.) The universalist answers, "Everyone, for God is so good he will see to it that all are saved." The Bible shows clearly that everyone will not be saved. Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:13, 14.) God, indeed is good, but he is also just and true. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou shalt be cut off." (Rom. 11:22.)

The Calvinist answers, "The elect, those chosen before the foundation of the world." The invitation of Christ is to all—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34.) The moralist answers, "All who live upright." Cornelius lived a good moral life, and yet he had to hear and obey the gospel that he might be saved. (Acts 10:1-11:15.) The best of men are not perfect. All must obey the gospel, God's power to save, in order to reach the atoning blood of Christ. (Eph. 1:7; John 10:34; Rom. 6:3,4.)

However, God has answered the question, "Who then can be saved?" He shows that the wicked can be saved. Even the murderers of Christ were told what to do to be saved. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38.) Paul preached the gospel to the wicked in the city of Corinth, a place noted for its wickedness, and some of them obeyed the gospel. Paul said that they had received the gospel, by which they had been saved. (1 Cor. 15:1,2.)

He shows that unbelievers can be saved. The Philippian jailor was an unbeliever, but the word, the basis of faith (Rom. 10:17), was preached to him that he might believe. Hearing the gospel, he did believe and was baptized the same hour of the night. (Acts 16:25-34.)

God shows that believers can be saved. Those to whom Peter preached on the day of Pentecost believed what he said, and were pricked in their hearts. When they asked what to do, he told them to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38.)

God shows that penitent believers can be saved. Acts 22 shows Saul of Tarsus to be a penitent believer, and he was told by Ananias, a disciple, to arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins. (Acts 22:16.)

God shows that baptized penitent believers can be saved by continuing "steadfastly," by being faithful even unto death. (Acts 2:42, Rev.2:10.) Even erring children of God can be saved, as Peter told Simon the sorcerer, who, after obeying the gospel, sinned. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be

for given thee." (Acts 8:22.)

Actually all can be saved. The gospel is for all, both Jew and Gentile. (Rom. 1:16.) But it is evident that many will not be saved because they will not obey the gospel, or because having obeyed it at one time they will not remain steadfast and faithful until death

MENTAL PICTURES IN A PERFECT MONUMENT

Earl Kimbrough

The best monuments set up by men are those that effectively call to the beholder's mind pictures of the persons or events in whose memory they have been erected. One cannot seriously visit Shiloh Battlefield without "seeing" the Rebel and Union soldiers at the bloody pond, or visualizing General Johnston receiving his mortal wound, or "watching" as Grant's reinforcements arrive to change the tide of battle. Of course the monuments in that battlefield would be of little significance to one who has no knowledge of the battle that was fought there or of the larger conflict in which the nation was struggling. But with this knowledge one has but to see the monuments to have a multitude of pictures called to his mind.

So it is with the greatest monument ever instituted upon the earth—the Lord's Supper. This memorial is perfect in its design and profound in its simplicity. This is so because God is its author. When faithful saints assemble on the Lord's day to observe this memorial feast they behold, with the physical eye, the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. But by faith the worshipper sees far more than these simple elements. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul directs our attention to some of the pictures we see by faith when we observe the Lord's Supper. Some are clearly stated, while others are implied.

First, and perhaps foremost, we see the death of Christ on the cross. The word "cross" is used in the New Testament to signify the death of Christ. It indicates three things about His death. (1) It indicates the manner of His death. He died by crucifixion. "And when they came to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him." (Luke 23:33.) (2) It indicates the place where His blood was shed. It was while He hung on the cross, fastened by spikes to that cruel stake, that a Roman soldier pierced His side out of which poured His precious blood. (Jno. 19:33,34.) (3) It indicates His sacrifice for sin. "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9:26.)

Christ's death on the cross was according to God's will. Peter said He was delivered up to death "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." (Acts 2:23.) God's perfect justice could not be satisfied without the penalty for sin being paid, but His perfect wisdom devised a plan by which that penalty could be paid and His perfect love motivated Him to put that plan into effect. There could be no salvation from sin without the blood of Christ. (Rom. 5:8,9.) The elements of the Lord's Supper, the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorate the debt for sin that Christ paid on Calvary. "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me...This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:24,25.) Thus in the Lord's Supper we see the cross where love and mercy overcame sin and death through the atoning sacrifice of Christ. And we partake in memory.

In the Lord's Supper we also see our fellowship with Christ. The Lord's Supper is described as a communion. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16.) The word "communion" means having in common, partnership, fellowship. The Lord's Supper represents our sharing the benefits of Christ's death. It is an assurance of His fellowship with us. His table is in His kingdom. (Luke 22:29, 30.) Those

who partake are thus sharers in the fellowship of His kingdom. In observing the Lord's Supper we commune with Christ. "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. 10:17.) We partake of the One Whom the communion represents. We partake of one bread—Jesus Christ. Partaking of the Lord's Supper represents this fellowship with Christ. We also commune with the church. "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, because we all partake of that one bread." (RSV) Thus in the Lord's Supper we see our communion with Christ and His spiritual body, the church. And we partake in fellowship.

Another thing we see in the Lord's Supper is our need to live for Christ. Fellowship with Him is conditional. (1 Jno. 1:6,7.) We cannot partake of the Lord's cup and serve sin. "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils." (1 Cor. 10:21.) One must endeavor to live right if he is to partake acceptably. We must observe the Lord's Supper itself in a worthy manner. (1 Cor. 11:27.) To observe worthily means to observe with thanksgiving (v. 24), in remembrance (v. 24, 25), with self-examination (v. 28), and with discernment (v. 29). To observe unworthily is a dangerous thing. (1 Cor. 11:27-30.) Thus in the Lord's Supper we see our need to live for Him. And striving to do this we partake in righteousness.

In observing the Lord's Supper we see a world that needs the gospel. The Lord's Supper is a proclamation. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:26.) If we need the death of Christ then so does the world. Observing the Lord's Supper should make us conscious of this fact. We proclaim the Lord's death by observing the Lord's Supper, but we proclaim the gospel plan of salvation by teaching the word. (1 Tim. 3:15.) Thus in observing the Lord's Supper we see a world lost in sin. And we partake in compassion, endeavoring to bring the lost to a saving knowledge of God's Son.

One more thing we see in the Lord's Supper is the promise of His return. The Lord's Supper looks forward to the Lord's second coming. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:26.) As it proclaims His death so also it proclaims His promised return. The Lord's Supper and all that it represents is completely meaningless without His return. But His coming is sure. He promised to return. The angels who stood by when He ascended said he would return. Paul says the assurance of His return is His resurrection from the dead. Just as surely as He arose from the dead He will come again. (Acts 17:30, 31.) Thus in the Lord's Supper we see the promise of His return. And we partake in hope.

In this perfect monument the Christian with the physical eye sees only the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. But by faith we may see much more and we surely partake in vain if we fail to see it.

HANDS THAT TOUCHED HIM

John D. Swatzell

Please read Mark 14:32-46, and then go back with me on the wings of imagination some 1900 years ago! We stand outside the city of Jerusalem. It is night. We can hear the noises of the night, the sounds of the city..., barking dogs inside the city wall, the sound of music, voices, some laughing, singing..., others talking, But we are not interested just now in the city or its people. We leave the shadows of the wall and walk toward a garden of olive trees—a place called Gethsemane.

In the dim light of the garden we can see men sleeping on the ground. But just a little farther on in the garden we can just make out the form of another man; and as we come nearer we hear Him say, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." Yes, this man is praying that if it is possible, that the hour might pass from him. (Mark 14:35-36.) The figure rises and approaches the sleeping men and we hear him say, "... couldst not thou watch one hour?" Again, the figure departs into the shadows of the garden and the same prayer is heard again, as we listen. He returns again to the men and departs. This He does the third time and we hear Him say, "...the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

As He is speaking these words, we hear the sound of approaching people. In the gleam of torches we see the helmets and shields of soldiers. One man steps apart from the crowd of people and comes to Jesus saying, "Master, Master; and kissed Him." "And they laid their hands on Him" (verse 46), "and bound him." (John 18:12.)

Who is this that they "laid hands on"? The Son of God; God in the flesh! Whose hands are laid upon Him? The hands of rough and brutal man. Hands that smell of the wine skin. Hands that knew the touch of the dice cup. Hands that had held the reins of war horses and felt the blood of battle. These are hands of hired soldiers, godless men! These hands twist tight the rope about His wrists. These hands will soon put a cloth of purple on Him, a platted crown of thorns will be pressed on His head. The hands of men who will strike Him, mock Him and crucify Him. These are hands of rejection!

We leave this scene and step into the pages of the Bible as we turn back some 30 years to see other hands that touch this man Jesus. We meet with an old man in the busy scenes of the Temple. (Luke 2:25-35.) A promise had been made to this man that he should not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ! We watch him as he pushes through the merchants, the buyers and sellers, and into the inner court. This is the day of promise! He sees the couple and the babe. What a moment! He runs and takes Him into his arms. He has seen the Lord's Christ! God was true! Salvation was come! Simeon touched the Lord... hands of faith in fulfillment!

Our imaginary scene now changes (Matt. 16:13-23) as we walk in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. We approach the Lord and His disciples as Peter had just confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We stay with them as Jesus begins to tell how He must go to Jerusalem to suffer many things and be killed and rise again the third day. What a change comes over Peter! The hands of Peter touch Jesus in rebellion (verse 22);

reprovingly, Peter says, "This shall not be unto thee. " Things had to be Peter's way ... not the Lord's way! This is the same Peter who drew a sword and cutoff the ear of one in the garden (John 18:10.) We leave just as the Lord rebukes Peter.

Soon we find our way into the presence of the disciples again, and we hear them say, "We have seen the Lord." (John 20:25.) We realize that we are standing this side of the Cross. The Lord truly did die as He had said, and all but Thomas had been assembled on the first day of the week when the Lord appeared unto them. Thomas argues that unless he shall see in His hand the print of the nails and thrust his hand into His side he will not believe them! I suppose that is the beginning of our usage of "doubting Thomas," because Thomas did doubt! After eight days, Thomas was with the disciples when they assembled again. Jesus appears, We watch closely to see the effect upon Thomas, and we hear the Lord say, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." We watch as hands of doubt reach forth and hear Thomas cry, "My Lord and my God."

We hasten to a final scene. One that is so rare that we want especially to view it before we return to the present time, before we complete our imaginary trip into the past. We enter a Pharisee's house and see Jesus sitting at meat. Just then, a woman, known to be a sinner, slips into the house and at the feet of Jesus begins to weep, her tears falling onto His feet. She takes her hair and begins to wipe the feet of Jesus, and anoints them with ointment from an alabaster box! The Pharisee, with whom Jesus was eating, did not speak, but we can almost read the thoughts of his mind: "He should know what manner of woman this is if He is a prophet. This sinner woman touching Him! (See Luke 7:36-39.) But these were hands of love that touched Jesus!

Now we are back to the present, but our lives will not be the same, for we have seen many people whose hands touched Jesus. We know that it is not possible for us to reach forth our hands and touch the actual body of Jesus as they did; but we must reflect on the fact that our attitude is often that of the soldiers who rejected Jesus, or that of Peter who rebelled at the teaching of Jesus, or that of Thomas when we doubt the Lord. But two of the scenes we viewed linger in our minds: Old Simeon's attitude was one of faith in fulfillment of God's promises ... the woman who through love reached out to Jesus. These two should be our attitudes. To see salvation in Him (Acts 4:12; Gal. 3:26-27), and show our love by the doing of His commandments (John 14:15.)

If Then ye Be Risen With Christ

Curtis E. Flatt

The members of the church at Colosse had been raised with Christ. (Col. 3:1.) From what had they been raised? Jesus had been raised from the grave of death. But these, who had been raised with him, had not even died. They were still living. And yet, the message is that they had been raised with Christ. From what, then, had they been raised?

Risen from What?

Some things preceded these having been raised with Christ. In the first place, they had died in some way while they were yet alive in the flesh. The Roman Christians had also been raised with Christ. (Romans 6:5,6.) Before they were raised, they had died—had been crucified with Christ. (Romans 6: 5-8.) The old man, who had lived in sin, was crucified. Thus, both the Romans and the Colossians had died and had been buried. (Romans 6:4; Col. 2:12.) From this grave, in which they had been buried, they had been raised.

The Nature of Their Grave

From what kind of a grave had these been raised? Christ's grave had been a literal grave. The grave of these people had been a grave of water. They had been buried in baptism. (Romans 6:4; Col. 2:12.) The baptism with which people were then commanded to be baptized and with which all since that time are to be baptized was water baptism. (Acts 8:36; Acts 10:47.) This grave in water was such a complete burial that it was also called a planting. (Romans 6:5.) It is utterly impossible for one to understand this third chapter of Colossians until he can comprehend that baptism is a burial and that it is given to save people from their sins and to make them new creatures in Christ. From this grave of baptism, in which they had been buried, they had been raised with Christ. (Col. 2:12.)

The New Life

Newness of life followed being raised with Christ. "... Even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4.) The object of their affections was to be changed. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on the things on the earth." (Col. 3:1,2.) Old ways of life were to cease. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." (Col. 3:5-10.)

Not only were old ways of life to cease, but now new ways of living were to be adopted. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ for gave you, so also do ye.

And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Col. 3:12-17.)

Even unto this day, true Christians everywhere are even as these Romans and Colossians. They have died and have been buried with their Lord in baptism. They have been raised with him. They have put off the old man. They have put on the new man and walk in newness of life.

* * * * *

The battle against evil is difficult, not so much because of the action required, but because of the endurance necessary to achieve victory.

ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Robert Waldron

To speak of absolute truth is to speak of that which is of God. (Jn. 17:17.) Absolute truth is a firm rock to which we may cling, a reliable path which we may follow. The fact that it cannot be wrong is proof of the fact that it issues from a source that cannot be wrong. Thus Paul refers to God as He who cannot lie. The reflection in our minds on this fact ought to give us great comfort and hope.

There are many today who teach that there is no absolute truth. Is this statement itself absolute truth? The infidel must needs answer "yes" or "no." If he says, "Yes, this statement, that there is no absolute truth, is absolutely true," he contradicts himself. He therefore would make the statement denying the existence of absolute truth, absolute truth itself. If that statement is absolutely true, then we have a false statement, because the statement says there is no absolute truth; yet the false statement is absolutely true. Thus the infidel finds himself enmeshed in a trap of logic from which there is no escape.

What would be true, however, if the infidel answered, "No, the statement, that there is no absolute truth, is not absolutely true"? Then the statement would admit of exceptions, but the exceptions would be absolute truth. Therefore the statement would be false and could not be true.

Having shown that the statement denying the existence of absolute truth is false, we come to the conclusion that there is absolute truth. For this to be, there must be absolute basis for truth. In fact, since absolute truth cannot be wrong, this would imply infallibility for the source of truth. We do not apply the term infallibility to inanimate things such as rocks or trees. Nor dare we apply it to human beings. But the source of truth must be living since infallibility clearly cannot be attributed to non-living things. This infallible source would clearly be far superior to men. Who could that source be except GOD?

Having come to the conclusion that God is the source, and the only source, of absolute truth, what must we conclude? We must be very careful to believe what God says. We must secondly be very careful to do what God says. To believe or to do other than that which God says is to believe or to do error. —Robert Waldron.

THE CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN

Raymond Harville

Character is "the property by which a person or thing is recognized in distinction from others;..., the sum of traits and habits that make up a person's mental and moral being."

Character is also thought of as being what others think of us. We usually use the word reputation here. Our character is responsible for our reputation.

1. Morality alone is not enough. The character of a Christian is not simply moral excellence. (You don't curse, steal, lie, cheat, drink, etc.; you pay your bills, treat your neighbor right, etc.) We do not cast reflection on these, but they are not enough. (Even a ear needs more than wheels.) There are other qualities (graces) that **MUST** be characteristic of a child of God.

The Lord is not glorified in the life of a person who is good "morally," but who does not control his temper, nor his tongue. A church will not go far in reaching people with the gospel when the elders are hot-headed, and unable to get along with people. (Yes, they are morally good men.) A church does not need the services of a preacher who does a good job preaching; and whose moral character is good, but is void of meekness. The Christian who is not an elder or a preacher is just as obligated to produce the character of a Christian as are these.

2. What else do we need? There are two verses of scripture I would suggest just here. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.) We need Christ living in us. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (Jno. 15:4.) To have Christ in me, we need to (must) abide in Him.

One does not develop the character of a Christian by himself. The Holy Spirit produces this fruit. One's connection with Christ makes him what he is—a Christian. Paul said, "I am crucified." He then shows that Christ "lives in me." Only in this relationship with Christ can we have the character of a Christian.

3. What kind of character does a Christian have? Please observe the wording of Gal. 5:22, 23. "But the fruit of the Spirit (the fruit the Spirit produces in the Christian) is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." These graces have to do with the character of a Christian. **LOVE**: for God—keep his commands, render devotion to him, show reverence for him. Love for man—seek his salvation, help him in need, strengthen his feeble knees. **JOY AND PEACE** are traits one enjoys because he belongs to Christ. Others see these traits. **LONGSUFFERING AND GENTLENESS** are characteristics of our lives that are demonstrated (and tried) when things don't go just right for us—when someone takes advantage of us. The thought of gentleness is kindness. **GOODNESS** is to be good in character, but also beneficial in its effect. **FAITH** emphasizes trustworthiness. **MEEKNESS** is an attitude we have toward God. We recognize our weakness and inabilities (our limitations), and accept God's dealings with us as good. One cannot exercise meekness in his pride. **TEMPERANCE** is the bringing of

our will (and body) into control—the control of God's will. We are not to be self-centered, but God-centered and fellow-human-centered.

4. How does the Spirit produce the Christian's character? One does not grow up with a natural taste for meekness, kindness, longsuffering, love for an enemy, etc. These qualities are the fruit of the Spirit. They come because we are joined to Christ, like a branch is joined to the vine. To refuse to produce this fruit is to be burned—to be cast out and off in eternity.

These characteristics are not produced by the Spirit in some "better felt than told" way. Please observe Paul's expression of how Christ lived in him. "I live by the FAITH of the Son of God." This is how Christ will live in you.

(Gal. 2:20.) This faith comes by the word of God. (Rom. 10:17.) If you do not study, you will not have the character of a Christian. In John 15:3 Jesus explains that one is cleansed by the WORDS he had spoken. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. (Eph. 6: 17.) If you are to abide in Christ, and Christ in you: If you bear the fruit of the Spirit: If you have the character of a Christian; the Bible must be your constant companion. Your delight will be in the law of the Lord; you will meditate upon it day and night. (Ps. 1:1.) Its promises will then become your reward.

SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING HEBREWS 10:25

Guthrie Dean

I. WHY SHOULD WE ASSEMBLE? ANSWER: Hebrews 10:24 says that we are to provoke one another unto love and good works. Verse 25 shows that this is done by assembling together and by exhorting one another, These are some reasons for assembling.

II. WHAT HAPPENS IF I PURPOSELY STAY AWAY FROM THE SERVICES? ANSWER: You are sinning wilfully. Verse 25 tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and verse 26 continues: "For if we sin willfully..." The word for which introduces verse 26 is from a Greek term *gar* and means "because" or "the reason is." So we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, for (because, the reason is) if we sin wilfully..., there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

III. DOES HEBREWS 10:25 REFER TO THE WHOLE CHURCH QUITTING OR CAN THE STATEMENT ALSO REFER TO EACH INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN?

ANSWER: The text is speaking of individuals forsaking the assembly. Some contend that the word "ourselves" in the verse means that it is the WHOLE church that either does or doesn't forsake. But "ourselves" (Greek—*heautou*) refers to individual members, just as the same word does in Romans 15:1 and 2 Cor. 7:1. If Hebrews 10:25 applies only to a whole congregation forsaking, who are the "some" in the verse that ARE forsaking? Certainly not SOME other congregations. We have no record either in the Bible or outside the Bible of churches falling away that early in the first century. Some members had forsaken, and the writer says: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." A careful study of the various translations of Heb. 10:25 will also make this point clear.

IV. DOESN'T FORSAKE MEAN TO PERMANENTLY ABANDON, ACCORDING TO THE GREEK DEFINITION?

ANSWER: No. The matter of time, whether permanent or temporary, is not inherent in the word itself. Forsake (Greek—*egkatalepo*) is not only used here in Hebrews 10:25, but was also used by Jesus in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. Read those verses carefully. Surely you do not believe that God permanently abandoned His Son on that occasion. One can become guilty of forsaking the services without permanently abandoning or completely quitting. The motive and intent of the heart has much to do with whether or not one is forsaking the assembling with the saints.

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN BE JUST A CHRISTIAN?

Eugene Crawley

There are three passages of Scripture in the New Testament where the name that most people are willing to accept religiously is to be found. However, this by no means is proof that all are satisfied with simply that name—Christian." In Acts 11:26 we're told that "... the disciples were called Christians... "; (Acts 26:28), "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"; (I Pet. 4:1), "But if any man suffer as Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf" —and the ASV says, "... let him glorify God in this name."

The modern denominational idea is that one cannot be simply a Christian, nothing more, and nothing less—he must be a particular kind of Christian. It goes without saying that many fine people preach and practice this concept of "Christianity"; but doesn't such a practice sound to you like the people of Corinth in the New Testament? "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." (1 Cor. 1:12.) Were they not very much like many today? Think of it—"Paulite-Christians," "Cephasite-Christians," and "Apollosite-Christians." Now, in reality was that not what those people were trying to be? And is that not just like many in the world today—not satisfied with simply the God-given name "Christian"? Yet Paul pointed out to these Corinthians that such was wrong because Christ is not divided, Paul was not crucified for them, and they were not baptized into the name of Paul. (1 Cor. 1:13.)

Now, if it was wrong to be divided religiously and wear human names such as "Paul," "Cephas," "Apollos"—and all must admit that the one Bible teaches it was—by logic or scripture, do we have the right to wear the names of men, religious ordinances, or religious movements in religious matters today? If it was wrong to add the names of men and ordinances to the name "Christian" then, is it any less wrong today? Or by what authority do men today have the right to wear the names of ordinances, or systems of methods church government, before the worthy name "Christian"? Can all these human names add one bit of honor, glory or esteem to the God-given, glorious and beautiful name "Christian"? Why not, my friend, BE JUST A CHRISTIAN? You CAN be, so why not be?

You may have thought it impossible to be just a Christian. Not only is it possible, but it is just what Christ wants you to be. His name is above every name (Phil. 2:9), and in His name is God to be honored. Listen, "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Col. 3:17.) YOU CAN BE JUST A CHRISTIAN like the disciples in Antioch, where the followers of Christ were first called by this name. You should want to be nothing more than they who were called Christians. They were not called this because they had obeyed some human doctrine, nor because they were following some man, but because they had obeyed the gospel of Christ and were following Him. You can do just that, and when you do, it will not make you some peculiar kind of Christian, but you will be just a Christian. ISN'T THAT SUFFICIENT? Think about it!!!

Don't be deceived by the modern concept that you have to be something more in addition to being a Christian. Many will say, "Oh, I'm a Christian all right, but I'm a (shall we call it a hyphenated Christian, because they want to add some human name; and, if they do, which comes first?)." It seems that some just cannot be content to be simply a Christian.

They have been taught—many of them, that it is easier for them to live the Christian life if they join some particular human denomination (and when they do, another name must be added to distinguish them from other religious people, making them something more than just a Christian.) Oh, friend, can you not see the inconsistency in such reasoning?. Paul said all scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable and will make the man of God perfect, furnishing him unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) Just what else, or more, does a person need? Can't you see that God has done a perfect work in giving us such instruction? Why, then, be encouraged to follow anything else?

You may be reading this as one who has never made any move religiously, and that because you thought you had to be something more than just a Christian—that you had to join some human denomination. If that be the case, then do not remain in such condition spiritually; it is dangerous to do so; you may answer the appointment of death unprepared. Become simply a Christian by following the teaching of Christ. It was Jesus Himself who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) Do you believe Him, that He is the Son of God? If so, then repent of sin, as He commands in Luke 13:3, and confess your faith in Him as the Son of God (Matt. 10:32) that He will confess you before the Father in heaven. Upon such confession, be buried with Christ by baptism into death (Rom. 6:3,4), therein contacting the cleansing power of His blood to be washed pure from all sin, being delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of Christ. (Col. 1:13.) Becoming then simply a disciple of Christ, a child of God, to wear the name of Christ, you **ARE JUST A CHRISTIAN**. Would you not like to be just a Christian, a member of the church that Jesus purchased with His blood? You **CAN** be if you will meet His conditions of pardon; for when He saves you, He will add you to His church (Acts 2:47), because the saved are by Him added to the church. This is the Lord's way, the Lord's plan; and none other is acceptable in the sight of God Almighty. This conclusion you will reach if you will only study the cases of conversion recorded in the book of Acts.

Friend, be simply a Christian; please God; honor Him and glorify His holy name; and while you do, you are preparing for Heaven; and this pays eternal rewards. **YES, YOU CAN BE JUST A CHRISTIAN!! WHY NOT BE?**

* * * * *

If you would turn the best schoolmaster out of your life, fail to learn from your mistakes.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Matt. 9:10-13.)

This passage of scripture shows that the human race is plagued by a dreadful disease—sin. It affects the heart. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matt. 15:19.) It is contagious. "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. 5:6.) "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. 15:33.) It is insidious. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13.) It is universal. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) It is fatal. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23.) "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.!" (Ezek. 18:4, 20,24,)

This passage also shows that Christ is the Great Physician.

Characteristics of a Great Physician

1. He must know his medicine. The medicine which Christ prescribes is truth, and indeed he knows it perfectly. Even as a lad of twelve years he was able to astound the doctors of the law with his profound knowledge of the word of God. (Luke 2:46-52.) By proper application of the word of God, his medicine, he overcame the strongest temptations of the evil one. (Luke 4:1-13.) Because of his perfect knowledge of his medicine he was able to teach the multitudes and was able to answer all the captious questions of his enemies. (Matt. 22:23-33.)

2. He must have confidence in his remedy. With confidence in his remedy Jesus said to the Jews, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) Identifying the truth, Jesus prayed to his Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) Jesus knew that his medicine could make men free from sin.

3. He must know the patient, and the patient's exact needs. We are told that "he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." (John 2:24,25.) He could look into the heart of man and know whether it was evil or good. On one

occasion he said, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matt. 9:4.) On another occasion, when he and his disciples came to Capernaum, he asked them, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be greatest." (Mark 9:33, 34.) Jesus could see weakness, but at the same time, strength and great good in Peter. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Luke 22:31,32.)

4. He must be skilled in his work. Jesus knew how to apply his remedy in the most skilled manner. When the Samaritan woman came to Jacob's well to draw water, Jesus talked with her about "living water." This woman became so interested in Christ and what he had to say that she went and brought others to hear him. (John 4.) The "Sermon on the Mount" is evidence of the skill with which he presented his remedy. (Matt. 5-7.) Concerning him certain officers said, "Never man spake like this man." (John 7:46.)

5. He must be sympathetic and compassionate. The true physician is not hardened to the suffering of his patients, nor is he indifferent to their unfortunate condition. Christ was deeply concerned about the condition of his patients. "But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. 9:36.)

6. He must be available. A physician is of no benefit when he cannot be reached, or will not come when he is needed. Christ made himself available to his fellowman in need. A centurion came to Jesus in behalf of his servant who was grievously tormented with the palsy. Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." (Matt. 8:7.) Again and again his answer was, "I will come. I will come." His invitation to us is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28.) When we come to him in obedience to the gospel, we can be sure that he will be available. We will not have to go to the altar and beg, and plead, and implore him to heal us of our sin-sick souls. The invitation is to all, and "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9.)

7. He must be strong, and durable, and disciplined. The doctor who dissipates his strength and energies by improper conduct cannot serve his patients as he should. At a time when he is needed most, he cannot come because of his own debilitation. To himself Jesus applied perfectly the rules of spiritual health. Concerning him Peter said, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Pet. 2:22.) The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15.) He overcame the temptations of the devil by properly applying the word of God. Each time he was tempted, he answered, "It is written. It is written. It is written." (Matt. 4:1-11.) As the Great Physician prescribed truth (John 8:32) for his sin-sick patients, he himself lived that truth perfectly.

Characteristics of a Good Patient

1. He must recognize his condition, and his need of a physician. Though people realize that something is wrong, they may try to persuade themselves that they have no need of a physician. Many have waited too long to seek a cure. All men need the Great Physician, and

all need him now. "For there is no man that sinneth not. (1 Kings 8: 46.) "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psa. 14:2,3.) "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Prov. 20:9.) "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Ecc. 7: 20.) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8.)

Every man is indeed in need of the Great Physician, for all are plagued by the dreadful, soul-destroying disease of sin. "For the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23.) When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, the people were pricked in their hearts and recognized their dreadful spiritual condition. They were religious, devout people, but now they were aware of the terrible sin they had committed in crucifying Christ. When once they had become conscious of their true condition, they were ready to apply the remedy. They cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2.)

2. The good patient will be willing to take the remedy. The remedy that Jesus has prescribed for every sin-sick soul will cure without fail when properly followed. In order to cure the disease of sin Jesus has prescribed faith in him as the Son of God. "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.) He has prescribed repentance. "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3.) He has prescribed confession of our faith. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10: 32, 33.) In his prescription Jesus also included baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.)

The healing remedy, prescribed, but unused can be of no benefit. The Great Physician knows our needs exactly. He has prescribed the healing, cleansing potion. It is for us to apply the remedy in our obedience to the gospel, or else the healing power of the prescription and the saving skill of the Great Physician will be of no benefit to us.

“These Things”

Curtis E. Flatt

In 2 Peter 1:5-15, the apostle Peter gives a list of characteristics which he refers to on five occasions as these things. They are: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. (2 Pet. 5-7.) The epistles of Peter were written to Christians, who were to find these things necessary to their growth and development. It is apparent that the epistles were written to Christians. These were people who had been baptized in order to be saved from their sins. (1 Peter 3:21.) These were people who had purified their souls in obeying the truth. (1 Peter 1:22.) These were people who had been born again by the word of God, the seed of the kingdom. (1 Peter 1:23.) These were people who had been redeemed by the blood of Christ, the lamb. (1 Peter 1: 18,19.) These were people who were called Christians. (1 Peter 4:16.) These were people who had obtained like precious faith with the apostles. To these people certain admonitions were given in regard to these things. Let us notice them.

"These Things" to be Done

These things are things which Christians are expected to do. "Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (2 Peter 1:10.) Thus, these are things which are to be done. These are obligations. Christians either do these things or else. The only other alternative is to fall. These things, when done, are the Christian's safeguard against apostasy. Not only does this show that Christians may go into apostasy, but this also shows that Christians will apostatize unless they do these things.

"These Things" to be Added

These things are things which Christians must also add or supply. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue ..." (2 Peter 1:5.) One can have faith and then have more faith. One can have more virtue and more knowledge and more temperance and more brotherly kindness and more love. He not only can have these, but he can and must add these. He is obligated to supply more of each of these things. If he does not add these things, he will become spiritually blind and not be able to see afar off. He will get to the point that he cannot properly discern true spiritual values. The people who are spiritually blind are in a dangerous place. They will eventually fall into the ditch whether they lead or follow. (Matt. 15:14.) These things must be added.

"These Things" to be in the Christian

These things are things which Christians must have in them. "For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:8.) The American Standard says that these things must be yours. They must be in the Christian to the extent that they are his—a part of him. If one does not have these things in him, then he will be barren and unfruitful and will eventually be cut off. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:1,2.) Truly, these things are to be in

you.

"These Things" to Abound

These things are things in which the Christian is also to abound. In verse 8, we read: "For if these things be in you and abound..." (2 Peter 1:8.) It is necessary for the Christian to have these things. But having them is not enough. He must abound in them. He must have them in abundance. He is to add them until he has them in great quantity. This process of adding them is that which is called growing in the scripture. When the Christian adds these things and keeps on adding them, he grows. Following this process he abounds in them and is finally said to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

"These Things" to be Remembered

These things are also things which are to be remembered. "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth," (2 Peter 1:12.) This very part of the epistle was being written that these things could be remembered after the decease of the apostle. "Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." A great amount of effort was made to impress upon us the value of remembering these things.

"Results"

These things keep good company. When Christians do these things and keep on doing them, the promise is that they shall never fall. In addition, when these things are added or supplied, they enable the Christian to be able to see and to properly discern things that are really important. These things also furnish the ingredients of true success; for if they are really in the Christian, he is fruitful. These things also furnish the prescription which enables one to go to Heaven. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:11.) These things, when possessed in abundance, provide a guaranty. In showing the authenticity of his writing about these things, the apostle said: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19.)

Let me commend "these things" to you. When properly considered and applied, they will make a difference here and hereafter.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Earl Kimbrough

"Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (Jno. 7:16,17.)

In this passage Jesus states two facts about His doctrine. It is divine, because God is its source, and it is understandable. Any person who desires to do His will can know the doctrine. The willing subject not only can know the source of the doctrine, but he can also know its contents. How else could he obey it? So if any man rejects the doctrine of Christ, he rejects that which came from God. And surely man is without excuse in not knowing, or in misunderstanding, the doctrine, for the Lord intended that it be understood and obeyed. But let us look a little more closely into the doctrine of Christ.

1. What is the doctrine of Christ? Doctrine is simply teaching. Later translations render the word "teaching." For instance, "The teaching that I give is not my own; it is the teaching of him who sent me." (NEB) The word, whether translated "doctrine" or "teaching," is used in two ways in the New Testament. First, it is used with reference to the substance of teaching, i. e., the thing that is taught. "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine." (Matt. 7:28.) The people were astonished at the contents of Christ's teaching. Second, the word is used to denote the action of teaching, i.e., the act of imparting instruction. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine (teaching)." (1 Tim. 4:13.)

The word is frequently used in the sense of the substance of teaching to indicate beliefs peculiar to some religious body. For example, the New Testament speaks of "the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"; "doctrines of men"; "doctrines of devils"; and "the doctrine of Balaam." In modern speech we frequently use the term in this way to indicate teaching that is peculiar to some particular religious body or religious theory. Thus, "Mormon doctrine" is used to denote the teaching that is peculiar to the Mormon Church. And "the doctrine of premillennialism" indicates beliefs associated with that theory regarding the second coming of Christ.

However, Christ has but one doctrine. He spoke of "My doctrine," not of "My doctrines." This indicates the unity and perfection of His teaching. This unity and perfection is even more obvious when we view the New Testament facts about the doctrine of Christ. As we have already seen, it came from the Father and was given to us through His Son. The manner in which it was made known was by holy men who were guided by the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 3:3-5.) The doctrine of Christ is thus contained in an inspired book, the New Testament, which is complete and understandable. (Jno. 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:12, 13; 2 Tim.3:16, 17.) The doctrine of Christ is the New Testament. There is no other means by which the will of God is communicated to man.

2. How is the knowledge of Christ's doctrine acquired? Since the New Testament is the only source of learning the doctrine of Christ, it is obvious that from it alone may we learn the doctrine of Christ. Jude said "the faith," the doctrine of Christ, was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3.) This forever precludes any new or latter-day revelations. Peter

declared that all things pertaining to life and godliness have been given us through the knowledge of Christ. (2 Pet. 1:3.) Paul said the scriptures furnish us unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) What more is there for us to learn? What spiritual knowledge do we need that is not supplied by the doctrine of Christ as revealed in the New Testament?

But knowledge of the doctrine of Christ comes through study. The doctrine is complete, and it is understandable. However, the individual who would know it must apply himself to learning the doctrine. Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (Jno. 6:45.) Peter admonished Christians to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 3:18.) The Lord has not promised us a miraculous knowledge of the doctrine. There are no short cuts to learning the will of God. Paul prayed for the Philippians that their love might "grow ever richer and richer in knowledge and insight of every kind" and thus bring them "the gift of true discrimination." (Phil. 1:9, 10—NEB.) But if study brings the desired knowledge, it must be motivated by the right purpose —the desire to know and to obey God's will. (Jno. 7:16, 17.)

3. Why is it important to know the doctrine of Christ? Ignorance cannot save! One cannot be subject to the righteousness of God while he is ignorant of the truth. (Rom. 10:1-3.1) Only the truth can make men free. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jno. 8:31,32.) "For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:13, 14, 17.) The truth must be known and obeyed to avail.

A superficial knowledge of the truth will not do. One must know the fundamentals of the gospel to be saved from alien sins and become a child of God. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16.) But the Christian must go on "unto perfection" in the knowledge of the truth. (Heb. 5: 12-14; 6:1.) The Christian life requires a threefold duty toward the truth that necessitates a constantly growing knowledge of Christ's doctrine. The Lord requires that he know the truth. (Eph. 5:17.) The Lord requires that he practice the truth. (1 Tim. 4:16.) And the Lord requires that he teach the truth to others. (2 Tim. 4:1-4.)

The doctrine of Christ is God's will for man today. It has been revealed by the Holy Spirit through inspired men, and it is contained in its fulness in the New Testament. Knowledge of this doctrine comes only by diligent study, And this knowledge is essential to one's obedience to God so as to be saved from sin, live so as to please God, and have eternal life in the world to come,

* * * * *

It is a poor sermon that gives no offense, that neither makes the hearer dissatisfied with himself nor with the preacher.

SOME SOUL-SEARCHING QUESTIONS OF THE SAVIOR

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

That men ask questions which are of no importance is recognized by the Lord when He warns, "... but foolish and unlearned questions avoid ..." (2 Tim. 2:23.) In fact, more than being unprofitable, such questions may "gender strife." But this is not true of the questions of the Lord; and He frequently used questions in His efforts to teach men. His every question is of eternal importance and is worthy of our serious consideration. This is especially true of some of His questions which, more than being important, are soul-searching! Do you dare give sincere attention to them? (or maybe we should ask, do you dare NOT to?—inasmuch as they have to do with your eternal destiny!)

"BUT WHO SAY YE THAT I AM?" (Matt. 16:15.) To say we live in a time of skepticism is putting it mildly. Surveys show that a major portion of the "clergy" deny the virgin birth of Jesus. They thus conclude that at best He was just another "good man," and not the "only begotten Son of God," as He, as well as other inspired men, affirmed. The apostle Paul assures us that He was "declared (proven) to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:4.) But then the liberal "clergy" must also deny the resurrection, which would mean "our faith is vain"! (1 Cor. 15:17.)

Regardless of what others have said and do say about Jesus of Nazareth, He is asking YOU, "But who say ye that I am?" He wants you to confess before men, as did the Ethiopian, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37.) In return, He has promised to confess you before the Father in heaven. (Matt. 10:32.) A failure to confess such faith in Him will bring Him to DENY you before God! (v. 33.)

Surely, the undeniable evidence (in the Scriptures) proves Him to be the Son of God and the Savior of men. What do you think about it?

Then there is His question which probes the sincerity of professed followers: "WHY CALL YE ME LORD, LORD, AND DO NOT THE THINGS WHICH I SAY?" (Lk. 6:46.) To call one "Lord" is to give at least lip service to his authority. But to acknowledge one's authority, while failing to submit to the same is hypocrisy! Do you call Him "Lord"? Are you submissive to His authority?—have you obeyed from the heart the gospel of Christ, as had the Romans to whom Paul wrote? (Rom. 6:1-18.) Many call Him "Lord" while insisting that one of his commandments is "not essential to salvation"! They acknowledge that baptism is a commandment of the Lord, but insist that one can be saved without being baptized; and that in spite of the fact that the Lord says, "He that believeth AND IS BAPTIZED shall be saved." (Mk. 16:16.) A number of passages of inspired scripture show that baptism is just as surely a prerequisite to remission of alien sins as are faith, repentance, and even the blood of Christ. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:7; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4.) Do YOU call Him "Lord"? Are you doing what He demands of you?

Then, one of the most applicable questions to men in general of our time, "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN, IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?" (Matt. 16: 26.) It seems that more and more, even professed followers of Christ, are primarily concerned with material gain, rather than spiritual values. Paul warns, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Tim.

6:7.)

Another question asked by the Savior, or a continuation of this same question (Matt. 16:26) is, "... OR WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?" When you come before Him to be judged (Matt. 25:31ff; 2 Cor. 5:10), what will you give in exchange for your soul? A life of faithfulness in His service is the only thing that will avail anything then! This will, of course, not earn salvation, but it is what He requires of those who would be saved by His grace.

Which is of greatest concern to you —material gain, or spiritual values? To use another of the Savior's soul-searching questions, "LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?" (John 21:15.) Unless we come to love Him more than any and every other thing in this world, we cannot be saved! Do you?

As suggested above, "Everyone of us must give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12.) He who would now be your Savior shall then be your JUDGE. (Acts 17:31.) You will stand before Him to give an account of the deeds done in your body. To borrow a question He asked of the two blind men (Matt. 20:32), "WHAT WILL YE THAT I SHALL DO UNTO YOU?" Just what do you wish Him to do with you then? As shown in the judgment scene in Matt. 25, He will say to you (and me) either "depart," which will mean "everlasting punishment," or "come ye blessed of my Father," granting you "life everlasting." (v. 46.) Just which shall it be for you? "What will ye that (He) shall do unto you" then? What He shall do with you then will be determined by WHAT YOU DO WITH HIM NOW, in this life.

He has provided salvation for you, in His death on the cross, and He stands pleading, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ..." (Matt. 11:28.) He is the "author of eternal salvation to all them that OBEY Him." (Heb. 5:8f.) Your obedience, from the heart, to His will now will bring Him to grant you the "crown of righteousness" then.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Bobby Graham

There is prevalent in the religious world the notion that no relation exists between Christ and the church. Some have said that we should preach Christ, not the church, or preach the man, not the plan. Furthermore some have said that people can be saved just as easily out of the church as in the church. They would thus deny any relationship that Christ bears to the church and say that there is none. Paul affirms in Eph. 3:10-11, however, that Christ does sustain a very definite relationship to the church in God's eternal purpose: in Christ God eternally purposed to demonstrate his wisdom through the church. The same writer in Eph. 5: 23-27 again underscores this point by showing all that Christ has done and will continue to do for the church—Christ loved the church, gave himself for the church, sanctifies and cleanses the church, will present it to himself. When Philip preached Christ to Samaria, he did so by preaching the kingdom of the church. There is a relation between the two, then, that we need to examine in order that we might better appreciate our responsibility as we fit into this relationship.

Let us notice what the relationship is:

Christ as Builder

The link between Christ and his church is set forth in the word "builder." That he is its builder indicates that he is responsible for its existence. Christ announced in Matt. 16:18 that he would shortly build his church and made good his promise in Acts 2 when as heaven's king he used duly authorized ambassadors to open the doors of the church. Just as a man might use laborers to build his house, even so Christ employed his apostles to build the church. The man would be foolish who would allow just any builder to erect his house, and concerned individuals will be equally insistent that they be members of the church that Jesus built. Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15: 13.) The Psalmist said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it ..." (Ps. 127:1.)

Christ as Buyer

Christ not only built the church, but he also purchased it unto himself—he paid the price. It is referred to as "the church of the Lord which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28.) The apostle Paul accordingly refers to the Christian as belonging to the Lord entirely—body and spirit—because he was bought with a price. The Lord buys the church as he buys the individuals who compose it; therefore, the church collectively and saints individually should recognize Christ as their purchaser and master. The church is to be subject to Christ in every thing. (Eph. 5:24.)

Christ as Owner

Since Christ has built the church and paid its purchase price, is it not reasonable that he would be its owner? Jesus therefore referred to it as "my church" in Matt. 16:18, and Peter describes Christians as "a people for God's own possession" in 1 Pet. 2:9.

Now let us ask a question: Since Christ built the church, bought it, and owns it, whose name should it wear? Merely asking this question answers it! It is no wonder that local churches were called churches of Christ in Rom. 16:16 or that individuals were called Christians in Acts 11:26; 26:28; and 1 Pet. 4:16. To wear any other name than that of Christ denies his relationship to the church as builder, buyer, and owner.

Christ as Foundation

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation..." (Isa. 28:16.) The apostle Peter in 1 Pet. 2:6 applied this prophecy of Isaiah to the Christ, thus establishing God's prior will that the church be built upon Christ. Paul says in I Cor. 3:11 that no other foundation than Christ can be laid. The various foundations of men, whether they be men, particular doctrines, or specific forms of organization, are thus classified as decayed and unworthy by the inspired writer.

Christ as Head

Christ's relation to his church is likewise defined in his headship. As head over the church in all things Christ is God's gift to the church. (Eph. 1:22, 23.) To be head of the church is equivalent to having the preeminence, according to Paul in Col. 1:18. We must therefore give unto Christ a position above all others and submission that we would grant to no one else. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10: 5.) Every member of the body and each person desiring to become a part of the body must be willing to yield to Christ our head.

Christ as Savior

Christ is at the same time the savior of the body, the church. Paul declares such to be the case in Eph. 5:23. Every other relation that Jesus holds to the church points to this one. Jesus built the church, bought it, owns it, serves as its foundation and head that he might save it when time shall be no more. Luke, the inspired historian, records in Acts 2:47 that the Lord adds the saved to the church. If he adds some saved to the church, he adds them all without respect of persons; accordingly, all saved people are in the church. The promise of salvation is offered to no one outside the body that Christ promises to save. Let it be understood that salvation is in Christ and the saved are in his body. In view of Christ's relationship to the church, will any man now say that one can be saved as easily out of the church as in it?

Let us recognize in conclusion that all Jesus came to the earth to accomplish, he did for his church. Furthermore, every spiritual relationship that Jesus bears, he bears to the church. Therefore, if one can be saved out of the church, he can be saved without being related to Christ, because only in the body of Christ can a person sustain a spiritual relationship to Christ.

* * * * *

You cannot control the length of your life, but you can control its breadth, depth, and height.

"THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU"

Raymond Harville

Over nineteen hundred years ago the church of Christ was established. Today it has the same name, organization, worship, work and teaching. Its mission is stated by Paul in Ephesians 3:10. God's eternal purpose for the church was to make known His manifold wisdom. The church does this as it (in belief and practice) follows the will of God. Only by so doing is it the image of God's wisdom. To do otherwise is to make it in the image of man's wisdom.

When Was the Church Established?

We learn from a study of the Old Testament that the house of God was to be established in the last days and in the city of Jerusalem. (Isa. 2:1,2.) Jesus promised the apostles that the kingdom would come with power. (Mk. 9:1.) He said the power would come with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8.) Acts chapter two is the time for the fulfillment of these things. The apostles are in the city of Jerusalem (the right place); the Holy Spirit descends upon them (the Power came); Pentecost is identified as in the last days (Acts 1: 17); repentance and remission of sins are being preached in Christ's name for the first time. (Lk. 24:46,47.) The word spoken on this occasion convinced a multitude of sinners, and they became Christians. (Acts 2:36-41.) From this point on, Christ has been adding the saved to the church. (Acts 2:47.) This day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two was the birthday of the church of Jesus Christ.

What Was the Church Called?

Paul calls it the church of God in Acts 20:28. He calls it the house of God, and the church of the living God in 1 Tim. 3:15. Jesus made the promise in Matt. 16:18, "I will build my church." In speaking of churches in several places, Paul says the churches of Christ salute you. (Rom. 16:16.) A more common expression found in the New Testament is simply "the church." There was no confusion as to what was meant; there was but one church. Jesus built but one, and the New Testament is the blueprint for but one. If more than one church exists (and there are more than one), something other than the Bible has been taught.

Members of the church (disciples) are called Christians. (Acts 11:26.) However, we do not read of the church being called the "Christian church."

Do you believe God is happy with the confusion that exists in the religious world? Is not division wrong? See 1 Cor. 1:10; John 17:20; Eph. 4:3-6.

How Was the Church Organized?

In the church general (universal), Christ is head. (Eph. 1:22,23.) He has given the laws, manner of worship and all other things that pertain to the religious life of people. No other man, nor any group of men, has the right to make any changes in the rules of conduct of religious people. Jesus sealed the rule book (Bible) with his death. If a person makes any changes he is accursed of God. (Gal. 1:6-8.) Jesus is King of kings. He is the head.

However, there were different congregations. There were the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2,3); the church at Antioch (Acts 13); the church at Corinth. (1 Cor. 1:2.) Elders were ordained in each of these local churches. (Acts 14:23.) Along with the elders (who were also called bishops, pastors, overseers, shepherds), there were special servants known as deacons. (Phil. 1:1.) Elders were to oversee the church. (Acts 20:28.) They were to TEND the flock among themselves. (1 Pet. 5:1-3.) Each congregation was completely separate and apart from all others. Each existed and worked as though they were the only congregation until alms were needed by another in cases of need. (Acts 11:27-30.) In such cases there were elders to receive the alms for the poor of that congregation.

Preachers are not rulers over the church. They are ministers of the word of God.

In the first century there were no synods, conferences, associations, sponsoring churches, etc. Each congregation was completely free and independent under the oversight of its own elders in the rule of Christ.

How Does One Enter the Church?

The answer to this question is simple. He enters the church by becoming a Christian. The apostles gave the terms of salvation to the Jews in Acts 2. As a result of the power of the preached gospel, the Jews said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The answer was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:36-38.) Those who gladly received Peter's words were baptized. Three things are here shown as conditions of being saved. One must believe that Christ is God's Son, repent of his sins, and be baptized into Christ. He is now saved. (See also Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.) As a saved person, the Lord has added him to the church. (Acts 2:47.) There is no saved person outside the church. Neither does the Lord add any unsaved person to His church.

How Should Christians Worship?

The plan of acceptable worship given by Jesus in John 4:24 was to worship God in spirit and in truth. God alone is the proper object of worship. He is not worshiped by the objects of men's hands (idolatry). (Acts 17:22-25.) God has not allowed man to decide what acts he will use to pay homage, nor the spirit one uses to express himself in these acts. If one devises his own manner and mode of worship, his efforts will be in vain. (Matt. 15:9.)

When one studies the New Testament, he will be impressed with the simplicity of first century worship. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them . . ." (Acts 20:7.) Their meeting on the first day of the week commemorated the Lord's resurrection, and the breaking of bread (Lord's Supper) commemorated his death. On this occasion Paul preached. To receive instruction and edification was a regular part of their worship. (1 Cor. 14:19,26.) In addition to the Lord's Supper and instruction, the early church sang praises without the addition of a mechanical instrument. (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19.) They sang and made melody in the heart. They also engaged in prayer. This was not only a part of their public worship, but of their private devotions as well. They worshiped by eating the Lord's Supper, studying the apostles' teaching, singing and praying. Also, in their Lord's day gathering, they were to give of their money as God had prospered them. (1 Cor. 16:1,2.)

Their worship was directed by the apostles. Do we have a right to do more or less than they did?

What Was the Work of the Church?

The Bible prescribes the work of the church. The church is to be guided by the truth in its work just as much as in worship and organization. Many churches are nothing more than social organizations. Others are following their path. The work of the church as prescribed in the Bible is threefold. Preaching the gospel of Christ, edifying Christians and relieving needy saints. Please note these works being done in the first century: 1 Thess. 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:12,16; 1 Cor. 14: 26; Acts 2:44,45; 4:34,35.

When the church functions in the realm of recreational and social activities, it does so without the approval of its head, Christ. There is no more authority for a church kitchen, fellowship hall, ball club, parties, camps, etc., than there is for mechanical music, sprinkling for baptism, or human names. The Bible must be our guide. Jesus died to build the church. It is a spiritual relationship. (Eph. 2:14-16.) The church manifests itself to the world as God desires only when it functions as God directs.

What Is the Doctrine of the Church?

The church has no doctrine of its own. The church was conceived in the mind of God, brought into existence by Christ, and exists in any community as it does the will of Christ. The doctrine it teaches is the doctrine of Christ. One enjoys the blessings of God only as he abides in this doctrine. (2 John 9-11.) For this reason the church and every Christian is to study diligently the Bible. (2 Tim. 2:15; Rev. 2:7.)

ADULTERATION OF GOD'S WORD

Edd Holt

To adulterate is "to corrupt, debase, or make impure by admixture of a foreign or a baser substance; ... counterfeit"—WEBSTER. The encyclopedia says food is declared to be adulterated under the following conditions: "First if any substance has been mixed and packed with it... ; Second, if any substance has been substituted wholly or in part for the article; Third, if any valuable constituent of the article has been wholly or in part abstracted; Fourth, if it is mixed, colored, powdered, coated, or stained, in any manner whereby damage or inferiority is concealed." The law of the land forbids the adulteration of foods.

God's Pure Food Law

Man is to live by the word of God. (Mt. 4:4.) The word of God is spiritual food for the soul. It is more sinful to poison the soul than the body. Hence, God has a spiritual pure food law. He forbids the adulteration of his word. "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." (Prov. 30:6.) "Learn not to go beyond the things which are written." (1 Cor. 4:6, R.V.) "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2.) "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8.) "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.)—Truth in Love, June, 1943

THE WONDERFUL CHRIST

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6.) That this passage is a prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that the descriptive terms of the passage refer to Christ, should be beyond controversy. From the prophetic terms describing Christ, we want to notice the first one that we might see him as the WONDERFUL CHRIST.

1. Christ is wonderful because of his eternal nature.

The passage which we are considering not only describes him as wonderful but also as "everlasting." He spoke in reference to his eternal nature when to the Jews he said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (John 8:56-59.)

His eternal nature is set forth by the apostle John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1: 1.) The fourteenth verse of the same chapter identifies the Word as Christ. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Moses said that God is "from everlasting to everlasting." (Ps. 90:2.) But Christ is identified by John as God, therefore from everlasting to everlasting. Paul says concerning him, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. 1:17.)

When some claim, as do the Jehovah's Witnesses, that Christ is a created being, they violate the scriptures, and rob him of the wonder of his eternal nature.

2. Christ is wonderful because of his part in the creation.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen. 1:1.) Though the translation into our language does not show it, "GOD" in this passage is in the plural. The first chapter of Genesis shows clearly that God was not alone in the creation, for, in the twenty-sixth verse, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Concerning Christ as the Word, John says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3.) In speaking of his eternal nature, and his work in creation, Paul said, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. 1:16, 17.)

The wonder of creation is that simply because God spoke there came into existence out of nothing this great physical universe. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were

framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. ° 11:3.) The most reasonable account of the origin of the universe is the Bible account. It goes back to beings of eternal nature and infinite wisdom and power. The theory of evolution offers no real explanation of the origin of matter and of life. Starting with lifeless, senseless matter, it robs God and Christ of the wonder of creation.

3. Christ is wonderful in the nature of his birth.

When the angel told Mary that she was to be the mother of Jesus, she wondered, and asked, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. " (Luke 1:34, 35.) Thus Christ was brought forth into the world through the virgin birth, the Son of God and the Son of man, qualified to be our intercessor as one who knows both the human and divine sides.

4. Christ is wonderful in the fulfilment of prophecy.

Even in his birth he fulfilled prophecy. "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14.) Concerning the birth of Christ hundreds of years later it is said, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matt. 1:22,23.) It was prophesied that he would be the seed of woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of Isaac, the seed of Jacob, would come from the tribe of Judah, would be heir to the throne of David, would be born in Bethlehem, would make the flight into Egypt, and the innocents would be slaughtered, would be preceded by a forerunner, would heal the brokenhearted, would be rejected by his own people, would be betrayed by a friend, would be sold for thirty pieces of silver, his side would be pierced but no bones broken, would be with the wicked and rich in his death, would be resurrected and would ascend to be at the right hand of God.

The life of Christ was pre-written in prophecy. In the exact, detailed fulfilment of each prophecy we see again the wonderful Christ.

5. Christ is wonderful because of his character.

He was tempted in all points as we are and was yet without sin. (Heb. 4: 14.) He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Pet. 1:22.) He was wonderful in obeying every law under which he lived, in overcoming every temptation of Satan, in doing the will of God perfectly.

6. Christ is wonderful in the service which he rendered to humanity.

In our time people in the name of some cause go about rioting, bombing, killing, destroying. Jesus "went about doing good." (Acts 10:38.) He rendered the kind of service to humanity that lifted up the palsied knee, that healed the broken heart, that fed the hungry mouth, that gave hope to the oppressed. Indeed he was wonderful in the service which he rendered and in the good that he did among men.

7. Christ was wonderful in the death that he died.

He came to be "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.) And indeed he offered himself in sacrifice for all mankind. Concerning his life he said, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." (John 10:18.) He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5:21.) Little wonder then when Christ died so nobly the shameful, horrible death of the cross that the Roman centurion should cry out, "Truly this was the Son of God. " (Matt. 27:54.)

8. Christ was wonderful in his resurrection and ascension.

Christ has made a great claim: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25.) When on the third morning after his crucifixion the women came to the tomb to anoint his body, he proved this colossal claim to be true. Instead of finding the body lying still in death, they found the tomb empty, and heard the angels say, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." (Luke 24:5,6.) After forty days with his disciples, while blessing them as they stood on the mount of Olives, he was parted from them and carried into heaven on a cloud that received him out of their sight. (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9.) That empty tomb, that fleecy cloud offer to mankind the hope that indeed is the anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast.

9. Christ is wonderful in his work of redemption.

In his coming from heaven, in his great sacrifice, in his victory over Satan and over death, he has executed God's great plan of salvation for man. Now through his precious blood which flowed on Calvary we can be cleansed from every sin. (1 John 1:7; Eph. 1:7.) It is for us to show our appreciation for this wonderful Christ by obeying the gospel which he proclaimed, and which is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16.) We reach out to that precious, atoning blood by being baptized into his death—not as those who repudiate baptism, and thus deny the word of God, but as humble, penitent believers. (Rom. 6:3,4.) The wonderful Christ is the wonderful "author of eternal life unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:9.)

CROSSES – EXPECTED OR UNEXPECTED?

John D. Swatzell

The test of life does not come when our plans are running smoothly, but actually it comes when we must face the problems and carry the crosses of life. We know that such do come our way; and life's true meaning, that which proves our worth as Christians, lies in the carrying of these crosses.

Matthew 27:32 records the story of Simon of Cyrene as he was compelled to carry the cross of Christ. Mark adds to the account that he was "passing by," that to him this was an unexpected cross," because he was compelled or impressed to carry it. He did not volunteer to carry it. The strain under which Jesus had been had taken His strength, and evidently the Pharisees and Roman soldiers had no time to wait for an exhausted man to struggle, bearing His own cross. (John relates that Jesus went out bearing His cross.) Thus Simon was compelled to carry the unexpected cross.

Thayer says of the word cross (stauros): "An upright stake.., well known instrument of most cruel and ignominious punishment"; also, "proverbial expression used of those who on behalf of God's cause do not hesitate to cheerfully and manfully bear persecution, troubles, distress ..." The first definition of the word describes the cross that Simon carried, an unexpected cross. The second definition is of the cross we are expected to bear; therefore, it is not an unexpected cross.

Jesus used the word cross as a symbol of distress and burden bearing TO BE EXPECTED by followers of His in Matthew 16:24 and Luke 14:27. In these and related scriptures, distinct notice is posted thereby of the difficulties which His followers will have to encounter of EXPECTED CROSSES. We realize this is a far cry from modern high-pressure selling, of invitations extended verse after verse, with emotional pleas and appeal, soft-soaping the demands that Jesus has placed on followers, mixed all along with what one does not have to give up, what one can hold on to and still become a Christian. But, Jesus points out, the only way to Heaven is through self-denial and self-sacrifice, through expected cross-bearing; therefore, to the world in general, Christianity will never be made popular. (Matt. 7:13,14.) From this and parallel scriptures, we learn of some of the expected crosses of those who would follow after Jesus: deny self; take up his own cross daily —these things will bring expected crosses to each life.

The Expected Cross of Self-denial

Look briefly at the expected cross of denying self. It means that as Jesus emptied Himself, so must we; and then we must be filled with the will of God in heaven. Our own wisdom, will, mind, and pleasures must be replaced by those of God. Notice with care the word "cannot"—one cannot be a follower of Him with it. It is the same word that preachers stress so much in John 3:5, that a person cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit. Not that it is just hard or difficult, but that it is impossible—cannot.

The Expected Cross Taken Up

Consider the fact that the cross is to be taken up. We are not to manufacture our own crosses to carry as consequences of sins and failures common to man. We are to take up that which God provides as consequent to following Jesus. We are not to drag that cross, but as Thayer says, bear it up manfully and cheerfully; and nothing is said of laying it down. This cross, the expected cross of God's providing is the result of denying self and filling ourselves with Him, regardless of what cross that may bring into our lives.

The Expected Individual Cross

Luke records, 14:27, the thought that each of us has his "own" cross to take up. It seems that particular years and situations have placed the heavier cross to be shouldered by only a few individuals. The unexpected cross may be peculiar to our own making, but the difference between expected and unexpected crosses?—NONE. The difference is in the one who carries it, according to his talents and opportunities. Sometimes a person becomes bitter, narrow, with less faith in self, others, and God, with less sympathy and understanding, while another bears up under the weight of the cross, bigger, with a kindly spirit, with a firmer faith, with a sympathetic feeling toward other cross bearers. The same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay.

Again, the expected individual cross is a daily affair, not once a week, or once every so often. Being a follower of Him is a daily affair, minute by minute, hour by hour. It is the faithfulness until death (Rev. 2:10) of carrying one's individual cross daily. Ever present are crosses peculiar to each day. The challenges of today must be met by men of today. No one else can carry this particular cross for us—not those of yesteryear, not those of tomorrow.

The Expected but Neglected Crosses of Today

Crosses are either picked up or laid down on the authority and all sufficiency of God's word concerning becoming Christians, involving hearing, believing and obeying all that God has said, nothing more, nothing less.

Crosses are either picked up or laid down on the authority and all sufficiency of God's word concerning the name, worship, and work of the church in all that God has said, nothing more, nothing less. Battle lines 100 years ago were not drawn so much on instrumental music and the missionary society, but merely on attitudes toward God's word reflected in these matters. Many crosses were cast down, while a few continued to carry the expected cross of truth.

Many have never denied (emptied) self, still are too full of human wisdom, too high-minded, too self-willed to carry the cross of truth. Man's schemes and designs, whatever they be or whenever they rear their heads, are but a strike at the heart of Christianity—the all sufficiency of our Lord's word, the authority behind that word. And now! Great the sickening sound as the cross of truth tumbles into the dust from the shoulder of a once faithful follower; great the deathly view of the debris of truth cast down; faint the echo of "cannot be my disciple."

Expected Cross Bearing Ends in Glory

Encouragement is given to those who bear crosses. It is necessary if one is to be saved.

(Matt. 10:38.) The duration is short. (2 Cor. 4:17,18.) God is with us all the while to strengthen us. (Phil. 4:13.) Others also carry crosses. (Jesus carried His cross before both Simon and us, others before and after us.) (1 Cor. 10:13.) Glory is the expectation of bearing expected crosses. (Rom. 8:17.)

Unexpected crosses? No. Expected crosses? Yes. In persecution. (Matt. 15:20.) Endurance of reproach. (Heb. 12:3.) In families. (Matt. 10:34ff.) In the church. (Acts 20:29.) In preachers. (Acts 20:30.) Therefore expect these crosses. (Acts 20:31,32.) Let them produce whatever shame, disgrace, or pain they may, but let us bear up under them, not trying to escape them, but accepting them as a challenge, knowing that He who holds the earth in the hollow of His hand has a heart of love toward us.

The False Teacher

Curtis E. Flatt

Surely there must be some false teachers somewhere. The Bible talks about them. However, people who believe that one church is as good as another and that one religion is as good as another are hard pressed to find any false teachers anywhere. Nevertheless, the Bible has much to say about them. In Matthew 7:15 we are admonished to beware of them. In 1 John 4.1 we are told that there are many of them and that each is to be tested or tried to determine whether or not he is a false teacher. In 2 Peter 2:1,2 we learn that false teachers bring in damnable heresies and that men follow their pernicious way. Now in view of all of this, we would do well to seek to learn how to determine who the false teacher actually is.

Some False Standards of Identification

One cannot tell who a false teacher is by using the identification marks which are so commonly used. Let us consider some of these;

1. A pious look on the part of the teacher does not mean that he is a true teacher. True teachers are pious but false teachers may be pious also. Jesus said. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matthew 7.15.)

2. The success of the teacher in drawing the crowd does not mean that he is a true teacher. In Acts 8:10, we learn that Simon was a teacher to whom all the Samaritans gave heed from the least to the greatest, but still he was a false teacher. "You know that many people could not be wrong about the man," is a commonly heard expression. However the crowd is often wrong. The crowd approved of Simon but the crowd was wrong. He had bewitched them. Timothy was told. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4..3,4.) The success of the teacher in drawing the crowd is no true test of his true qualities.

3. Good words and fair speeches are often used as the basis as to whether or not a teacher is a true or false teacher. However, false teachers sometimes use good words and fair speeches. In Romans 16:18 we learn that certain people, by good words and fair speeches, deceived the hearts of the simple. So often, people judge the teacher's accuracy on how good he makes it sound.

4. Self appraisal by the teacher wherein he tells how right he is in his teaching does not make him a true teacher. Your author has never met a teacher who admitted that he was a false teacher. Every teacher gives out the message that his teaching is correct. Simon, in Acts 8"9, let it be known that he was some great one, but that did not change the fact that he was actually a deceiver and a sorcerer. Every teacher seems to be right if one listens to his appraisal of himself. Many false teachers, like Simon, give out the message that they are great ones, but that does not make them right and true.

These are some of the standards by which many people determine the genuineness of

the teachers they hear. A true teacher may have all of these qualities, but he is not a true teacher because of these. A teacher may have all of these and still be a false teacher. Since one can not tell whether or not a teacher is true or false by these standards, how can we determine who the false teacher is?

One Who Wrests the Scriptures

Any teacher who wrests the scriptures is a false teacher. In 2 Peter 3. 16, Peter says that Paul wrote some things hard to be understood and that some did wrest these as they did the other scriptures. To wrest is to twist or distort. When you hear a teacher twisting and distorting a passage of scripture to make it say what he wants it to say when it does not actually convey the message that he wants it to say, you have found a false teacher. For example, when one hears a man who is so intent on proving that baptism is not necessary for salvation from past sins that he will use 1 Corinthians 1.14-17 to prove his point, he has found a false teacher—one that wrests the scriptures—for that is not the teaching of 1 Corinthians 1:14-17. In this paragraph the apostle was teaching about the sin of division, and he was thankful that he had not personally baptized more of them lest more of them should have been claiming to be followers of Paul. And then he added that: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." There were others who could do the baptizing. There were not many who could do the preaching. But the end results of the preaching were that people were then baptized. Even Paul did some of it which he should not have done if he meant that people did not need to be baptized. It is wresting the scriptures to say that this means that baptism is not necessary and that Paul was seeking to express disapproval of it.

One Who Perverts the Scriptures

A teacher who will pervert the scriptures is also a false teacher. Elymas, the sorcerer, of Acts 13:10 was one who perverted the right ways of the Lord. To pervert is to turn diversely or change. People actually change the scriptures to make them say what they want them to say. Teachers will literally add or subtract a "not" or some other word in order to prove or disprove a doctrine. For example, the doctrine of salvation by faith is clearly taught in such places as Romans 3: 25 and Romans 5:1. However, many teachers are so intent on teaching that salvation is by faith alone that they add this to the quotations. Martin Luther, in giving to the world his translation in German, actually translated Romans 3:28 to say– "... a man is justified by faith alone." He put in writing what so many others say verbally. A teacher who perverts the scriptures is a false teacher.

One Who Teaches Partial Truth

A teacher who teaches just part of the truth on a subject is a false teacher. There are those teachers who will quote truth on the subject under consideration but will not quote all of the truth on that subject, and thus leave a distorted conclusion. Partial truth is a dangerous thing. For example, a teacher who will talk about worship and emphasize that having the right attitude is the essential thing and leave the impression that attitude is just about all there is to acceptable worship is a false teacher. He teaches truth in that having the right attitude is important. But that is just a part of it. What one does in worship is just as important. The Bible teaches that worship must be with the proper spirit but that it must also be done according to truth. (John 4:24.)

One Who Teaches Other Than Truth

One who teaches other than truth is also a false teacher. There are those who do not even bother to wrest or pervert the scriptures but just plainly teach something unheard of in the scriptures. There are commandments of men who turn people from truth. (Titus 1:14.) We are not to go beyond that which is written. (2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 4:6.) Men are to speak as the oracles of God. (1 Peter 4:11.) Those who speak otherwise are false teachers.

There are false teachers. These may be dishonest deceivers, or they may be honestly mistaken. They will misdirect those who give heed to them. All men have a safeguard against such a tragic thing happening. Every teacher should be tested in the light of God's word. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11.)

WHY ARE YOU NOT SAVED?

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

There are two senses in which being saved is pictured in the Word of God—being saved NOW, by which we have God's forgiveness of our sins and "every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:3-7), and being saved ETERNALLY in heaven when this life is over. (Matt. 25:34,46.) To be lost is to be charged with your sins (Rom. 3:23); to be separated from God (Isa. 59:1-2); and to be cast into eternal hell fire when this life is over. (Matt. 25:41,46.) In view of this, WHY ARE YOU NOT SAVED?

IT IS NOT BECAUSE GOD WILLS SUCH. Satan's determined goal is that you not be saved (1 Pet. 5:8), and he will do anything within his power to keep you from being saved. But this is exactly opposite to God's will concerning your eternal soul. He "is not willing that (you) should perish." (2 Pet. 3:9.) He desires that you be saved, and that enough to "give his only begotten Son." (Jno. 3:16.) He loved you enough that "While (you) were yet in sin, Christ died for (you)." (Rom. 5:8f.) Christ, in that terrible suffering on the cross, became "the propitiation for (your) sins." (1 Jno. 2:2.)

Now that He has made salvation possible (for YOU), He INVITES YOU to take advantage of the same, regardless of your nationality, color, social or financial standing. (Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17.)

No, God has not arbitrarily excluded any person, the Calvinistic doctrine of "predestination and foreordination" to the contrary, notwithstanding. If you are not saved, YOU CANNOT BLAME GOD!

IT IS NOT BECAUSE OF OTHERS. We are all prone to want to "pass the buck"—blame others for our own failures and mistakes. Granting that one may cause another to "stumble" (and "woe unto him" who does!), would you be willing to face your Judge, blaming others for your lack of preparation to meet Him? No, "every one of us must give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:12.)

If you are not saved, IT IS BECAUSE YOU ARE OUT OF THE AREA OF SALVATION. All the human race, other than Noah's family of eight, were drowned because they were not in the ark; they were not WHERE God had placed salvation from the flood.

And so it is that the alien sinner is not saved because he is not in Christ, where redemption and forgiveness are to be found. (Eph. 1:3-7.) The erring child of God is not saved (James 5:19f) because he has "gone into a far country" (Lk. 15:11ff), allowing sin to "separate (him) and (his) God." (Isa. 59:1-2.) You are not saved, because you are IN SIN, just as the men in the flood were drowned because they were in the water, and not in the ark.

WHY ARE YOU NOT SAVED? Is it because you think you "have plenty of time yet"? If so, it may be that even now God is saying, "Thou fool, this night shalt thy soul be required of thee." (Lk. 12:20.) In the light of James' warning (Jas. 4:14) that "ye know not what shall be on the morrow," heed Paul's admonition (2 Cor. 6:2), "NOW is the day of salvation."

Truly, if you are not saved, **IT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO BE!** God, Christ and the Holy Spirit have provided salvation for you and revealed (in simple terms in the Scriptures) the conditions you must meet to obtain that salvation. You are not saved because you, for one reason or another, as the rich young man of Matthew 19:16-22, are not willing to meet His conditions. Jesus spoke of those who "will not come to me that ye may have life." (John 5:40.) In Romans 10:21 the Lord says, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." The **DISOBEDIENT (YOU) REJECT** the salvation which has been provided by Heaven. In your disobedience you are **CHOOSING** to be lost!

Refuse His provisions no longer—**BELIEVING** that Jesus is the Christ (Jno. 8:24), **REPENT** of your sins (Lk. 13:3), **CONFESS** your faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9f), and be **BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST** (Rom. 6:1-4); and thus cease to be a servant of sin and become a servant of righteousness. (Rom. 6:17f.) If you are a "prodigal" child of God, "**REPENT** of this thy wickedness and **PRAY** God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22); **RETURN** to your Father, that you may obtain His blessings.

REMEMBER, if you are not saved now, and you should die in that state, you will be **LOST FOR ETERNITY! JUST WHY ARE YOU NOT SAVED?**

MISLEADING STATEMENTS

Earl Kimbrough

The religious world is filled with stereotyped expressions. These are so often repeated that they come to be accepted as true whether or not they are. Such expressions may contain elements of truth but they are essentially untrue. Or else they may be true on the surface but misapplied. In either case they are misleading statements. Here are three that are perhaps most often heard.

1. "One church is just as good as another." This is used to prove that all churches are acceptable with God. But this is not the teaching of the Bible. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." (Psa. 127: 1.) A church founded by uninspired men this side of the first century A. D. is not "just as good" as the church founded by Christ. (Matt. 16:18.) Christ's church was purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28.) It has Christ as its one and only head. (Eph. 1:22,23.) It consists of those who have been saved from sin. (Eph. 5:23.) How could a church founded by men in opposition to the Lord's church be "as good as" the Lord's church?

2. "There are good people in all churches." This is another expression that is often repeated to show that God approves of all churches. The statement itself is true, but the conclusion drawn from it is false. There are good moral people in all churches, but this does not prove that all churches are acceptable with God. A little reasoning will show the fallacy of this conclusion. If there are good people in all churches, there are also bad people in all churches. If the good people in all churches proves that God accepts all churches, then the bad people in all churches would prove that He accepts none of them. Such reasoning cancels itself out! It really proves nothing! There are also good people who are not members of any church. Does this prove that no church is as good as any church? The fact that there are good people in all churches proves nothing about the importance of the Lord's church. The importance of the Lord's church is revealed by the Scriptures.

3. "The church does not save one." This is also a true statement that is usually employed to prove the church is non-essential or that one church is just as good as another. It is used to prove that the church has nothing to do with salvation, that one can be saved out of the church as well as in it. Certainly the church does not save. God saves! But the church is composed of the saved. The church is the relationship in which the saved stand before God. It is in the church, the spiritual body of Christ, where men are reconciled to God. (Eph. 2:13-16; 1:22,23.) The church is composed of those who have been saved by the blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28.) So to speak of salvation apart from the church of Christ is to speak of salvation apart from the blood of Christ, or apart from reconciliation to God. The church does not save, but it is in and through the church that men are saved.

In each of these statements there is an element of truth. The last two in fact are true, but are used to draw a false conclusion by misapplication. A man-made church is not just as good as the church Christ purchased with His own blood. There are good moral people in all churches, but it takes more than moral goodness for one to be saved; and only the saved are added to the Lord's church. (Acts 2:47.) The church does not of itself save, but it is the body composed of those who are in a saved relationship in Christ. Truth cannot be established by often repeated stereotyped expressions. Truth can be established only by the Scriptures. (John 17:17.)

HOW MUCH IS THAT FARM WORTH?

"How much is that farm worth?" said one friend to another, as they passed a beautiful house with highly cultivated land surrounding it. "I do not know how much it is worth," was the reply, "But I know what it cost its owner." "How much?" "His soul!" was the startling reply, and then he began to tell how exclusively and selfishly the owner had lived for one object—to build himself a home and security on earth, utterly careless of the home on high. He died impenitent, LOST. —Selected.

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WHY THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

The right of the church of Christ to exist is based upon a plea that distinguishes it from all other religious bodies. It stands for the New Testament way of worship and service to God without either addition or subtraction. Because of this, churches of Christ reject all innovations which have been injected by men.

The church has often suffered disfavor because of this strict adherence to New Testament teaching and respect for its silence, frequently being designated as "narrow" when drawing the line of fellowship against those things for which authority is not found in God's word. This is the only safe course to follow, however, as the purity of the church is dependent upon a clear line of demarcation against all the Bible does not command.—Selected.

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GOSPEL GUIDELINES ON PRAYER

Earl Kimbrough

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) This prayer for the forgiveness of those who were responsible for His death, prayed by Jesus while he was yet suffering the agony of the cross, is the world's greatest example of a non-retaliating spirit. It shows the deep and immeasurable love Jesus had for those who hated Him so much that they were willing to subject Him to that cruel form of execution. In fact, it was His great love for them, and all mankind, that moved Him to meekly submit to the death of the cross as the true sacrifice for sin. But Jesus did not pray for the forgiveness of His murderers without regard for the gospel. To have done so would have been incompatible with His death. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) Nor was His prayer without regard for the terms of pardon announced in the great commission. (Mark 16:16.) It was necessary for those who put Jesus to death to hear, believe and obey the gospel in order to obtain the forgiveness for which He prayed. (Acts 2:37-41.) When men today pray for forgiveness of sins before and without submission to the terms of the gospel, they are not following the example of Jesus, nor are they praying according to His will.

* * * * *

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. 7:7.) This verse is sometimes used to show that God will save the sinner if he will but ask or pray for forgiveness. This is not the teaching of the verse. First, the sinner seeking salvation is not necessarily the subject under consideration. These words were addressed to those who were already children of God. They were disciples of Christ who were being prepared by Him for entrance into the kingdom that was soon to be established. Second, the asking, whatever it may involve, must be in keeping with God's will. (1 Jno. 5:14.) It is God's will that sinners obey the gospel to be saved. (Acts 2: 38.) Asking for salvation apart from gospel obedience is not according to the will of God and thus does not come within the scope of the promise in Matthew 7:7. Third, the promise of the passage is not to those who merely "ask." The disciples were to "ask," "seek," and "knock." These words are apparently used synonymously indicating that the asking is not simply a matter of making a request, but involves learning God's will and doing whatever it requires in order to enter into and obtain the blessings of the kingdom. (Matt. 7:21.)

* * * * *

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13.) We are told that this means to pray for salvation. But "calling" here is preceded by hearing and believing (14, 15) and is equivalent to obeying the gospel. Men are to hear, believe and "call" to be saved. In expressing the negative of this Paul said, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord who hath believed our report?" (v. 16.) Saul of Tarsus was told to "call" upon the name of the Lord by being baptized to wash away his sins. (Acts 22:16.) God promises salvation to all who will hear, believe and obey the gospel. To call upon the name of the Lord in these verses simply means to invoke that promise by meeting the conditions set forth in the gospel.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LOST

Bobby Graham

Few people, if any, give serious thought to the idea of being lost in hell. Stop and think for a minute, "How long has it really been since I soberly considered the possibility of being condemned at the judgment and spending eternity in torment?" Furthermore, what does it mean to be lost—in terms of time and eternity what does it mean?

The word of the Lord certainly teaches the possibility of my being lost and the certainty of hell. Near the close of the sermon on the mount, Jesus urged men to enter and follow the narrow way that leadeth unto life and added the note that few will find it because many are following the broad way leading unto destruction. (Matt. 7:13-14.) After the Lord had finished his description of the last judgment in Matt. 25: 31-45, his epilogue noted that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous into life eternal. What sounder warning or more reflective words could be used to admonish concerning the reality of punishment? There will be no doubt in the mind of the condemned person as to what punishment means; even so, let us learn what it means to be lost.

Separated from God

The lost person is separated from God in this life. Isaiah reminded God's people in his day that their iniquities had separated between them and their God and their sins had hid His face that He would not hear. (Isa. 59:1-2.) God's answer to sin was in the person of Christ, who through the shedding of His blood made possible the removal of sin and thus the reconciliation of man to God. (2 Cor. 5:19.) But, my friend, separation from God in this life is not worthy to be compared to eternal separation from God. (2 Thess. 1:6-9.)

Servant of Sin

The man who is lost is one who serves sin, as Paul notes in Rom. 6: 16-19. He serves sin through his obedience to sin as he yields his members as servants to the cause of iniquity. Would it not be tragic to survey an entire life spent in the service of sin, when at the judgment we would like to consider ourselves as the servants of God? But the man who obeys sin is sure to be lost if he does not repent, for he has chosen the wrong master. Let it be remembered likewise that we cannot serve two masters; and to attempt such is to neglect the Lord and serve the devil.

Let each of us examine himself to determine whom he is serving, and in this way know whether he is lost.

Christ's Death in Vain

To the lost individual the death of Christ means nothing. As far as he personally is concerned, Jesus' death was useless—vain—because it means nothing to him. He has not benefitted, therefore: he is still lost. This is the person who counts the blood of Christ an unholy (common, light) thing. Since he places no special value on the blood of the cross, he makes no attempt to obtain its benefits. He classifies everything associated with the death of our Lord as null and void.

Word of Judgment Rejected

"He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same Shall judge him in the last day." (Jn. 12:48.) The lost man whom Jesus described in this verse rejects the very word by which judgment will be rendered. He thus abandons all hope of salvation that the Lord has offered to any man. The only hope of the Christian in the judgment is Christ, whose blood cleanses those who are walking in the light. (1 Jn. 1:7.) But the only way he can possibly know how to live to walk in the light is the word of light. (Psa. 119:105.) When he rejects God's word, he accordingly throws all hope overboard.

All Spiritual Blessings Forfeited

Being lost also means that a person has forfeited every blessing of a spiritual nature. All of them are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and the man not in Christ cannot enjoy them. All of the lost—alien sinners and unfaithful children of God—are outside of Christ either by failing to enter or failing to abide in him. The election and predestination of God, redemption and acceptance in Christ, being God's inheritance, the right of prayer, the exceeding great and precious promises, and many others are outside the reach of the lost: they have forfeited them.

The lost individual, for instance, does not enjoy the peace of God that passeth understanding; it does not guard his heart and mind as it does for the Christian. (Phil. 4:7.)

Damnation

Being lost as one goes through this life means separation from God, service to sin, Christ's death in vain, rejection of the word of judgment, forfeiting all spiritual blessings. As far as eternity is concerned, being lost spells eternal condemnation. The punishment of the lost is not pleasant to consider. As to its time, it is everlasting; its motive is vengeance; its nature is fiery tribulation; and its subjects are the host of wickedness, both earthly and spiritual. (2 Thess. 1:6-9; Matt. 25:41.) This, my friend, is what it means to be lost. Will you then not heed the warning and do the Lord's bidding that you might escape the sure condemnation of God and win His divine favor in the after awhile?

WHAT IS A LIMPET?

I did not know until I counseled with Mr. Webster, who says that the limpet is "any of several marine mollusks having a more or less broadly cone-shaped shell, found sticking tightly to rocks and piles and often used for food." Knowing nothing about the limpet, I had never thought of it in connection with the faith of a Christian, but Charles Spurgeon, an English preacher of time gone by, knew something about it and spoke about it in the following words: "Our little friend the limpet does not know much, but he clings. He cannot tell us much about what he is clinging to, he is not acquainted with the geological formation of the rock, but he clings. He has found something to cling to, that is his little bit of knowledge, and he uses it to cling to the rock of his salvation; it is the limpet's life to cling. Thousands of God's people have no more faith than this; they know enough to cling to Jesus with all their heart and soul and this suffices. Jesus Christ is to them a Saviour strong and mighty, and they cleave to him as to a rock immovable and immutable."

The story of the limpet, with the comparison made by Mr. Spurgeon, is very interesting, but the question is how does one show faith in Christ, how does one cling to Christ? Can one have faith in Christ without knowledge of his will? Paul says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If we are to have faith in Christ, we must know his will. If we are to cling to Christ, we must do his will. Barnabas showed that clinging to the Lord was one and the same thing with obeying the Lord. He exhorted the church in Antioch that with purpose of heart they cleave to the Lord, that they continue steadfast in their obedience. Thousands who laugh at the idea of baptism for the remission of sins claim great faith and say they are clinging to Jesus, but Christ said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

"THE FAITH ... ONCE DELIVERED"

In the short epistle of Jude we find this statement in the third verse: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

The fact that Jude uses the term "Beloved" shows that he was writing to those whom he loved and about whom he was concerned. He gave diligence to write them in regard to the common salvation, such writing as no doubt would instruct and encourage them in their quest for eternal salvation; but it is evident from the epistle that the work of false teachers had compelled him to change his plans. He needed to direct his teachings to the immediate needs and problems of the day. False movements, differing one from another, may arise from time to time. Whenever error arises, the faith must be contended for, and truth championed. "The faith" mentioned in this passage is the gospel. The gospel is identified as "the faith" in Acts 6:7: "And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

1. "The faith" is something "delivered."

This means that the gospel could not be the product of the mind of man, for it was delivered to man. Paul shows that God deliberately formulated the gospel to be contrary to the wisdom of men. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:18-20.)

The gospel was delivered by God through the ages—in purpose, when man became guilty of sin and stood in need of salvation; in promise, when God "preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed," (Gal. 3:8); in prophecy, when the prophets foretold the coming of Christ; in preparation, when John the Baptist came to prepare the way for the Lord (Matt. 3:1-3); in perfection, when Christ finished his work on earth and established the facts of the gospel in his death, burial, and resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.)

II. "The faith" is something once for all delivered.

The word for "once" in this passage means of such quality that it needs no repetition. The word is to be found in a number of passages. "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year ..." (Heb. 9:7.) The one time was sufficient to accomplish that which God intended. "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many..." (Heb. 9:26-28.) When once Christ suffered and died on the cross, that sacrifice was of such quality that it never needed repetition.

Since "the faith" has been once for all delivered, any claims of revelation since the first

century must be false. Many, however, have claimed later revelations. These revelations are proved false because Jude says the gospel was once for all delivered and because they conflict one with another. Joseph Smith claimed a revelation, and from his revelation came Mormonism. Mrs. Ellen G. White claimed a revelation, and from her revelation came an entirely different religion—Seventh Day Adventism. Such latter day revelations make God the author of confusion. But Paul said, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." (1 Cor. 14:33.)

Jude's statement suggests that the gospel delivered in the first century is adequate for every generation to the end of time. It is "the perfect law of liberty." (James 1:25.) It will furnish us "unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3: 17.) Man is clearly warned not to change it, not to add to it, not to take from it. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:80 "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.)

Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48.) This means that since we are going to be judged by the law of Christ, and not by the doctrines of men which have been added since the first century, we must now respect and obey his law.

III. "The faith" is entrusted to "the saints."

Since it has been delivered to the saints, the saints have the responsibility of contending earnestly for it. This would suggest that it must be preached by the saints. Jesus said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:16.) It seems that it is very difficult for the saints today to realize their responsibility in preaching and teaching the gospel. Many, perhaps even most, members of the church now expect the preacher, or someone else, to meet this responsibility. The first century church grew rapidly because each saint preached the gospel. "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:4.)

Since the gospel has been delivered to the saints, and they have the responsibility of contending for it, they must not only preach it, but must defend it—in private and public discussion, by godly living, and by proper discipline in the church. Contending earnestly for the faith once delivered may not always be pleasant. The word Jude uses for contend, or defend, contains the root of our English word "agony," and means to wrestle. The figure shows that great effort must be exerted in proclaiming and defending the faith.

To what extent are you contending "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"?

"John The Baptist"

Curtis E. Flatt

"And it came to pass, that on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, not so, but he shall be called John." (Luke 1: 59, 60.) This introduces the man who was later called John the Baptist. Let us study this man.

His History

John was a child of promise. He was born of a barren woman who, with her husband, was well stricken in years. While Zacharias, his father, was executing the priest's office, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him and told him that Elizabeth, his wife, would bear a child who was to be called John. The birth of John preceded the birth of Jesus by about six months. John and Jesus were cousins or kinsmen, as some versions declare. When John grew to manhood he dwelt in the wilderness of Judea. His dress was that of the old prophets—raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins. His food was the food of the desert—locusts and wild honey. His work was that of preaching. His supernatural birth, his quaint life, and the spirit of expectancy of the time that some great one was to come enabled him to attract great crowds of people. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." (Matt. 3:5.) His preaching finally got him into trouble when he told Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. Eventually he was beheaded because of this.

His Mission and Message

What was the mission and the message of John the Baptist? The Bible makes that clear. Before he was born, the angel said: "And he shall go before him in the spirit and the power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:17.) In Matt. 11:14, we are told that John was the Elias to come. When John began his work of preparation for the coming of Christ, he began to baptize people in the Jordan River. He said that people ought to repent for the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. His baptism was a baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Even Jesus made his way to the Jordan to be baptized of him. When John forbade Jesus to be baptized, Jesus insisted that this be done to fulfill all righteousness. This was done. Thus John's mission was to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. John's message was one of persuading people to make this preparation. He did his work well.

His Church

No study of John the Baptist begins to be complete without giving some consideration to his church. What do you know about John's church? The truth of the matter is that John never had a church. Such is not mentioned in the Bible. As strange as that may sound to many people who have repeatedly been told that they are members of the church John established, the truth is that John was not sent to establish a church—never said he would—never did establish one. If John has been successful in establishing a church, the one he started would not be the one that Jesus built. It would not be the one that is described in

such detail in the New Testament. In Matt. 16:18 Jesus promised to build his church. John was already dead at this time. (See Matt. 14:1-12.) Thus if John had built a church, which is not mentioned in any way in the Bible, it would not be the one that we read about in the Bible. That one so minutely described on page after page in the New Testament is the one that Jesus built and paid for with his own blood.

Not only that, but by the time one comes to the 19th chapter of the book of Acts, he finds that disciples who were being baptized with John's baptism were commanded to be baptized again—baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And thus even the baptism with which John baptized by this time had completely served its purpose and was no longer the baptism with which people needed to be baptized.

Stranger yet to many people, but nevertheless true, is the fact that John was never even permitted to be a citizen of the Lord's kingdom—a member of his church. Notice carefully Matthew 11:11: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." John soon died without ever being a citizen in that kingdom.

John did not build a church. How ever, if he had built one, it would not have had either salvation or the blood of Jesus connected with it, for Jesus, not John, shed his blood for the remission of man's sins, and Jesus purchased his church with his blood. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20: 28.)

John the Baptist had a noble work to do. He did his work well. All men benefit from his work. But men are not to follow John. Men need to follow Christ. Even John's disciples came to recognize that Jesus was the one to follow. John said that he saw and bare record that Jesus was the Son of God. (Jn. 1:34.) The next day John told two of his disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." (John 1:36, 37.)

LET US LOOK TO JESUS AN FOLLOW HIM!

* * * * *

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.)

THE TRAGEDY OF TRANSGRESSION

Earl Kimbrough

The will of God has been made known to man in every age since his creation, Adam was not left in darkness as to what God expected of him in Eden. The patriarchs knew what it meant to walk with God for He told them how to walk. The Israelites were given a law to guide them from Sinai to the cross. In our own era God has spoken to us through His Son. The specific requirements of God's law have changed from age to age. Dressing the garden was peculiar to the first man. Building the ark was exclusive to Noah. Keeping the sabbath was special to Israel. But the principle of obedience has never changed. Whatever law God placed upon man He required him to keep, and when man failed to keep the law God placed upon him he sinned against God. (Jno. 3:4.) In Proverbs we read: "Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of the transgressor is hard." (Prov. 13:15.) The word "hard" here means "rough and rugged, leading to destruction." The transgression of God's law is always hard on the transgressor. This is true because transgression has tragic consequences.

1. Transgression can destroy the conscience. The conscience is the faculty of the mind that governs our rational conduct. It distinguishes between what it has been taught is good and bad, and it urges us to choose the "good" and to refuse the "bad." The conscience becomes offended whenever we go contrary to what we believe is the right course of action. A good conscience is one that is not subjected to offense through improper conduct. Paul had such a conscience even when he was persecuting the church because he was doing what he thought was right. (Acts 24:16; 26:9.) A good conscience will not prevent sin unless it has been properly trained, for it may approve of something that is contrary to God's law. The conscience is like a computer; it provides the right answers only if it has been properly "programmed." An acceptable conscience must be accompanied by a pure heart and unfeigned faith. (1 Tim. 1:5.) This requires two things. First, the heart must be purified by the gospel. (1 Pet. 1:22.) Second, the heart must be guided by faith. (2 Cor. 5:6; Rom. 10:17.)

Because the conscience is so important, when properly directed, in governing our conduct, any violation of the conscience is condemned by the Lord. (1 Cor. 8:6,7; Rom. 14:23.) If one persists in violating his conscience, it becomes defiled and unable to function properly. Even when such a person knows the truth, he may find it difficult to conform to it because of his defiled conscience. Continual violation of the conscience will in time cause it to become "seared as with a hot iron" and place such a person beyond the hope of redemption. (1 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 6:4-6.) This is a tragedy of sin.

2. Transgression can ruin one's good name. The Bible teaches that a good name is important. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." (Prov. 22:1.) "Name" here denotes one's character, but one's character should be good both before God and before men. "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable with God, and approved of men." (Rom. 14: 18.) One who shows himself a servant of Christ has a "name" that is acceptable with God and that has the approval of right thinking men. Of course, all men are born with a good name. (Ezek. 18:20.) But because of sin a good name becomes tarnished. Even those who have escaped the pollution of sin through the gospel of Christ may so act as to destroy their good name. However, no person needs to have a bad name. "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep my statutes, and do that

which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die." (Ezek. 18:21.) People need to be impressed with the importance of guarding a good name by righteous conduct. It is far easier to maintain a good name than it is to rebuild one after it has been ruined.

3. Transgression can wreck one's life. First, it hinders wholesome living by causing mental anguish, physical pain and moral decay. Judas was so overwhelmed by the anguish of a sinful heart that he took his own life. The prodigal son not only suffered mental anguish and humiliation but physical pain as well because of his sinful life. Moral corruption is the inevitable result of sin because "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. 6:8.) Second, sin affects one's position in life. The wicked are shunned by good men. They certainly are not fellowshipped by the children of God. (Eph. 5:11.) And some become so bad that even the world finds it necessary to confine them in prisons. Third, sin wastes the most useful years of our lives. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." (Rom. 13:12.) Fourth, sin gives nothing of lasting value in return. "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 Jno. 2:17.)

4. Transgression will condemn the soul to hell. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10:28.) "Destroy" does not mean extinction, but "ruin, loss, not of being but of well-being." (Vine.) Hell is a reality and its punishment is eternal ruin. Those who live and die in sin will experience its pain and sorrow. "They will suffer the punishment of eternal ruin, cut off from the presence of the Lord, and the splendor of his might." (2 Thess. 1:9—NEB.) There are but two destinies and these are described by our Lord as "everlasting (eternal) punishment" and "life eternal (everlasting.)" (Matt. 25:46.) Hell is the ultimate tragedy of sin. From it there is no escape. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:15.)

The way of the transgressor is hard indeed. It is "rough and rugged" every step of the way. While sin may bring temporary joy and a false sense of well-being, the way the sinner treads is strewn with tragedy. Corrupted and even "seared" consciences, ruined characters, and wrecked lives fill the broad way that is so easy to enter and follow. The devil blinds the minds of many to the tragedy of sin. Like the wicked world before the flood they skip merrily along in the deceptive sunshine of sin and know not until it is too late that the way they have walked leads at last to the unrevokable ruin of ever lasting damnation.

REASONS FOR RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

In First Thessalonians 2:13 the inspired apostle praises the Thessalonians for the manner of their having "received the word of God." They had received it "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God..."

But, just what does it mean to "receive" the Word? It certainly involves more than HEARING the word. It includes personal STUDY (2 Tim.2:15), a sincere MEDITATION upon it (Ps. 1: 1-2), storing it in our hearts (Ps. 119: 11), and OBEDIENCE to it, as did some three thousand on Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Have YOU done this? Although many more might be given, will you consider these REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD RECEIVE THE WORD OF GOD?

BECAUSE IT IS FROM GOD, we should readily receive the Word. In spite of our insignificance, as compared to Him, the God of heaven and earth has been "mindful" of us. (Ps. 8: 4.) He "has spoken," in times past, in various ways, but in this age through His Son. (Heb. 1:1-2.) What we have in the Bible is the result of "holy men of God (speaking) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21.)

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are the utterances of God higher than those of men. The Thessalonians had not received the Word as though it were from men, but as it is indeed from Almighty God. The very fact that it IS from Him is enough reason why we should receive it "with all readiness of mind." (Acts 17:11.)

BECAUSE IT, AND IT ALONE IS TRUTH, we should readily receive the Word of God. In order to be free from sin, and to be a disciple of Christ, one must know and continue in His Word. (John 8:31f.) Anything other than Truth enslaves men to Satan. Paul warns (2 Cor. 4:3f) that Satan would blind us to the Truth, knowing what "the light of the glorious gospel" can do for us. Again, we are warned that a failure to love TRUTH will result in deception, which will cause us to be condemned!

But, in the words of Pilate, "What is Truth?" The WORD OF GOD is Truth. (John 17:17.) Anything and everything is, or can be, truth only as it agrees with the Word of God.

Inasmuch as we must either be made "free" from sin or be eternally lost, and the Word of God being that redeeming Truth, this is certainly reason enough for receiving the Word.

All should be anxious to receive the Word of God BECAUSE OF ITS POWER. The Hebrew writer (4:12), in contrast with men's claims that it is a "dead letter," declares the Word to be "Alive and Powerful!! It is indeed, the "living word" and it gives life. (1 Pet. 1: 22f.) The apostle Paul proclaims it as "the power of God unto salvation. (Romans 1:16.) There is absolutely nothing else that has that saving power! God instilled that power in His Word, and in His Word only. James urges (1:21), "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is ABLE to save your souls." Surely we should all readily receive something which has this great power.

THE UNCHANGEABLENESS OF GOD'S WORD is good reason to receive it into our

hearts and lives. Frustration, discouragement and often disgust have resulted from the instability of records of information – even textbooks in certain fields of learning, and certainly CREED BOOKS, which are often changed to teach the very opposite of what was before set forth as safe and dependable instructions. Not so with the Word of God!

As the Lord, who declares in Malachi 3:6, "I change not," so the eternal Word of the Lord changes not. Men have perverted it (Gal. 1:1-9), and in various ways distorted versions of it, but the Word of God is – and will be at the end of time – just as it was "once for all delivered unto the saints:" (Jude 3 – ASV.)

You can put your full confidence in it today, knowing that IT WILL NEVER CHANGE! You can receive it without reservation, knowing that even coming generations will find it saying the very same things, demanding the same requirements, and making the same promises.

THE ASSURANCE THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS INDESTRUCTIBLE is good reason for receiving it. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word shall not pass away," says our Lord in Mark 13:31. Peter assures us that the time will come when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:19); but in all of that God's Word shall stand unscathed! You and I shall face it, exactly as it is, in the judgment. (Jno. 12:48.)

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF FAITH. Faith is essential to pleasing God (Heb. 11:6), and to saving our eternal souls. (Jno. 8:24.) We are told in Romans 10:17 that the source of saving faith is the Word of God. There is no other source! We must receive the Word of God, or "believe not" and be damned! (Mk. 16:16.)

THE WORD OF GOD CAN "MAKE YOU WISE UNTO SALVATION." (2 Tim. 3:15.) All who believe there is life beyond the grave want to be saved— we want salvation. Ignorance of the will of God is destructive. (Hos. 4:6.) Jesus warned, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures." (Matt. 22:29.) Paul assures us that the inspired Scriptures will "completely furnish the man of God unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16f.) Receiving the teachings of those inspired Scriptures leaves us without need for any further instructions in spiritual matters; they will, indeed "make (us) wise unto salvation."

As a final reason for receiving the Word of God, I submit to you that BY DOING SO ONE IS PROVEN TO BE HONEST OF HEART. To reject it is to show ourselves dishonest! Jesus, in the parable of the sower (Luke 8:415), says the "good ground" represents the "honest and good hearts." One who, without bias or prejudice, gives sincere attention to God's simple plan of salvation, will "receive the word with gladness," obey it, and by doing so be forgiven of his sins.

I believe these are sufficient reasons why YOU should RECEIVE THE WORD OF GOD. My dear reader, have you done this? Have you obeyed from the heart the gospel of Christ, as the Romans had? (Rom. 6:17f.) Remember the words of Jesus (John 12: 48), "He that REJECTETH ME, AND RECEIVETH NOT MY WORD hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." I urge you with meekness, and yet with gladness of heart, to receive His Word: believe in Jesus as the Son of God (Jno. 8:24), repent of your sins (Lk. 13:3), confess your faith before men (Rom. 10:9-10), and

obey Him in baptism unto the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38). To RECEIVE NOT His Word, is to REJECT HIM, and to reject Him is to be eternally lost! This, in summation, is THE reason why you should receive the Word of God.

* * * * *

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:11-12.)

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE MIND OF GOD

1 Cor. 2:1-16

Drew E. Falls

Holy Spirit and The Godhead:

That the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead there is little doubt. In Matt. 28:18-20, as Jesus commissioned His apostles, He told them to make disciples of all the nations, "baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit:" thus indicating who they are that make up the Godhead. In the very first verse in the Bible, Gen. 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the Hebrew word for God is plural (Elohim). This would indicate to us that there is more than one in the Godhead, and that they were in the beginning with God the Father. It might also be pointed out just here that the verb created (Hebrew, Bara) is singular. This shows us the unity in the Godhead. That each had a part in the creation is taught in Gen 1:26 where God said, "Let us make man in our image."

Holy Spirit and The Creation:

To find out each one's part in the creation is easy enough to do. In Genesis the first chapter we find that God the Father must have been the designer or architect, for we read in verses 3, 6,9,11,14,20,24, and 26 that God spoke to someone to do what He told them to do. He also must have been the inspector, for He, after each work was finished, would put His approval on it by saying, "It is good."

That Jesus Christ was the builder in the creation is without doubt. In John 1:1-3 we learn that "all things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." Also see Col. 1:16,17.

The work of the Holy Spirit was that of finisher. In Gen. 1:2 we learn that the earth was waste and void, or in other words, without form. But then it says that the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," or He brought order and beauty out of chaos. See also Job 26:13. "By His Spirit the heavens are garnished (beauty)"; also Psa. 104:30, "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; And thou renewest the face of the ground."

Holy Spirit and The Plan to Save Man:

After man sinned in the Garden of Eden, he was lost and separated from his Maker. But by the grace of his Maker, there is today a plan by which man can find forgiveness of his sins and come back into a relationship with God. I suppose the first promise of this is found in Gen. 3:15, and is repeated throughout the Old Testament. Without a doubt, God is the designer or architect of this plan also. See Rom. 8:28-30, "And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." See also John 3:16, where it is said that GOD did the giving, and John

6:38, where Jesus said that He was come to do the WILL of God, not His own WILL.

Jesus again was the builder. In Matt. 16:18, Jesus says, "I will build my church." The church is where people are that are saved (Acts 2:47), "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"; and Acts 20: 28, "the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."

Suppose that after Christ had died on the cross that the Holy Spirit would not have come, do you think that we would have the New Testament or would we even know of the plan of salvation? Certainly not; because the men that wrote the New Testament and preached the plan of salvation were in a state of confusion before the Holy Spirit came. They did not understand that Jesus would come back again; they had thought that He was going to set up an earthly kingdom in Jerusalem. In John 16:7 Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." Why was it expedient for Jesus to go away? So that the Holy Spirit could come and finish the work that Jesus had started. Notice the things that Jesus taught His apostles about the Holy Spirit. Read John 14:16, 17,25,26; 15:26,27; 16:12,16. In these passages of Scripture the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Comforter and Spirit of Truth. In other words, He would be a comforter to the apostles after Jesus had gone to the Father; and He would teach only truth (Jn. 17:17), "Thy word is truth." Jesus also said He would teach His apostles all things. This they needed, for they did not even understand that Jesus was going to rise again from the dead. Also Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance all that He (Jesus) had said unto them. The Holy Spirit was to bear witness of Jesus. This was done through the miracles that were wrought through those who had the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Also, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would guide them in all the truth.

The Holy Spirit was thus insurance. He would insure that the apostles would preach and teach only the things that were according to God's will. Throughout the book of Acts, we see the apostles teaching and preaching under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This was because they did not have the New Testament written down as we do today. After the New Testament was finished, the Holy Spirit began to operate through the Word, and not through direct operation. (1 Cor. 13:8-13.) What the Holy Spirit did direct for the early Christians, He does for us today through the New Testament. He is the Spirit of Truth; the word that He brought is truth. (Jn. 17:17.) He is the Comforter; the word that He brought comforts. (1 Thess. 4:18.) He teaches all things, brings to remembrance all things, and guides in all the truth. The word that He brought does all that. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) He is to bear witness; the word that He brought does that. (Jn. 20:30, 31.) Also the word teaches us how to live (Phil. 2:14-15), how to be saved (James 1:21), and produces faith (Rom. 10:17.)

Paul Preaching at Corinth:

In 1 Cor. 2:1-5 Paul explains to the Corinthians that when he preached unto them, that he did not use fancy speech or wisdom of men, but that he preached the simple Gospel, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. In verses 6-9 Paul says that "We speak wisdom, however," the We referring to the apostles. Paul is teaching that the apostles do have a great wisdom, but the wisdom that they have is not from this world. The Corinthians were Greeks, and they sought after a great wisdom; yet a wisdom of this world. Paul's wisdom was not of this world, but was spiritual wisdom, and the Corinthians could not have received it because they were worldly minded. (3:1,2.) In 1 Cor. 2:10-13 Paul explains how he and the apostles

received their wisdom. In verse 10 he says that God is the one that revealed this wisdom unto them. How? Through the Holy Spirit. Notice he says that the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. In other words, he is saying that the Holy Spirit has searched the MIND OF GOD, and has delivered what He found unto the apostles.

What did the apostles do with what they received? In verse 13 Paul says, "Which things also we speak." Which things refers to the things that the Holy Spirit found in the mind of God. They took these spiritual things and spoke them to others, or they preached and taught the spiritual wisdom they received from God by the Holy Spirit. A parallel passage is found in Eph. 3:3-5 where Paul says, "How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." What Paul is saying here is that the Holy Spirit brought the mystery to the apostles by revelation; they wrote it down for us, and when we read we have and can understand the revelation or the MIND of God. (1 Cor. 2.)

The Lesson That Is Taught:

Now let us draw a lesson from what has been said, The lesson is that if we cannot find something in the New Testament, then the Holy Spirit did not give it to the apostles so they could record it; and if He did not give it to them, then He did not find it in the mind of God.

Let's take for instance the Pope of Rome. If I cannot find Pope mentioned in the New Testament, then the Holy Spirit did not give it to the apostles; and the reason He did not is because He could not find Pope in the MIND of God. Therefore, Pope of Rome must be man's wisdom and not God's. This is the principle that Paul was trying to teach the Corinthians.

What about the idea of having Clergy and Laity in the church. We hear men calling themselves "Father" and "Reverend," etc. But does the New Testament teach this? If not, then it was not in the MIND of God, and is therefore man's wisdom.

We can do the same thing with denominations, instrumental music in the worship of the Lord, sprinkling of babies (and even sprinkling of mature people) for baptism. If these things are not found in the New Testament, then they were not in the MIND of God. Therefore, they must be man's wisdom.

Rev. 22:18, 19 teaches us that we are neither to add to nor take away from the Word of God, because if we do we will be punished. If we ever want to have unity, we must let man's wisdom go and let the Mind of God furnish us unto every good work. (2 Tim. 3: 16,17.) Let us let the Holy Spirit be the finisher, and do and teach what He found in the Mind of God, and let not man's wisdom finish us off completely.

* * * * *

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Lord, give me strength to live this day,
In such a kind, obedient way,
That at the setting of the sun,
Thou canst say to me, "Well done."

Help me not dwell on yesterday,
Nor linger there in sad dismay,
But give me grace and loving power,
To live for Thee this very hour.

May I not borrow from tomorrow,
Any of its fear or sorrow,
But as I journey in Thy way,
Give me strength to live this day.

—Guthrie Dean.

BIRTHS: OLD AND NEW

John D. Swatzell

According to our Lord, one cannot be "good enough" to enter the Kingdom of God through mere morals or earthly standards. Jesus said that a man must be born again. If this new birth is a "mystery" then "salvation" also is a mystery, for they are one and the same. Herewith are basic considerations of the "new birth." (John 3:1-7.) In the old birth there are four things to consider. (1) It is natural: flesh. (2) There are parents. (3) We are born into the world. (4) There is no other way of entry. In the new birth there are also four things to consider. (1) It is spiritual: Spirit. (Verse 6.) (2) There are two elements: water and Spirit. (Verse 5.) (3) We are born into the kingdom of God. (verses 3, 5.) (4) There is no other way of entry. (verses 3, 7.)

The Proposition of the New Birth

Read the entire passage slowly and thoughtfully. The proposition of the new birth is stated in verse 3. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus did not understand in light of the natural birth he thought about, so he questioned it in verse 4. "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus illustrated the birth then in verses 5 and 6. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (See also verse 12.) Then because of Nicodemus' expression or some unrecorded words, he added another statement in verse 7. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." In verse 8 Jesus showed that not all "causes and effects" are completely understood or controlled by man, but that man accepts them. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In verse 9 Nicodemus again refused to accept the teaching and questioned further, "How can these things be?" Jesus rebuked him in verse 10, and in verse 11 showed that His testimony should be enough to convince. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." (Notice Nicodemus' own regard for the Lord's teaching in verse 2: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.") Because of Nicodemus' continued questioning, Jesus showed that Nicodemus would not accept things suited to his present knowledge (verse 12), still he continued to ask concerning higher and more complex things. Jesus complied with his request in spite of Nicodemus' attitude of mind and began a more thorough explanation of the matter, beginning with verse 13.

Figurative Language

At this time Jesus was speaking in parables and figures. (Psa. 78:2; Matt. 13:10, 34, 35; Mark 4:34.) The new birth and the kingdom were yet future. (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 16:18,19; Acts 1:6-8.)

After Jesus began to "speak plainly" (John 16:29), he never again used the figure of the

new birth, but rather said one must believe and be baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16.) "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:19,20.) Thus, we have the elements of the one birth—water and the Spirit (John 3:5) symbolized in baptism, which puts one into the kingdom. (Col. 1:12-14.)

Further Revelation

Jesus spoke of the promise of the Holy Spirit as a revealer of all things, which would include the new birth. (John 14:26; 16:12-14; 16:7.) This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4, yet the new birth was never mentioned as such. Peter, in Acts 2:38, revealed the conditions for entering the kingdom and later wrote that such as had obeyed the commands of the Lord had been "born again." (1 Peter 1:21-23.) Thus to obey God is to enter the kingdom. (Matt. 7:21-23.)

We become children of God by faith, produced by the word (Rom. 10:17), being thus led by the Spirit to be baptized, (Gal. 3:27.) "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:13.) Again the new birth of the two elements: Spirit (word) and water.

For those desiring a more detailed study of the new birth, we list examples of the new birth in action in the days of the apostles: Acts 2:38-47; 8:5-12, 36-38; 10:48; 16:14, 15; 16:25-34; 18:8; 22:6-16. Note also the connection of the Spirit and the word. We are born again, begotten, are new creatures, Notice the idea and principle in the following: James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Peter 1:20-23; Romans 10:13, 14; Gal. 3: 26,27; 1 Cor. 1:21; John 17:20; Romans 10:17; John 20:30, 31; Acts 4:4; Acts 15:7; Luke 8:12; John 17:17; James 1:21; Acts 20:32; and John 8:32.

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FAITH AND AUTHORITY

An axiomatic part of our faith is that the Bible says what it means, and means what it says. If the Bible clearly states a doctrine, we know that doctrine to be an essential element of the gospel which saves. If the Bible logically implies a thing, we ought to incorporate the inference into our teaching. On the other hand, that which is not plainly taught nor necessarily inferred must be rejected as unscriptural.

No, the Bible is not a product of the church, therefore subject to modifications by church councils. Rather, the Bible is the authority which governs the work and worship of the church of Christ. The Bible is not subject to the authority of the church, but the church is, and must be, subject to the authority of the Scriptures. —Gordon Wilson

"TODAY IS SALVATION COME TO THIS HOUSE"

Bobby Graham

What a glorious proclamation at the house of Zacchaeus the Publican! When this little man left home that day to see Jesus, he probably never thought that Jesus would be his guest that day. As an interested observer, he had made his way to the place where Jesus was to pass; but at the end of the day, salvation was the thought of every heart in this household. As a rich man he had left that morning only to become far richer than his work could ever make him. The passage also notes that he was chief or prominent among the others of his vocation, but his prominence among his fellow-workers would never equal the honor which Christ bestowed upon him and his entire family.

Sweeter words than these could never be uttered to one who is concerned about his soul. The wonderful thought to consider in all of this is that salvation can come to us also. It will not come in the personal presence of Jesus as it did on this day, but it is ours as Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. (Eph. 3:17.) It would therefore behoove each of us to examine this passage in Luke 10:1-10 to determine what caused Jesus to bestow salvation upon him.

Determination to See Jesus

One of the first of the outstanding traits exemplified in the life of Zacchaeus was his determination to see Jesus. He would not allow his position as a government official to stop him. What a splendid example he makes for those of us who are somewhat ashamed of Christ and his word because of the positions that we occupy. Many times we fail to stand with him and for him because we fear what someone might do or say or think. Let us remember the long list of important people who did as Zacchaeus: there was Nicodemus who came to Jesus, the centurion at the cross, Matthew the apostle (formerly a publican), Cornelius in Acts 10, and even the saints in Caesar's household in Phil. 4:22.

Not Blinded by Wealth

Furthermore Zacchaeus was not blinded by the wealth that he had accumulated. The rich young ruler could not heed the instruction of the Master because his wealth would not let him. Jesus pointed out in the parable of the soils in Luke 8:14 that riches often choke out the inclinations we have to do right so that we cannot bear fruit as the Lord desires. Abraham obeyed God and left his homeland, partly because he was not tied to his riches. Those who will be rich encounter temptation, snares, foolish lusts that hurt, and eternal damnation. (1 Tim. 6:9-10.) A foolish choice indeed to choose earthly wealth that passes instead of heavenly treasure that abides!

We see then that Zacchaeus, unhindered by the riches and vain glory of life, eagerly went to see Jesus. Certainly he went to the right person. What folly it would have been had Zacchaeus gone to the blind religious leaders of Judaism: these would have nothing to offer him. He was just as incapable to direct his own steps as were the Jewish leaders. Jesus called attention to the lost condition of Zacchaeus inverse ten. Jesus had come to save this kind of person.

Willingness to Wait Upon the Lord

Another noteworthy trait in Zacchaeus which should be in us was his willingness to wait upon the Lord. He ran before and climbed the tree to wait, because Jesus was to pass that way. Too often we find ourselves growing impatient with the Lord's way—trying to go ahead of him. Like Jonah of old we try to run ahead of God. Jonah thought he had a better way of dealing with the wicked Ninevites; he was unwilling to wait on the Lord's way to work. We likewise fail to see the wisdom in much of God's plan and seek to invent our own devices and schemes. We easily forget that God has promised and that He is not slack concerning His promises. Let us learn the lesson that God's way is always best, not just one of the best; and thus let us wait for Him as He works His purpose.

Receiving Christ with Joy

The passage also indicates that Zacchaeus received Jesus joyfully. He made haste to come down from the tree; Jesus was going to his house. It was said of the Jews on Pentecost that they gladly received the word preached by Peter. Jesus said in John 12:48 that to do otherwise is to be condemned in the last day. He equated rejection of him with a failure to receive his word; on the other hand, reception of his word is reception of the Christ. Since we receive the word by faith, we also receive Christ by faith. If I at any time refuse and reject the word of Christ or if my faith is not sufficiently strong to accept it, I simultaneously reject Christ. There is no such thing as accepting Christ and refusing his word—any part of it.

Genuine in Religious Practice

We also learn from the passage under consideration that this man Zacchaeus was genuine in his religious practice under the Old Covenant. Whatever his motive for telling Jesus of his deeds in verse eight, Jesus accepted his statement and commended his right attitude in the next verse by proclaiming salvation to be his. Religion which does not motivate us to work that which is good toward all is empty and unreal. As the old song puts it, "It makes me love everybody," and if it does not make us do that, it is the wrong kind. (Matt. 25:31-40.)

Let us notice finally that Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham in two senses. Verse ten indicated his being a physical son of Abraham, but his faith in Christ made him a spiritual heir to the promises. (Gal. 3:7-29.)

Every man willing to do as did Zacchaeus can, by faith, inherit the promises and live with God eternally.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

In Luke 16:19-31 Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. It would be good to read these verses carefully. The account is not identified by Christ as a parable. It tells the story of two men, of how they lived on earth, and of how they fared after death as a result of their earthly conduct.

1. This passage condemns certain PRACTICES. One is "faring sumptuously every day." The marginal reading is "living in mirth and splendor every day." It is evident that God intended for people to be happy here on earth because in the beginning he gave to man a paradise in which to live. Jesus said to his disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:11.) Paul wrote to Christians, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." (Phil. 4:4.) True joy comes in serving Christ and not in "the pleasures of sin for a season."

The rich man in this passage was condemned not necessarily because he was rich, but because he used his riches selfishly in living in mirth and splendor. Warnings are given to the rich. "But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. (Luke 6:24.) "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Luke 18:24.) "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6:9,10.)

This passage also condemns a lack concern about the physical well-being others. If the poor man received any help from the rich man, it was only the unwanted crumbs which fell from his table. Yet, the rich man lived under the law of Moses which said, "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." (Deut. 15: 7,8.) The rich man failed to obey this law.

In the New Testament Paul shows that one has the responsibility of trying to support himself—"if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thess. 3:10.) But when one is not able to do this, others have a responsibility toward him. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3:17.)

This passage also condemns waiting too long to be concerned about the spiritual well-being of others. In the place of torment the rich man became concerned about the destiny of his five brothers and begged Abraham to send Lazarus that he might testify to his brothers, lest they also come to that dreadful place of torment. He had waited too long. One could not be sent back from the dead. He failed to meet his responsibility toward his brothers in the days when he had opportunity. How many now are letting days of golden opportunity pass by without trying to save others from an eternal torment?

Further, this passage also condemns waiting too long to be concerned about our own spiritual welfare. After the rich man had fared sumptuously every day, after he had lived in mirth and splendor without concern for doing God's will, he now begs for relief from his dreadful suffering, begs for even a drop of water. He had waited too long to become concerned. "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.) Many may have in mind, "Lord, I will obey thee, but not yet, not today." That "not today" becomes not tomorrow, and not the next day, until death comes and there is no day of grace left.

II. This passage condemns certain DOCTRINES.

It repudiates the Christian Science doctrine which denies the existence of pain and suffering. The sores of Lazarus must have been real, for the dogs came and licked them. The suffering of the rich man must have been real, for he cried, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

It repudiates the doctrine of Spiritualism which proposes communication between the living and the dead. The rich man proposed that Lazarus be sent back to his father's house that he might testify to his five brothers to help prevent their coming to that place of torment. Abraham said that if they were not willing to hear God's word—Moses and the prophets—communication from the dead would be of no benefit to them.

It repudiates the Jehovah's Witness doctrine of soul-sleeping. Both the rich man and Lazarus died, and neither was in a state of sleep after death. The rich man lifted up his eyes; he felt; he saw; he spoke, he remembered. All of this he could hardly do while asleep. If it is said that this passage is only a parable, and that it, therefore, represents something else, this argument is without the support of the passage itself. The passage does not refer to the story as a parable. A parable makes use of well-known facts to teach spiritual lessons. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus Jesus is revealing unknown facts of conditions after death. If this passage is a parable, and Christ is making use of these unfamiliar facts to teach a spiritual lesson, what lesson is he teaching? The true lesson is to be found in the factual revelation of conditions after death and not in some parabolic projection of these conditions.

It repudiates the doctrine of Universalism—that all will be saved. Even if one person should be lost, this doctrine falls, for it declares that all will be saved. Certainly the rich man was not saved. Further, Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:13,14.) In the great judgment Jesus will say to those on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41.)

It repudiates the doctrine of Purgatory. The rich man could not do anything for his brothers; nor could his brothers do anything to relieve him from his endless suffering.

It repudiates ancestor or family worship. Sometimes people now say, "If I obeyed the gospel, I would be condemning my father" (or my mother, or my husband, as the case may be). A woman said, "If my father is lost, I want to be lost." The rich man had an entirely different idea. He wanted his brothers to do God's will in order that they might not come to

that terrible place of suffering.

It repudiates the doctrine of the second chance. He prayed. He begged for relief, and no relief was given or promised. One who rebels against God in this life, and expects another chance after death, will find that he has made an unalterable mistake, for "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.)

“Remember The Sabbath”

Curtis E. Flatt

"Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy." So reads one of the ten commandments. (Exodus 20:8.) This is God's message: "And God spake all these words saying." (Exodus 20:1.) Since this commandment was given of God, it is wise to learn what we can about it.

When and Where Was It Given?

When was the commandment to keep the sabbath given? The first reference to the sabbath (not so named) is Genesis 2:1-3. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. However, there was no commandment given unto man to keep it. As a matter of fact, man was but one day old when this is mentioned. This says that God rested and blessed and sanctified it. Please note that there is no command in Genesis 2 or any where in Genesis to keep the sabbath. Please note, also, that there is no example of any man keeping the sabbath in all of Genesis. That tells us that sabbath keeping, by man, has not been an eternal thing.

If man was not commanded to keep the sabbath in the beginning, when was man commanded to keep it? In Exodus 16:23, shortly before the law of Moses was given, certain instructions were given to the Israelites in regard to collection of manna in view of the sabbath. "And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until morning." Please note that this says that the sabbath was holy unto the Lord. It is not said it was holy unto man, yet. But still this is not a commandment to keep the sabbath. All this says is that because it was the sabbath, and holy unto the Lord, certain things were not to be done on that day. However the commandment to keep the sabbath came soon after this. (Exodus 20:8.) This was a part of the law of God, the law of Moses. Nehemiah explained when and where the law was given which contained the commandment to keep the sabbath. "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." (Nehemiah 9:13,14.) This commandment to keep the sabbath was given during the lifetime of Moses on Mt. Sinai. These people had no such commandment before that time.

To Whom Was It Given?

We have learned that the commandment to keep the sabbath was given at Mt. Sinai by Moses. That tells us to whom it was given. Please refer to the above quotation from Nehemiah. Note that the sabbath was given to the children of Israel. In Exodus 31:13-17, we learn that the sabbath was given as a sign between God and the children of Israel. There is nothing to indicate that people who lived before these ever knew anything about keeping the sabbath.

Was It Given?

This commandment to keep the sabbath, given to the children of Israel, was given as a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day." (Deut. 5:15.) By observing the sabbath, the children of Israel, generation by generation, were reminded that in Egypt their people had no rest but God delivered them and then they had rest. That is the explanation which the Bible gives as to why the commandment to keep the sabbath was given.

How Long Was the Commandment to Last?

How long was the practice of sabbath keeping to continue? In Exodus 31:16 we learn that it was to be observed by the children of Israel throughout their generations. This is stated a little differently in the next verse where we learn that it was to last forever—that is, as long as Israel continued as God's people. Even the Israelites knew that the keeping of the sabbath would cease one day. The prophet Hosea talked about this as God directed him. "I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." (Hosea 2:11.) The apostle Paul shows clearly that these (feasts, new moons, and sabbaths) had ceased when he wrote to the church at Colossee. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." (Col. 2:14-16.) As Hosea said it would be, it came to pass.

The Sabbath and the New Testament

The sabbath is also mentioned in the New Testament. It is mentioned about fifty times in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is also mentioned in the book of Acts and twice in the epistles. But nowhere is it given as a commandment under the new covenant. The sabbath, as we have learned, belonged to the old covenant. The new covenant included no commandment to keep the sabbath. Since the old covenant has been taken away and since the new covenant includes no such commandment, the conclusion is necessary that people in the Christian dispensation are not commanded to keep the sabbath.

Jesus kept the sabbath, of course. Jesus lived while the old covenant was in force. It was his death that took it out of the way. However, since the death of Christ, no people anywhere have been obligated to keep the sabbath.

There is a day for Christians to worship. But it is not the sabbath. Neither is it the seventh day. Furthermore, there is no such thing as the Christian sabbath. The day for worship in the new covenant is the first day of the week--not the seventh. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2.)

THE GOSPEL IN OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

Earl Kimbrough

The Old Testament is part of God's revelation to man, but it is not binding upon man as a law today. (Heb. 1:1,2.) This does not mean that the Old Testament is useless. Far from it. It contains the unfolding of God's scheme of redemption in ages past. It contains prophecies pertaining to Christ and His kingdom. It contains types and shadows of things that find fulfillment in the gospel age. Paul also recommends the Old Testament as a source of valuable lessons for Christians. (Rom. 15:4.) In this respect there is a very striking analogy between the cleansing of Naaman of leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-14) and our salvation from sin. For this reason the story of Naaman has been called "the gospel in Old Testament example." There are four views of Naaman that will help us better understand God's plan for us.

1. We see Naaman as the great man of Syria. His greatness is indicated in these words : "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria; he was also a mighty man in valour ..." (v. 1.) Thus his greatness lay in the fact that he was commander of the Syrian army and was highly esteemed by the king of Syria. He was also a national hero and a man of great courage. Yet, in spite of all this "he was a leper." His greatness did not prevent him from having this loathsome disease. Leprosy is to the body what sin is to the soul. Leprosy results in physical death and sin results in spiritual death. (Rom. 6:23.) Sin, however, is a disease from which no accountable being is exempt. (Rom. 3:23.) The greatest men on earth are sinners before God as well as the humblest people in the land.

Naaman recognized his condition. He made no effort to minimize it. He did not seek to excuse it. He did not try to hide or pretend that it was only a harmless skin rash. This was an essential step in his seeking a cure. Had he failed to realize the seriousness of his condition he would have been content to remain a leper even when a remedy was available to him. The sinner likewise must be conscious of his sins before he will or can seek divine forgiveness. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov. 28:13.) Naaman not only knew his condition for what it was, but he was willing to learn from a humble source what to do about it. It was a little girl who had been taken captive out of Israel that told him where he could obtain relief from his malady. (v. 2,3.)

2. We see Naaman as a man searching for a cure. He sincerely wanted to be cured of his leprosy, but not all men want to be cured of sin. The pleasures of sin blind many to its consequences, and the reality of torment is pushed from their minds as non-existent or something that will never happen to them. But while Naaman desired to be cured of leprosy, he failed to pay close attention to the maid's instructions. Instead of going to Elisha the prophet of God where she told him to go, he listened to the king of Syria who sent him to Jehoram the king of Israel who was not even on speaking terms with the Lord. (v. 3-7.) Men who want to be saved from sin often made the same kind of mistake. Their desire to be saved does not move them to search carefully for God's instructions in the matter. Instead of asking, "What saith the Scriptures?" they look to their conscience, to uninspired men, to latter-day "revelations," or to some other source of consolation apart from the Bible. It does make a difference where one goes for salvation. (Jno. 6:66-68.)

Another mistake Naaman apparently made was to think he could buy a cure. He took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. (v. 5.) But the cure, like salvation, is free: "it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8,9.) While Naaman may not have realized this mistake until he actually learned what he must do to be cured, he corrected the first mistake at once. Elisha, having heard of his coming to the king of Israel for a cure, sent him word to come to him. "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." (v. 9.)

3. We see Naaman as an angry man. The prophet's instructions enraged him. "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." (v. 10.) When Naaman heard this he was furious. In anger he said, "I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of his God, and strike (wave) his hand over the place, and recover the leper." (v. 11.) This reveals three things that were wrong with Naaman. First, his mind was closed to the prophet's instructions. Second, he expected a personal visit from Elisha. And third, he had his own plan for a cure already drawn up and only wanted Elisha to confirm it. Perhaps as a second thought he wanted to change the instructions. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" (v. 12.)

The plan of salvation is just as plain as Elisha's instructions to Naaman. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16: 16.) Many, like Naaman, become angry when they hear the Lord's instructions for salvation. Their minds are closed to baptism for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) They expect a direct operation of the Holy Spirit or they want to substitute their own ideas about salvation for the teaching of Christ. Some want to be saved by faith only, but this will not do. (Jas. 2:24.) Some want to be saved by prayer; but prayer will not replace obedience. (Acts 22: 16.) Some think morality will save them, but it did not save Cornelius. (Acts 10:1,2.) God's word is sure whether men accept it or reject it. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled (planted firm) in heaven." (Psa. 119: 89.) Naaman went away mad, but he was still a leper. He could go and wash in Abana and Pharpar from daylight till dark, but his flesh would still be afflicted with leprosy. God alone could cure him, and He would do so only upon the terms announced by his prophet.

4. We see Naaman as an obedient man. After his temper cooled his servants came near and said, "If the prophet had bidden you do something difficult, would you not do it? How much more then, if he tells you to wash and be clean?" (NEB.) Naaman would gladly have fought a battle to be cured, but he was overwhelmed by the simplicity of God's plan. It made no appeal to his intelligence or to his pride. It was beyond comprehension upon human reasoning. But when his pride gave way to genuine humility, he submitted to the prophet's instructions. "Then he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God' and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

Naaman was not saved by the waters of Jordan, but by the Lord. He knew this for he said, "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." (v. 15.) Nor was Elisha the savior. He was simply God's messenger who conveyed to Naaman what the Lord required of him. So it is with the plan of salvation. Water does not save, but the gospel does. However, the conditions of pardon include baptism in water for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38.) Just as Naaman was cured of his leprosy by the power of God when he obeyed the Lord's command, so men today are saved from sin by the power of the gospel when they render obedience thereto.

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

Gardner S. Hall

Without a doubt it would do good for people of different beliefs to get together and talk over their differences. I do not mean, get together to indulge in back-slapping, complimenting and fellowshiping each other without regard to differences in doctrines. Bro. Larimore told the story of a young dentist who hung out a shingle bearing the following: "Teeth extracted regardless of pain." If we have convictions we should stand up for them and not hold sweet fellowship with those we know are preaching doctrines contrary to the doctrine we have I earned from God's word; yet we should talk our differences over frequently with gentleness and kindness. For in doing this we can determine what viewpoints or premises each might hold that may cause differences. Perhaps we might be able to correct false premises or viewpoints among some who are in error and as a result lead them to right conclusions.

Many individuals in error are perfectly sincere; they do not hold to false doctrines because they are dishonest or do not love the truth, but because they have been taught an erroneous viewpoint or assumed a false premise that leads them to their doctrines and practices.

Regarding How to Follow the Bible

We all profess to follow the Bible. And we all, whether of the church of Christ or a denomination, resent the inference that we do not follow the Bible.

But here is a difference of viewpoint. The church of Christ holds the view that the only acceptable way to follow the Bible is to accept it as sufficient and complete in its instructions regarding how to serve and worship God; that in these acts we are not to go beyond what is written or what is clearly taught by specific command, approved example or necessary inference. But most religious people do not hold that view at all. They hold that whatever seems expedient and is not prohibited in the Bible is permissible. Luther and Zwingli viewed the Scriptures in the different lights here described. Luther sought to retain in the church anything not expressly forbidden. Zwingli taught that nothing should be admitted unless clearly authorized.

The popular view is expressed in a statement found on page 20 of Mosheim's Church History. He is discussing church government, and after giving an account of the government of the New Testament church under the apostles, adds the following: "But from this it would be wrong to conclude that such a form is immutable, and ought to be invariably observed; for this a great variety of events may render impossible." Another quotation found in the footnotes of page 21: "The truth is, that, Christ, by leaving this matter undetermined, has left to Christian societies a discretionary power of modeling the government of the church in such a manner, as the circumstantial reasons of the times, places, etc., may require; and therefore, the wisest government of the church is the best and most divine; and every Christian society has the right to make laws for itself, provided that these laws be consistent with charity and peace, and with the fundamental doctrines and principles of Christianity."

Now, I can see why people holding this viewpoint can conscientiously believe and

practice many things not found in the Bible. I can see why they play instruments in worship, sprinkle for baptism, organize societies, sponsor fairs, shows, bazaars, etc., for raising money, wear denominational names, vote on applicants for membership, hold the Episcopal form of government and do many other things the Bible does not teach. They hold a false viewpoint in interpretation.

Our Urgent Duty

What is our duty regarding these people? We should seek every possible opportunity to discuss these matters with them and show them the weakness and error of their viewpoint. I have personally succeeded in converting a number of people by talking with them regarding these two ways of looking at the Bible and showing them the fallacy of the popular view.

Correcting the False View

There are a number of Scriptures that show Christians must not do things in religion not authorized by the Bible.

1. We are forbidden to add to the word. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2.) Similar language is found in Deut. 12: 32, Prov. 30:6 and Rev. 22:18-19. This language excludes everything not taught in the word. For certainly all practices not taught are additions to those that are taught. Suppose a physician gives you a prescription and calls the druggist and warns him not to add to it. The druggist puts in all the ingredients specified and two medicines besides. Has he added to the prescription? Of course he has. So do people add to God's word when they do things in worship He does not teach in His word.

2. Certain religious people were condemned by our Lord for doing things in their worship not commanded in the word. "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market-place, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels." (Mark 7:24.) The Scriptures did not command these practices neither did they prohibit them as such. But they were additions—traditions of the elders. Jesus said, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Mk. 7:7.) If their additions made their worship vain, so will modern additions make our worship vain.

3. Many Scriptures imply that we are not to add our laws or practices, Jesus taught the disciples to, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19-20.) He did not say we could observe whatsoever He commanded and whatsoever we thought expedient.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." Note: he shall guide you into all the truth. He did not say the Spirit would guide us into part of the truth and that Christian societies would be left the right to make laws as they saw fit through the ages. All spiritual truth the church yet needed was revealed by the Spirit to the apostles and they wrote it. Anything besides it or in addition to it is not truth.

"Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." God has not left man to complete himself spiritually. He has furnished (revealed to him) every work that is good. If God's word does not furnish you with a religious practice or act of worship, then it is not good.

Lets Down the Bars

If we are permitted to use what is not specifically prohibited, then not only are protestantism's sprinkling, pouring, instrumental music, Episcopal system, societies, etc., acceptable, but also the confessional, counting beads, purgatory, mass and dozens of other Catholic Church practices which are unauthorized by the Bible, yet not positively forbidden. So the argument or viewpoint that lets in the "things we like" will justify also the things we abhor.

* * * * *

In the original language of the New Testament the word church means "called out." Indeed the church is called out of (1) the world into Christ, (2) darkness into light, (3) bondage into liberty, (4) the power of Satan unto God, (5) sin into righteousness. Paul said concerning the Father, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13.)

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Bobby Graham

There has probably never been an age of history in which there was a more ardent concern with freedom in so many areas of life. Ours will likely be remembered as the "Age of Freedom" because of the many efforts to cast aside most of the so-called restraints to liberty. This movement is an all-encompassing one that strives for civil (political), academic, moral, and religious freedom.

The same desire for freedom from many of the limitations that bind us has also been seen to an increasing extent in the church. There are those who speak of areas in which "there is no pattern," while others refer to "free men in Christ" under the New Testament when they actually mean that in many instances the pattern is not really a pattern at all— just instruction to a certain time in certain circumstances.

Let it be remembered, however, that the child of God who willingly submits himself to the will of God is the only person in the world who is really free. (Jn. 8:36.) Although some protest loudly the infringement of their freedom by the human restraints that are so necessary in this life, they fail to understand that complete freedom is an impossibility: the liberties that men can grant are few indeed and limited in scope. May we never forget that only God can free the soul.

Jesus had somewhat to say concerning the absorbing subject of freedom in Jn. 8:31-36. Let us look to his teaching in this passage as we endeavor to determine the various ways in which the Christian is free.

The Jews whom Jesus confronted in this instance were in some respects similar to us. In their fervor to remain free, they reminded themselves that theirs was an heritage of freedom: Abraham was their father, and they had never been in bondage to any man. (Jn. 8:33.) Their statement indicated a failure to comprehend the kind of freedom that Jesus was offering, and the Master proceeded to tell them that they were servants of their father the devil, whose lusts they were doing. (Jn. 8:44.) We like to boast of the splendid freedom that is our heritage; but to us Jesus replies, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (Jn. 8:34.) By knowing and continuing in the truth we can be free from sin and thus enjoy the freedom that men cannot give. (Jn. 8:31-32.)

Freedom from Sin

To be free from sin is to be free from that which condemns those who serve it. In Rom. 6:16-23 the apostle reminded the saints in Rome that they had formerly served sin, the wages of which is death; but in their obedience to the truth, they had been made free from sin. Freedom from sin means loosing from the guilt, power, and condemnation of sin. The man who is the servant of sin is not free, regardless of the country in which he lives.

Freedom from Law

The servant of Christ is free from service to the Law of Moses. Just as the woman is loosed from her husband at his death, even so we are dead to the Law that we might be

married to Christ. (Rom. 7:1-4.) Since we are loosed from the Law, no man should require of us anything that the Law demands. (Acts 15:10; Col. 2:16.) It is a yoke that binds and enslaves, and Christ set us free for freedom. (Gal. 5:1.)

Freedom from Error

The man who knows and continues in the truth of God's word will be free from error. The man who learns and continues in a perverted gospel, on the other hand, will walk in error. To the Sadducees Jesus gave answer, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures ..." (Matt. 22:29.) Whoso abideth not in the teaching, hath not God. (2 Jn. 9.) Let us look to our ways lest we learn and follow another gospel—one that would enslave us to error.

Freedom from Tradition

If we will continue in the word of the Lord, we will reject and lay aside any tradition of man that violates God's will. Such traditions transgress the commandment of God (Matt. 15:3), and of such we need to beware lest we be spoiled (enslaved). (Col. 2:8.)

Freedom from Worldliness

Men can become the servants of the world by seeing and desiring what they see in the earth-life; John therefore admonishes us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." (1 Jn. 2:15.) Paul's determination not to be brought under the power of meats and other things lawful (1 Cor. 6:12) must be ours in regard to earthly affairs that could make us the servants of this world.

Freedom from Superstition

False religions have millions under their spell. The Galatians were already evidencing inclination to false religion that made Paul fear that his labor had been in vain. (Gal. 4:10-11.) Denominationalism, spiritualism, and astrology are false religions because they do not harmonize with truth, and multitudes are swayed by their appeal to the flesh.

Freedom from Ourselves

Much of the time we are our own worst enemies. We serve ourselves instead of the living God, and to this extent worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator. Our enjoyment of many other freedoms seems to persuade us that we are free to please self. Paul spoke of bringing himself into captivity and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 10:5.) Is that liberty to do as we please? No, it is the exact opposite. It is freedom from serving the flesh, that in Christ we might be new creatures. (2 Cor. 5:17.)

Freedom from Death

The person who continues in the truth is finally free from death. (Jn. 8:51.) Neither temporary separation from God on the earth nor eternal separation from God in hell shall hurt the faithful. (Rev. 2:11.)

We err when we equate freedom in Christ and license. There are some things that a

Christian is not free to do (1) anything the New Testament forbids, even though civil law permits it; (2) anything that will harm my brother (1 Cor. 8:11-13; Rom. 14:21); (3) anything doubtful (Rom. 14:23; 1 Jn. 3:19-21); (4) anything not authorized. (2 Jn. 9.) Freedom in Christ has its limitations.

Would you be free indeed? Learn God's will and continue to follow it throughout life, and the Son will free you and grant unto you all of the wonderful blessings of freedom in Christ.

THE SHEPHERD AND THE LOST SHEEP

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety nine just persons, which need no repentance." (Luke 15:1-7.)

This is the first of three parables in this chapter, each of which expresses the Lord's concern for the lost. In this article we shall restrict our remarks to this one—THE LOST SHEEP.

These parables were prompted by the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees (verses 1 and 2), an attitude which Jesus not only condemned in them, but would likewise condemn in us.

The Shepherd Accused

First, we note that we should not despair when revilers come; and come they certainly shall! This is the "Chief Shepherd" whom they charge. In such passages as John 15:18 and 1 John 3:13 we are reminded that since the world hated Him, we can expect similar treatment. Instead of despair, when such comes, we are told to rejoice. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. 5:11-12.)

This is a bitter charge, so far as His accusers were concerned, but really a very high tribute—"This man receiveth sinners." It is indeed, many times, an honor to be FALSELY accused for the cause of Christ.

Note that there was murmuring on earth, but rejoicing in heaven; such joy as should characterize us when sinners are privileged to hear His saving message.

Yes, He indeed "receiveth sinners"! It was for this purpose He came into the world. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10.) He reminded another audience that it is "they that are sick" that "need a physician." (Luke 5:29-32.) Yes, this "Great Physician, this "Good Shepherd," receiveth "whosoever will." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.)

The Shepherd Heard

Now, consider the purpose for which the publicans and sinners gathered about Him—"for to hear him." (v. 1.) How badly the scribes and Pharisees needed to have

assembled for the same purpose; as Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet (Luke 10:39); yea, as WE should come into every assembly. The eternal destiny of our souls depends upon our HEARING HIM. God Himself said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17: 5.) Peter also exhorted, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." (Acts 3:22.) See also Hebrews 1:1,2; Acts 2:41; and Mark 13:37.

The Shepherd, Our Refuge

Think for a moment about the Shepherd, the Savior. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1.) This is the matchless Son of God. He who was "in the beginning with God" (John 1:2), but condescended to become flesh and dwell among men. (John 1:14.) Why should He concern Himself with us? "Because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19), and that "while we were yet sinners." (Rom. 5:8.) What "contradiction of sinners" was endured by Him! (Hebrews 12:3.) He gave not only "lip service" to His teaching on love, but was BUSY throughout His brief life proving it. He is not only "light to the floundering mariner," not only a place of refuge in time of storm, but all of this, plus One who is ANXIOUS that the lost be found, and, through His servants, seeks them out to rescue them.

The Shepherd Concerned

THE LOST? "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23.) All are as "sheep gone astray." (1 Peter 2:25.) "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23.) We need the Shepherd to direct us. In Him only is salvation (Ephesians 1:7), and those who come to Him, through obedience to His commands, He will "in nowise cast out." (John 6:37.) There will be rejoicing by Him and the hosts of heaven at the return of one single sinner! Surely, the Shepherd is concerned about the "ninety and nine," but those lost sheep warrant special concern.

The Shepherd's Followers

We should conduct ourselves in such a manner that sinners will "draw nigh" to hear us proclaim Him and His salvation. We are not OF the world, but are IN the world to serve as leaven—as a saving influence. Several times even His disciples would have prevented His association with sinners. How often WE prevent, stand in the way of, sinners coming to HIM! Better that a millstone be hanged about our necks and be cast into the midst of the sea!

The Shepherd's Invitation

The anxiety of the "Good Shepherd" for the lost sheep is expressed in His invitation in Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." For each one who heeds this blessed invitation there is rejoicing in heaven, although it might bring reviling and murmuring among men. WHAT WILL YOUR RESPONSE BE?

* * * * *

Truth angers those whom it does not fully convince.

KEEPING OUR EYES ON JESUS

Carl Gilbert

Winter is upon us. Most children, and some grownups, are looking for the snows to fall. All of us enjoy snow. And speaking of snow reminds me of a story I would like to share with you, which, I believe, will help to emphasize a spiritual truth and which will, I trust, help all of us to live more closely to the Lord. The story is about two little boys who were enjoying the first snowfall of the year.

Making a Path in the Snow

They were throwing snowballs and making snowmen. Then one of the boys suggested that they see who could make the straightest tracks across the field. So the boys hopped over the fence and headed across the field. As they looked back from the other side, it was discovered that one of the boys had made an almost straight track across the field, while the other had left a zigzag trail. The second boy inquired as to how the first had made such a straight path. The answer was that he had picked out a post on the other side of the field and kept his eyes on it, always walking straight toward it. This was the secret to the straight path. The other boy had looked down and around, which resulted in his going in all directions.

Our Walk in this Life

Our walk in this life is very similar to the walk in the snow. We must have a goal. We must fix our eyes on that goal. That goal or someone upon whom we must fix our eyes as we journey through this life is Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Heaven is on the other side of the field. Only those who walk the straight course will make it there. If we look down or around, surely we will go astray.

Story with a Warning

There is another story about a rock quarry in England. For generations rock had been quarried from this particular site until it had become necessary to construct a catwalk across an elevated corner of the quarry. Across narrow planks workmen were required to roll wheelbarrows of rock. On either side of them was a deep abyss. A slip of the foot would mean that a man would be plunged to his death on the rocks below; so the foreman in that quarry warned each man, "Don't dare look down. Always keep your eyes on the place where you are going."

Application

Where are you going? It is hoped that by these thoughts we can encourage you to "set your affections on things above, and not on things of this earth." (Col. 3:2.) Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3: 14.) Are we pressing toward that mark? Do we have our sights on the goal?

Many today are looking down and around. They are walking a zigzag course and ultimately will suffer the loss of all. It would do well for each of us to "examine ourselves"

(2 Cor. 13:5) that we might "make straight" our paths (Heb. 12:13), and win the prize of an eternal crown (Rev. 2:10) at the end of the way.

Friends, you are not following a straight course if you are (1) In a religious organization other than the church. (Eph. 4:4; Acts 2:47.)

(2) Following a creed other than the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Rev. 22:18-19; 2 John 9.)

(3) Relying on any plan other than the Lord's to save you. One must hear: John 6:44-45; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; Rev. 2:7. He must believe: John 8:24; Mk. 16:15,16; Acts 16:31; John 3:16; Heb. 11:6. A person must repent of his sins: Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:8-10. He must confess Christ: Matt. 10:32-33; 16:16; Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37-38; Phil. 2:11; and he must be baptized: Acts 2:38; 10:48; 22:16; 8:37-38; 1 Pet. 3:21; Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 7:30.

Friends, it is easiest, best, and safest to keep your eyes on Jesus as your goal, follow a straight course, and expect to dwell with Him in heaven for ever and ever.

SANCTIFICATION

W. C. Graves

The word "sanctify" means, to separate, to set apart to religious use or holy purpose. There is nothing of mysterious nature connected with the word. In the Old Testament, both animals and inanimate things were sanctified. "Sanctify unto me the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast." (Ex. 13:2.) ... The temple that Solomon built was sanctified. (2 Chr. 7:16.) This shows that these things were to be devoted to religious use, and therefore set apart for such purpose. In the New Testament the word means the same thing.

Some seem to think that sanctification is "sinlessness," that is, a sanctified person cannot sin. The Bible does not teach such. The Bible plainly teaches just the contrary. Paul addressed the "church of God which is at Corinth to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." (1 Cor. 1:2.) And yet, these same people were guilty of about all the sins one can think of, strife, carnality, division, envy, profanation of the Lord's supper, lawsuits and incest. See 1 Cor. 1,3,5,6,11, and other chapters. The two letters 1st and 2nd Cor. were written for the purpose of pointing out these sins and to correct them.

SANCTIFICATIONISTS are guilty of sin every time they say they cannot sin and do not sin. Maybe, such have no Bible conception of sin, to them sin is not sin. Now hear John: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." That is what an inspired apostle says of one who says he cannot sin and does not sin. John says, "he deceives himself and the truth is not in him," to which we say, "Amen." But John also says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jno, 1:89.) This shows conclusively that the "sanctified" do sin. And remember, that John used the pronoun "we" including himself, and that he was an apostle and had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. SANCTIFICATIONISTS claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of eradicating, knocking out even the very thought of sin. But John, the apostle, did not think so. Just the difference in an apostle and some uninspired men.

"TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?"

In John 6:63 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Upon hearing this teaching, many of his disciples, taking his word literally and thinking it too hard, went back and walked no more with him. This caused Jesus to ask the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" In answer to Christ's question Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:53-68.)

This passage of scripture clearly shows the possibility of apostasy. Disciples who had followed Christ did turn back, and the question which Christ asked shows that even the apostles could turn away. If there was no possibility of the apostles turning away, Christ's question to them would have been foolish. Paul uses a number of expressions which show that one can be in the faith and then turn from it. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith ..." (1 Tim. 4:1.) Speaking of certain younger widows he said, "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith." (1 Tim. 5:12.) Not only does this passage show that one's faith can be cast off, but also that the result of doing so is damnation.

As the passage in John 6 shows the possibility of apostasy, it further depicts man's need of guidance. Peter's question sets forth this need—"Lord, to whom shall we go?" As a young man ascending the throne of Israel, Solomon felt this need. He said, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." (1 Kings 3:7.) Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23.) Indeed, as little children we need guidance through this life. We have never passed this way before.

"TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?"

There are many possibilities. The greater part of the world's population are in heathenism. We could go to them and their leaders. But the dumb idol, being the product of man's hands, cannot be his savior. Communism controls the minds of almost countless millions. Though it tries to persuade men that their lot in life would be better under it, it does not propose to meet man's spiritual needs, or to offer anything beyond this life. Infidelity and irreligion seem to be popular concepts today, but the denial of God identifies one as a fool. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm 53:1.) The origin and precise order of the universe cannot be reasonably explained without recognizing supreme creative and directing power. Infidelity and irreligion have never offered anything constructive to man.

Some feel that they have found the answer in some of the current movements of today. The Hippie group seem to feel that they are close to Utopia. Yet in their free love, their filth, their dope indulgence, and their denial of honest toil they break all the great principles of right conduct upon which the individual must depend for happiness, and society must depend for endurance. Others seem to think the answer is to be found in anarchy, in arson, in destruction of anything and every thing that is the target of their hate. In the destruction of others, such a course ultimately destroys itself and its advocates.

"THOU HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE"

Indeed, the lowly fisherman gave the right and true answer. The words which Christ spoke are spirit and life. (John 6:63.) He said that he spoke not from himself, "but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12:49.) Christ spoke the word of the Father, and the Father's word is truth. In his prayer to the Father Christ said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) It is by this truth that men are made free from the bondage of sin. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) Jesus so lived in harmony with God's truth that he could say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.) The eternal God would have us hear his Son. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5.) Moses prophesied that all must hear him, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:22,23.) Christ's mother gave the servants good advice at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, when she said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." (John 2:5.)

WHAT DOES HE SAY?

With all authority in heaven and on earth he set forth the specific requirements for man's salvation from sin. He told his disciples to go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, make disciples of every nation. Those who heard were to believe, were to repent, and were to be baptized in order to be saved. (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46,47; Mark 16:15,16.) When the disciples of Christ carried out this commission, as recorded in the book of Acts, again and again they set forth these requirements to their hearers; and when sinners responded to the preaching, invariably they believed the truth, they repented of their sins, and they were baptized in the name of the Lord for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2;8;9;10;11;16;18;22;26.)

Christ said that those who were made disciples, those who were baptized, were also to be taught "to observe all things whatsoever I command you." (Matt. 28:20.) Thus, the greater part of the New Testament—all the twenty-one epistles—contains the things Christ has commanded his disciples, things concerning the personal conduct of his people, things concerning worship, "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." (2 Peter 1:3.)

What Kind of a Believer Are you?

Curtis E. Flatt

What kind of a believer are you? That question will, no doubt, seem strange to some of you. However, it is a proper question to consider. There is much confusion among religious people about faith and salvation. To a great degree, this is due to a failure to recognize that there are different kinds of believers and different kinds of faith. Faith is important. The Hebrew writer declared that without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6.) However, just any old faith will not please him. There are three kinds of believers and three kinds of faith among both non-Christians and Christians. Let us consider these.

Those Who Believe but Do Not Obey

There are people who believe and at the same time do not obey the gospel. In John 12:42,43, we find examples of these. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Most certainly, Agrippa was one of those who believed but would not do the things commanded. (Acts 26:27, 28.) This kind of faith will not save. Even the devils have this kind. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:19.)

Then there are people who have enough faith to obey the gospel and thus become Christians who, in reference to other spiritual things, have this same kind of faith. Most all Christians believe that God requires righteousness of his people. But some of these do not do right and are thereby condemned. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." (2 Peter 2:20.) Christians believe that God requires them to show their faith by their works. However, many do not so do. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:14-17.) This kind of faith will not save—will not make men pleasing unto God.

Those Who Believe the Wrong Thing

There are many people who believe, and believe fervently, but believe the wrong thing. Many religious people are of this sort. The Jews, who were of the first century, were of this kind. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:1-3.) They were religious, and they were zealous believers, but they were not saved. Why? They believed the wrong thing! Saul of Tarsus, for a time, had this kind of faith. In looking back at himself before he became a Christian, he explained it this way: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." (Acts

26:9.) But, believer though he was, he believed the wrong thing and was displeasing unto God.

After people become Christians there are those who believe but believe the wrong thing about certain matters. Some of the early Christians believed that people had to be circumcised to be pleasing unto God. (Acts 15:5.) They believed but believed the wrong thing. This was the wrong kind of faith. (Gal. 5:4.) The people making up the churches of Galatia believed, but believed that they were to keep certain parts of the law that had been given to the Israelites. They believed the wrong thing. (Gal. 1:6-8; 4:9-11.) There are people who have great faith but faith in the wrong things. This faith will not save them or make them pleasing unto God.

Those Who Believe and Obey

There is a third kind of believer. This is the one who believes the right things and does what he is told to do. Some of the Pentecostians were believers of this kind. When they were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, they did so. (Acts 2:38-41.) Some of the Corinthians were believers of this sort. In Acts 18:8 we read: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." The Ethiopian eunuch was this kind of a believer. When Christ was preached unto him, he believed and was ready to obey. He said, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36.)

There were Christians who remained believers of this kind. Paul, John Mark, Aquila and Priscilla, and many others had this kind of faith. There were churches made of people of this kind of faith. To the church at Philippi the apostle wrote: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12.)

This is the kind of faith which saves. Man is saved by faith. But faith without works will not save. Man is saved by faith. But faith in the wrong thing will not save. Man is saved by faith. But saving faith is a faith which works through love. (Gal. 5:6.)

What kind of a believer are you?

IF YOU HAD BEEN THERE

Gardner Hall

In Matthew 23:30 we learn that the Jews of Jesus' day upon the earth said, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets." Yet they shed the blood of Jesus, who was not only a prophet but was also priest and king, and the Son of God.

This brings us to the question, What would we have done if we had lived when Jesus was upon the earth? What would we have done about Jesus?

It is easy for us to think that we would have been His devoted disciples. We abominate Judas; we are sure we would not have betrayed Him. We heap criticism upon Pilate for being too cowardly to free Him when he saw that Jesus was innocent. We abhor the thought that we would have denied Him as did Peter.

How the People Reacted to Jesus

Let us look at the various classes of people and consider their attitude toward Jesus and His work and teaching.

1. There Were the Uninformed. They had heard about Him, of course. But they did not take the trouble to obtain the facts about His teaching and work. They did not carefully investigate His claims. They had their opinions all right, and freely expressed them, sometimes with deep emotion. But they formed them from rumors and misrepresentations. And, His enemies kept plenty of these going. "He casts out devils by the power of Beelzebub," they said. "He is a gluttonous man and a winebibber." "He eats with publicans and sinners." "He blasphemeth; He makes Himself the Son of God." "Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Would you have accepted these false charges and insinuations and peddled them around?

2. There Were Some Who Investigated. Nicodemus heard the rumors and false reports. But he knew they might have stemmed from envy. So he went and talked to Jesus about His work. He was not willing to spread rumors; neither was he willing to ignore the wonderful claims of Jesus or to show indifference toward such weighty issues. His interview with Jesus is recorded in John the 3rd chapter. Once when his fellow rulers and religious leaders were deriding Jesus, Nicodemus said to them, "Doth our law judge a man until it hath heard from him?" So he went to Jesus and heard firsthand what He taught. Also some Greeks came and asked to see Jesus. (John 12:20,21.) The wise men and the shepherds went to see about the things they had heard. Would you have taken that trouble? Would you have learned the facts, or have been content with false reports?

3. There Were the Prejudiced Ones. Someone has defined prejudice as the practice of being down on something you are not up on. Jesus' own fellow townsmen rejected Him because of prejudice. They were familiar with the humble surroundings under which He was brought up; they knew His parents, brothers and sisters; they knew them as plain, humble people. So they allowed these things to blind them to His greatness. (Mark 6:1-6.) The guileless Nathanael at first acquaintance was slow to believe, because Jesus was from

Nazareth. But evidence convinced him. (John 1:45-51.) Would you have been prejudiced and hastily rejected Him because He was not among the wealthy or elite? Would you have concluded there couldn't be much to Him since He was not recognized by the great religious leaders? Some asked: "Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?" (John 7: 48.) Would you have waited to see what the high and mighty would do?

4. There Were the Cowardly Ones. "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God." To be a friend or follower of Jesus meant defiance of popular and highly organized religion. Would you have been willing to pay the cost of being cast out of the synagogue, published as a reprobate, shunned by society, and discriminated against in business, profession, or as an employee?

5. There Were the Bandwagon Ones. When Jesus was popular they were on His side. But when He was forsaken by the crowds they forsook Him too. When He was persecuted and seemed to be down and out, they were against Him. Maybe they gave His claims a "fresh study" as His crowds diminished, so changed their position.

Jesus knew about all of these, so He often spoke of the cost of discipleship. (Matt. 10:32,33; 12:30; 16:24-26; Luke 14:25-57.)

YOU CAN FIND THE ANSWER

Do you think you are independent enough in your thinking and interested enough in spiritual values that you would have diligently sought out the truth in those days? Do you believe you are courageous enough to have stood with a few against the corrupt and organized powers of religious leaders? You can find the answer!

Dear friend, you do not have to wonder what you would have done! What are you doing? What you are doing is a sure index as to what you would have done then. Do you ask: "Have things not changed since those days?" Answer: Not much. Jesus is not visibly among us, but His cause is; His church is; His kingdom is; His word is. Being a true disciple still requires tremendous courage and sacrifice.

There has never been a time when it was popular to serve God acceptably. There was never a time when one could simply identify himself with a popular religious group and feel no further concern. Acceptable service has always required study, diligence, discernment. Acceptable service has always brought persecution. (2 Tim. 3:12.) It is no less true in our day.

We still have Jesus' word as to what a sinner must do to be saved. We have also the theories men have brought forward on this subject. What are you doing with regard to it? You may neglect to inform yourself, you may manifest a prejudiced spirit, you may see the truth but reject it because it is unpopular, just as many did toward Jesus. Men's theories all deny that baptism is for the remission of sins or that it is necessary to pardon. But Jesus' word says, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.) If you should decide to be baptized for the remission of sins and take your stand with others who believe and teach this Bible doctrine, you would suffer persecution

because of it. Yes, it still takes courage to stand for Christ's teaching.

We read of Christ's church in His word. (Matt. 16:13-20; Acts 20:28; 2: 47; Eph. 1:22,23;4:3-6; 5:25-27; 1 Cor. 1:2.) Men have established hundreds of churches. Tens of thousands do just as they did toward Jesus; they refuse to inform themselves concerning Christ's church. Many are prejudiced; many are too cowardly to accept that which they see the Bible to teach; many simply ride the bandwagon in religious matters. It takes courage and sacrifice to be a faithful member of the church Jesus built and reject the popular denominations.

What would you have done if you had lived in Christ's day? What are you doing now about His word, His teaching, His church? It is so easy for us to make the same mistakes the multitudes made when He lived visibly among men.

Which Baptism?

Irven Lee

In the first part of the fourth chapter of Ephesians mention is made of the one baptism. This passage would not teach that there is one baptism, just as there is one God, if it were not true. The Bible mentions several baptisms. Which baptism, then, is the one baptism in force at this time?

Baptism unto Moses

We may be certain that the one baptism of Ephesians four is not the baptism "unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. 10:2.) As far as we know this was not referred to as a baptism at the time it occurred, but it was truly a baptism. They were buried in the cloud and in the sea as they escaped Egypt and Pharaoh's army. That baptism marked the Israelites' deliverance from bondage, but that experience has nothing to do with this dispensation. We can all agree. This is certainly not a commandment for us.

John's Baptism

John the Baptist came preaching repentance in the wilderness of Judea. He was sent to "prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Matt. 3:3.) This great man had a position that was even above the faithful prophets. (Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28.) He came in the spirit and power of Elijah to introduce the Messiah to the world, and to prepare the way for His kingdom. How could man expect to do more?

John introduced baptism, which is a New Testament ordinance. This practice was not even mentioned in the Old Testament. His was a baptism in water, and it was unto repentance. (Matt. 3:11,17; Acts 1:5.) In accepting John's baptism, they were fulfilling righteousness, which is another way of saying that they were keeping the righteous commandment of God. The doctrine did not originate with him, but it was given him of God. Those who rejected his baptism during his ministry were rejecting the counsel of God against themselves. (Luke 7:30.) When God counsels or advises any practice, it is serious to reject it.

John's work was important in his day, and the baptism he commanded was of God, but there came a time when his baptism was no longer in force. (Acts 19:1-7.) The people at Ephesus knew when they received their epistle that the one baptism of Ephesians four was not John's baptism. They had been taught on this subject.

Holy Spirit Baptism

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest experiences that has ever come to man. It was a promise of the Father. It was never a command. (Acts 1:4,5; Matt. 3:11.) It could be administered by Christ but not by man. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, according to the promise made to them, was to guide them into all truth. They needed this power from on high so they could be equipped as accurate witnesses of the Christ and His teaching. They were thus qualified to write the Bible, or to bind upon earth those things that are bound in heaven. (Acts 1:8; John 14:26; 16:7-15; Luke 24:49.)

Those baptized with the Holy Spirit were blessed that through them all men might have the perfect law of liberty. The truth that can make men free is the gospel or the power of God unto salvation. Man is subject to error, so these witnesses needed this power from on high for our sake. Any who have thought of Holy Spirit baptism as something to cause men to feel good in the chest, or to have an unusual measure of excitement are seriously in error.

The power and kingdom came, and the apostles did bind on earth the will of God which is settled in heaven. The revelation is complete and final, so the occasion of that power has passed. (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3,21; Jude 3.) By a little careful study we can see that Holy Spirit baptism came in the century in which the Christ came to redeem man. It is no more necessary that the Spirit should return to repeat his work than that the Christ should return to die again on the cross of Calvary. Each did his work well. The one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 is not Holy Spirit baptism.

Baptism of Fire

The baptism of fire was mentioned by John that could be administered by Christ, but not by John or any other man. (Matt. 3:11,12.) Was this the baptism of Ephesians four? The sentence that mentions the baptism of fire does not end until it explains that the unquenchable fire is for the rejected chaff. The wheat is placed in the garner. Men have ignorantly prayed for the baptism of fire. Christ can destroy both soul and body in hell, so we should fear Him and obey Him that we might by His grace avoid the baptism of fire.

The "One Baptism"

Which baptism is now commanded? Which baptism is the one baptism of Ephesians four? It is the one linked with repentance and remission of sins in Acts 2:38. It is the one mentioned between faith and salvation in the great commission. (Mark 16:16.) The eunuch was asking about it when he said: "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:35-38.) He knew it was a burial in water, so he and the preacher went down into the water. The baptism of Ephesians four is the one Peter had in mind when he said, "Baptism doth also save us." (1 Peter 3:21.) Peter would not have said this if it were not true.

The one baptism is both a planting or a burial and a resurrection. It is a picture or form of doctrine which we are to obey that we may be free. It is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. When we obey, we are made free from sin by the grace of God. Please read Romans six prayerfully and carefully. (Also see Col. 2: 12,13.) The baptism that is into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is important and should not be overlooked. It is not sprinkling or pouring. A respect for the pure word of God makes this very evident to the careful reader. Please listen to men like Peter who bound on earth the command for every one to repent and be baptized.

* * * * *

Faith is something like electricity. You can't see it but you can see the light.

"GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE TO ALL THINGS"

Jimmy L. Winsted

In contrasting bodily exercise with godliness, Paul states in 1 Timothy 4: 8 that which constitutes our title. The remaining portion of the verse will be discussed in our study as we give careful consideration to what Paul had in mind with these instructions to Timothy.

"Godliness" comes from the Greek word EUSEBIA which is made up of EU (well), and SEBOMAI (to be devout). The word means "that reverence or love which, when characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him" (W. E. Vine.)

"Is profitable" means "useful or advantageous. "

"To all things" is a statement which includes the two "things" which follow in the verse; i.e., (1) Promise of the life which now is, and (2) the life which is to come.

Let us give attention to "all things" in our study.

1. Promise of the life that now is. "Life" in this instance is defined as "man's sojourn upon the earth to its duration." The same word is used in 1 Corinthians 15:19, and 1 Peter 3:10.

1. It is a life with blessings. God blesses all men in some ways and those who obey him in specific ways. Blessings which all men enjoy from God are

a. The call to obedience. Jesus said in John 6:44-45, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Jesus further taught in Mark 16:15, "... Preach the gospel to every creature." In 2 Timothy 1:9-10 we read, "... Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but now is made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Further in Titus 2:11 Paul says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to "all" who believe, both Jew and Greek. (Rom. 1:16.)

b. Remission of sins to the obedient. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, "Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In Luke 24:47 the promise was made that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his (Christ's) name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." On the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, after Peter and the apostles had taught the Jews and convicted them of their sins (the Jews having asked "What shall we do?"), Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38.) Peter further pointed out to Christians in 1 Peter 1:22 that they had "purified your souls in obeying the truth." Therefore, we conclude that the remission of sins is promised only to the obedient.

c. Spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. In Ephesians 1:3 the apostle Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

d. Physical provisions by our Father. In Matthew 6:33 Christ said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (These things are mentioned in the previous verses in Matthew 6; i.e., food, raiment, and shelter.) Before this instance, when Christ taught his disciples to pray, one of the petitions was, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt. 6:11.) In James 1:17 we read, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The Father in heaven gives good gifts to his children. (cf. Matt. 7:11.)

2. It is a life to bless. Not only is "the life that now is" a life filled with blessings, but it is a life in which we bless (aid) others with that which we have been blessed with, God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, "... thou shalt be a blessing." We ought to have the attitude manifested by the brethren in Acts 4:32, and also Acts 3:6 by Peter: "... such as I have, give I thee," There are many ways in which we may bless others. Let us notice a few.

a. Teaching them the truth. One of the greatest blessings and joys anyone could receive is to know the truth and obey it. In Acts 8 after Philip had taught the Ethiopian eunuch Jesus and had baptized him, "he went on his way rejoicing."

b. Setting the proper example. Another way we may bless others is to set a Christ-like example before them. Timothy, though younger than many brethren with whom he worked was to set an example. (1 Tim. 4:12.)

c. Helping those in need. In Christ's picture of the judgment we find we shall be judged according to our works, many of which are of a benevolent nature. (Matt. 25:34-40.) We must care for those of our own household. (1 Tim. 5:8.) We are to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. (James 1:27.) If we have faith and one have need, it will cause us to alleviate their want, if it be a living faith. (James 2:15-16.) As we have opportunity to do good and have the ability with which to do it, then we have the responsibility.

II. The life that is to come. "Life" in this instance is "man's eternal existence with the Father in heaven."

1. "The life that is to come" is the goal of "the life that now is." We are to "take ... the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Eph. 6:13.) In Philippians 3:14-15 Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." In Hebrews 12:1-2 we read, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." In 1 Timothy 6:12a we read, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life ..." Paul said he had "fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim.

4:7-8.) In Revelation 2:10 the brethren were told to "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

2. The life to come will be one "ever with the Lord." John 14:2-3: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." In 1 Thess. 4:17-18 we read, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

3. It will be a life free from sin and death. In 1 Cor. 15:54-57 we read, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

III. A statement in contrast. If you have not taken advantage of obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, then you are not a godly person. You have missed the greatest blessings, which are in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, the life that is to come is not your goal. Only punishment awaits you. "... When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9.)

Conclusion: Will you who are not freed from sins take thought of the things written and obey them before it becomes too late?

You who have obeyed the gospel are given these added words, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.)

THE FOOLISH RICH MAN

Earl Kimbrough

Covetousness is characterized by a craving for possessions. One may be covetous whether or not he actually has possessions. It is the evil attitude toward material things rather than the mere ownership of them that constitutes the sin. Paul describes the covetous man as an idolater. This is a proper term because the covetous man makes an idol out of the objects of his greed. Covetousness has always been a common sin. Much is said in the Bible about it. The parable of the foolish rich man (Luke 12:13-21) deals with this familiar sin.

1. The parable was occasioned by a covetous request. A man in a crowd of hearers said to Jesus, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." The law of Moses dealt with the division of family property and there were judges in the land to administer the law. The man may have had a just claim, but Jesus evidently knew that the man's request was based upon greed. Jesus refused to be a judge of the case itself, but He dealt with the sin which was the root of the conflict between the two brothers. He said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" The mission of Jesus was not to improve man's lot materially. He did not come to foster social or political reform as such. He was not an agitator for civil rights. He was not in the world as a judge or arbitrator of secular affairs. His mission was to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10.) Thus He disavowed the role of judge in such matters as the petitioner suggested.

However, since the mission of Jesus did deal with sin He used this occasion to warn against covetousness. He said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." Jesus knew the soul-destroying power of covetousness. He knew that there is no end to what some will do because of their love of possessions. The love of wealth is the root of all sorts of evil. (1 Tim. 6:10.) In an effort to satisfy their greed men will lie, steal, and murder; they will forsake family and God; they will pay any price to worship at the altar of material prosperity. So Jesus says be on your guard against it.

Jesus gave this reason for His warning against covetousness: "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The world's is directly opposite. It says, "If you would be happy, get all you can and keep it only for yourself." How foolish! Material gain cannot prolong life, make it happier, or free it from pain and suffering, except in a brief and deceptive manner. It certainly cannot buy eternal life or save the soul from sin and hell.

2. The parable of the rich simpleton illustrates the folly of the covetous philosophy. Riches are not sinful, but the wrong attitude toward them is. (Mark 10:23,24.) The rich man in the parable is not condemned for being rich. He is condemned for his covetousness. The difference between these two ideas needs to be made clear. So far as we know his wealth was not gained dishonestly. The abundant increase of his land's yield was certainly due to God's prospering him. His wealth therefore could have been a blessing to himself and others. But because of greed his bountiful prosperity became a curse to him, even destroying his soul. God's material blessings are not restricted to the righteous. (Matt. 5:45.) In fact, the righteous often seem to be the poorer of people. But the attitude one has toward these blessings, whether they are his or whether he desires those of another, determines whether or not he is covetous.

The rich man's prosperity presented a problem for him to solve. "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" We are all more or less confronted with this problem. What we do with what we have above our needs is a problem. How we solve it depends upon where we look for the answer. God's recommendation is that we use whatever we have, be it little or much, to make an investment in the true riches that will forever endure in the world to come. (1 Tim. 6:17-19.) There are other "barns" where our overflow may be profitably stored. There are widows, orphans, and many others who could use a little help from us. There are men who need support in preaching the word. There is work God has given the church to do for which we have a participating responsibility. These would be better "barns" for bestowing our fruits and goods than those covetous barns of material greed that only serve to damn the soul. Yes, far better! The rich man, however, chose to put his goods in material barns for his own selfish use. Herein lay his folly.

3. The Lord viewed the rich man as a fool for making such a decision. He had all that the world considers essential to success, but in the eyes of the Lord he was a fool. He thought he now had ample provisions for an easy life. He would henceforth enjoy himself by eating, drinking, and having a good time. Like many others he thought this is what "the good life" consists of. His decision was foolish for at least four reasons. (1) He left God out of his plans. He thought he could direct his own steps and pay no attention to God's will in the matter. (Jer. 10:23.) (2) He forgot that he had a duty toward his fellowman. (1 Jno. 3:17.) (3) He thought that riches could satisfy his wants, but they failed him completely in his greatest need—the friendship of God in the hour of death. And (4) he missed the whole purpose of life which is to fear God and keep His commandments. (Eccl. 12:13.)

The Lord said, "This night is thy soul required of thee." Nothing is more certain than death and nothing is more uncertain than the hour when it will come. The Lord's probing question to every covetous person is: "Whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Many have built houses and never lived in them; many have accumulated stocks and bonds and never cashed them in; and many have slaved for an estate only to leave it for others. When the great financier, J. P. Morgan, died, some inquisitive soul asked, "How much did Mr. Morgan leave?" To which a more thoughtful person responded, "Why, he left it all!" "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Tim. 6:7.)

The foolish rich man provided for that which was not to be and neglected that which was to be. He provided for a life on earth that he was not to have, while failing to provide for a life with God that he could have had. He provided for that which was uncertain—his life on earth, yet, he disregarded that which was sure—the approaching hour of death. No wonder the Lord called him "fool"! All who reason and act as he did are fools in the sight of God.

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THE NEED OF THE WORLD

Friends, what our world needs is teaching, teaching, and more teaching. Ignorance of God's will is a serious problem. Many preachers who speak to a young audience seem to think that all the young people want is jokes, and they are starved for a good sermon. If a preacher had good judgment enough to know that he could preach a gospel sermon to a group of young people and they would sit spellbound he would do it more often. Our boys

and girls need teaching. They have jokes and entertainment enough.—Irven Lee.

JESUS—THE SON OF GOD

Bobby Graham

The supreme fact of the entire Bible is probably the sonship of Jesus—He is divine. The whole of Old Testament prophecy, when it is used as it was intended, serves to point us to Christ as the only begotten Son of God. The Lord's biographers— Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—wrote to produce faith in Jesus as the Son of God. It may also be affirmed that the other writers of the New Testament believed in the deity of Jesus and wrote in consequence of His deity: the conduct that they urged and the promises that they held forth are true and valid because Jesus is the Son of God. One who merely scans the sermons of Acts of the Apostles quickly discerns that the pervading theme of these sermons is the sonship of Jesus. The first of these sermons in Acts is the first explanation of Jesus' deity: it is Peter's sermon that is recorded in Acts 2.

The occasion described by Luke in Acts 2 is momentous in respect to the audience assembled (devout Jews), the main speaker (who denied Jesus about fifty days earlier), the sermon preached, and the results achieved. Let us turn our attention to that sermon as Peter preached it that we might better understand the results that were achieved.

Just as it is impossible to understand a person's single statement out of the context in which it was given, even so we must view Peter's sermon as a part of the entire situation of Pentecost. Somewhat paradoxical is the situation that Peter on Pentecost affirmed the deity of Jesus, whom he denied in the shadow of the cross. He had been converted and was now strengthening his brethren. Furthermore, he was speaking to an audience of disbelievers, people who had opposed Christ and participated in His death. They had come together in Jerusalem to celebrate a Jewish feast under Old Testament law, not to hear more about Jesus whom they had crucified. What to preach is sometimes a problem, but on occasions like Pentecost there should be no question. Preach Jesus! The people were disbelievers and scheduled to be condemned unless they heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel of God's Son. (Mark 16:16.)

After Peter had cleared the air of false charges of drunkenness by referring to Joel's prophecy, Peter proceeded to instruct the Jews concerning Jesus of Nazareth and to teach them how to call on the name of the Lord for salvation. (Acts 2:21-22.) In his effort to convince the people of His deity, Peter sets forth these four points: (1) Life of Jesus (v. 22), (2) Crucifixion of Jesus (v. 23), (3) Resurrection of Jesus (vv. 24-35), and (4) Exaltation of Jesus (v. 36). Each of Peter's points had a very definite part and purpose in producing faith in the hearts of these Jews.

Life of Jesus—Divine Approval

Even the life of Jesus had its part in demonstrating His deity. The powers, wonders, and signs that God did by Him in the presence of these Jews were wrought in order to create faith in their hearts. These were the Lord's way of saying to men, "This is my Son." The miracles set Him forth as one approved of God. Peter did not even try to prove that Jesus had lived and that the miracles had been worked, for these in his audience accepted both of these points. On different occasions they had denied the power by which the miracles were wrought, but they never had denied the fact of the miracles.

Crucifixion of Jesus—Divine Purpose

The Pentecost Jews would admit the death of Jesus by crucifixion as freely as His life and miracles, for some of them had put Him to death and the rest would have consented. In lifting their hand against the Lord's anointed, they had actually participated in God's eternal plan. They had crucified Jesus in accordance with the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. In the plan of God the death of Jesus was the real purpose for His birth and His life on the earth: He had come to save, but without the shedding of blood there would have been no salvation. (Matt. 1:21; Heb. 9:22.)

Resurrection of Jesus—Divine Demonstration

His audience would not as readily admit the resurrection of Jesus as they had admitted His life, miracles, and death. Here Peter paused to give testimony that Jesus had risen from the dead. The testimony used was that of David (vv. 25-31), the apostles (v. 32), and Pentecost (vv. 33-35). In presenting his evidence to support faith in the resurrection, Peter was dealing with the supreme sign that Jesus is the Son of God. In raising Jesus from the grave, God was declaring Jesus to be the Son of God with power. (Rom. 1:4.) It only remained for Peter to demonstrate to his hearers that God had granted to Jesus a position of power after His resurrection.

Exaltation of Jesus—Divine Authority

Jesus' claim to all authority in heaven and in earth after He had risen was vindicated by the position that God gave Him at His own right hand. He is now Lord and Christ—the Lord's anointed ruler. As such He deserved the obedience of these Jews and a place in their hearts and lives. It is no small wonder, then, that honest hearts cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" About three thousand now accepted a truth that they formerly rejected—namely, that Jesus is the Son of God. Every person who is truly persuaded of this truth will do as did these—he will yield self to the Son of God to do as He bids. This is the plea that we need to make to honest souls everywhere and the attitude that should be ours throughout life.

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You cannot divide people when they stand on the Word of God. When men and women stand on the Bible, and the Bible alone, speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent, they cannot be divided. When they say we will teach and preach a "Thus saith the Lord," either in an apostolic precept, or an apostolic example, it is not possible to have division. They are all of the same mind and of the same judgment when they stand on the Word of God. —J. A. Allen.