

# GOSPEL GUIDE



"Understandest thou what thou readest?"  
"How can I, except some man should guide me?"  
(Acts 8:30, 31.)

VOL. II

NO. 2

## 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 8:12, 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... (continued on page 7)

## GOD'S CRAZY PEOPLE

(continued from page 1)

terized 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, Michaelangelo 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 super-human effort, to preach Christ and him crucified.

**CORNELIUS ...** (continued from page 4)  
urto 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 SHALL I JOIN?

(continued from page 5)

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.

## 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.



## "MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED"

War is terrible because of its destructive nature: Property is destroyed, health is destroyed, life is destroyed, morals are destroyed. The end of the world will be an awesome occasion because of the destruction at that time. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which 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. 3:10.)

The prophet Hosea tells of the sad destruction of Israel, a great nation once reaching from the Euphrates to the border of Egypt. (2 Chron. 9:26.) He shows that the reason for the destruction was ignorance of God's word. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (Hos. 4:6.)

Ignorance of God's word brought about the destruction of Israel. Let us see what ignorance of God's word destroys today.

1. It destroys the honor and reverence rightfully due God. If we are ignorant of the word of God, we cannot have an appreciation for God as our creator. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:26, 27.)

If we are ignorant of God's word, we cannot have an appreciation of God

as our preserver and benefactor. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:28.) "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." (Jas. 1:17.) Without knowledge of God's word we cannot know and appreciate his holiness, and power, and wisdom, and matchless love. We must be struck with the fact that "lack of knowledge" of the word of God not only destroys the honor and reverence rightfully due the true and living God but exalts human wisdom and human ways even though "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in him that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23.)

2. Ignorance of God's word destroys God's approval of us. Paul said, "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.) Without study we cannot know the will of God, and without knowledge we cannot do the will of God, and without doing the will of God we cannot have his loving favor. Because of ignorance we then must be like God's people of old, for though he gave them every opportunity to know and do his will, they refused, "until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chron. 36:16.)

3. Ignorance of God's word destroys any possibility of our salvation. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) Faith is absolutely essential to our coming to God. "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." (Heb. 11:6.) But the faith that saves comes from a knowledge of God's word. Without that knowledge we are without faith, and

without faith we are without any hope of salvation. "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.)

4. Ignorance of God's word destroys happiness and peace. "Blessed (happy) is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. 1:1-3.) As long as the children of Israel learned and did God's will, they prospered, but when they fell into ignorance, they inevitably fell into disobedience and thereby brought themselves under the wrath of God. In knowing and doing the will of God there is great joy. Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice... In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:4-7.)

5. Ignorance of God's word destroys any possibility of recognizing and overcoming the temptations of the devil. In his word God has let us know what sin is. (1 John 3:4; 5:17.) If we know and do his will we adorn ourselves with the Christian's armor--the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith wherewith we shall be able to overcome all the fiery darts of the evil one, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph. 6:10-18.) With a true knowledge of the word of God Christ was able to

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# HEAVEN

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.) "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.)

In all of this, there must be OBEEDIENCE FROM THE HEART. It was this that brought the Romans to cease to be servants of sin and become servants of righteousness. (Rom. 6:17f.) Jesus "became the author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him." (Heb. 5:8f.)

## CONCLUSION

Now that you have come and seen WHO He is and WHAT He offers you, are you willing freely and immediately to meet His conditions? Many desire to have what He offers, but are unwilling to meet His conditions! What about YOU? "Come and see" how wonderful is the fellowship with the Lord, and how peace-giving the Hope you can have only in Him!--P. O. Box 339, Red Bay Alabama 35582.

### "MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED"

(continued from page 1)

Overcome every temptation of the devil with, "It is written." (Matt. 4.) He had to use only three little verses of scripture from two chapters from one book, the book of Deuteronomy, under which he lived, but there is so much power in the word of God, when properly applied the devil cannot stand before it.

6. Ignorance of God's word destroys usefulness in the kingdom. Since the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), every member of the church has the responsibility of supporting and upholding the truth by standing in defense of it, and by taking it to others. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.) In view of this great responsibility Paul said, "For woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (1 Cor. 9:16.) Woe unto him who fails to preach the gospel. Woe unto him who preaches anything but the gospel. (Gal. 1:8, 9.)

We must diligently seek to study and know the will of God, for ignorance of his word costs too dear a price. It is destructive of so much in this life and of any hope of the good and glorious life to come. Little wonder Hosea

Should we want to go there? For many reasons, surely the answer is "Yes."

1. It is real. If we believe the Bible, the word of God, we believe that heaven is a real place. It is mentioned over and over again in the word of God. The faithful child of God has an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance reserved for him in heaven. (1 Pet. 1:4.)

2. It is the dwelling place of God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven." (Matt. 6:9.) Surely we want to live so as to come into the glorious presence of God in his heavenly home, for if we do not, we must spend eternity with the devil in endless suffering. (Matt. 25:41.)

3. It is the dwelling place of Christ. Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38.) Having accomplished all that God purposed for him to do on earth, he has now returned to be at the right hand of the Father in heaven. (Heb. 8:1.) Like Paul, we should have the desire to be with Christ in that heavenly home. (Phil. 1:23.)

4. It is the dwelling place of angels. After the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of Christ, they returned to heaven. (Luke 2:13-15.) The faithful angels are ministering spirits, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1:14.) Heaven must be a wonderful place if it is the dwelling place of God, and his Holy Spirit, and Christ, and the angels.

5. It is the home of the redeemed. John saw a great number in white robes before the throne of God. And one of the elders asked him, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" But John said, "Sir, thou knowest." Then the elder said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed

said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hos. 4:6.)--B.N.

their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-15.)

6. It is a holy city. (Rev. 21:2.) We have never lived in a holy city on earth. At the present time cities, with their crime and immorality, are most unholy. It would be wonderful to live in a holy city.

7. It is Paradise, for there is no sorrow, no pain, no death, no curse, no night, there, (Rev. 7:17:21:4,5.)

8. It is attainable. When we as penitent believers confess our faith in Christ, and are baptized in his name for the remission of our sins, we have entrance into God's earthly, and yet spiritual kingdom. (Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 11:18; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3,4; 2 Cor. 5:17; John 3:5.) Then, serving the Father faithfully throughout life, we have this exceeding precious promise: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you a bundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5-11.)

May we so live that heaven will be our eternal home!--B.N.

### A FALLEN DISCIPLE

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gression, once committed, is done. There is no undoing.

The consoling part of all of this is that God does not require the undoing of our sins. He requires us to seek forgiveness on his terms. He requires alien sinners to hear and believe his instructions, particularly relative to Jesus and what he has done for the salvation of man. He further requires alien sinners to confess their faith in Christ and upon this confession to be baptized for the remission of their sins. There is no other way for the alien sinner to have remission of sins. When a Christian sins, he must repent of his sins, confess his sins, and ask God to forgive him. There is no other avenue open unto him if he wants forgiveness.

Even from a fallen disciple there are lessons worth learning.--1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Ala. 35208.

# GOSPEL GUIDE

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:30, 31.)

VOL. XI

NO. 12

## "SO GREAT A SALVATION"

*"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?"* (Heb. 2:3.)

1. This salvation is great because of **WHAT IT SAVES**. It saves man, the crowning point of God's creation, the one made in the image and after the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26,27)—but one who has allowed that precious image to be marred by sin. It saves evil, corrupt, and wicked man. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortions, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

But it also saves good men, men who are morally good but still in need of salvation, "For there is no man that sinneth not." (1 Kin. 8:46.) Cornelius was a good man, "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." (Acts 10:2.) And yet this good man was commanded to send for Peter, who would speak to him words whereby he and his house could be saved. (Acts 11:13, 14.) This salvation is great because it is for all men, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) Showing that it is for all men, Jesus 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.)

2. This salvation is great because of **WHAT IT SAVES FROM**. It saves from past

sins. Paul, in looking back over his past life, said that he was "before" a blasphemer and a persecutor, and yet he had obtained mercy. (1 Tim. 1:13.) God made a promise to all who would enter into the new covenant by their obedience to the gospel, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. 8:12.) On the day of Pentecost, following the death of Christ, Peter showed the people that they were guilty of crucifying the one made both Lord and Christ by the God of heaven, but he also showed them that they could have remission of their sins: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, . . ." (Acts 2:38.) When one is baptized into Christ, he becomes "a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.)

This salvation is great because it saves from every sin: "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.)

This salvation is great because it saves us from the terrible consequences of sin—in this life and in the life to come. Even in this life "the way of the transgressor is hard." (Prov. 13:15.) And in the life to come the sinner's suffering is without relief: "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night . . ." (Rev. 14:11.) But this great salvation saves one from such a horrible destiny.

3. This salvation is great because of **WHAT IT SAVES FOR**. It saves one for honor and respectability in society. The Christian is appreciated and respected in the com-

munity because of the nobility of his character and the useful, compassionate service which he renders to his fellowman, when, like Christ, he goes "about doing good." (Acts 10:38.) He is saved for the greatest work to which man can put his heart and his hand, and that is work in the Father's vineyard in helping to carry the gospel, God's power to save, to a world lost in sin. Christ has commissioned his own to go into all the world with this message of salvation (Mark 16:15)—God's only way of salvation, and man's only hope of deliverance from sin.

It is so great a salvation because it saves one for the heavenly home. "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." (John 14:2,3.)

4. This salvation is great because of HOW IT SAVES. God's word said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ez. 18:4.) Since God's word is always true (John 17:17), this means that all men are under the sentence of eternal death because all have sinned. (Rom. 3:23.) But God in his infinite love provided a way by which man might be redeemed from his sin, and from the eternal consequences of his sins. In this provision God sent his own Son to be "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.) On the cross Jesus died in behalf of all mankind, but for man to be redeemed from sin, Christ's death must become the sinner's death. God has made this possible in his great plan of salvation. Through the hearing and study of God's word the sinner is led to faith in Christ, and to repentance (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3,5), and as a penitent believer is baptized into Christ, into his death. (Rom. 6:3,4.) Thus in this obedience he claims the death of Christ in behalf of himself. Vicariously he has paid the penalty for his sin, and he is redeemed by the precious, atoning blood of Christ. (Eph. 1:7.)

This great salvation is the only salvation, for without it there is no escape. As great as it

is, it may be lost by rejecting it, or by neglecting it, or by waiting too long to accept it. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.)—B.N.

## "Blessed Is The Man"

Dr. Wm. A. Phillips

The Bible is unique in the realm of literature. It abides NO garbling of phrases. Its expressions are always **progressive**. Whether in the positive or the negative atmosphere, the following phrase is always dependent upon the preceding one. For example: Baptism is of no consequence **unless** preceded by repentance. (Acts 2:38.) And repentance is of no consequence **unless** preceded by faith. (Acts 8:37.)

Psalms 1:1 is a classic example of the negative approach. "Blessed is the man that walketh NOT in the counsel of the ungodly, NOR standeth in the way of sinners, NOR sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Let us examine the words "walk," "stand" and "sit."

**WALK:** 1. "To follow a certain course of life whether it be good or bad." 2. "Mode of living, general conduct or behaviour. Sphere of activity. Walking with the saints of God or with the imps of Satan." Paul warns in 1 Cor. 15:33 that evil companionships corrupt good morals. (ASV.) Thus, those who walk in the counsel of the ungodly have no choice but to, themselves, become ungodly. And having become ungodly they proceed to take a **stand**.

**STAND:** "To take or maintain a position, attitude, or course of action." Thus, the man

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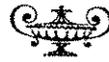
### GOSPEL GUIDE

Post Office Box 488  
Russellville, Ala. 35653

DECEMBER, 1979

Editor: Billy Norris

Bundles: \$3.00 per month for each 25  
(Recent postage increases & foreign postage additional)  
Billed Quarterly  
Single Subscription: \$3.50 per year in advance  
Foreign Subscriptions \$4.00 per year



## "IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION" ✓

In Hebrews 2:3,4 the question is asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

### COMPLETE

This salvation is great because it is *complete*. It saves us from our *past* sins. Describing his condition "before" he obeyed the gospel, Paul said that he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." (1 Tim. 1:13.) But when he was told to arise, and be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16), he obeyed immediately. (Acts 9:18.) Because he persecuted Christians, he considered himself the chiefest of sinners; and yet he obtained mercy and forgiveness in his obedience to the gospel. In reference to this salvation he exclaimed, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (1 Tim. 1:15.)

Even in a heathen world, Corinth was noted for its wickedness; and yet the Corinthians obtained pardon. After Paul had given a long list of sinners--fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, drunkards, extortioners, etc.--he said, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) Later in the same epistle, he 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 ye are saved." (1 Cor. 15:1,2.) In the second epistle he said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17.)

This salvation is complete in that it saves from *present* sins, sins that otherwise we *would commit* if we lived not by the great

principles of the gospel. Those who enjoy this great salvation have Christ, the perfect example, to follow. (1 Pet. 2:21,22.) He showed that by a proper application of God's word every temptation of Satan could be overcome. (Matt. 4:1-10.)

This great salvation is complete in that it saves from *every kind of sin*. "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.) Paul said that though he was guilty of blasphemy he obtained mercy. Even those who crucified the Son of God found pardon in their obedience to the gospel on the day of Pentecost. When Peter accused them of crucifying the one whom God had made both Lord and Christ, they were pricked in their hearts, and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, 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." They that gladly received his word were baptized that day, being about three thousand in number. Then the Lord added daily to the church those that were being saved, those who were obeying the gospel as did the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:36-47.) Indeed it is a great salvation because it saves from every kind of sin in the black catalog of sin.

It is a complete salvation in that it saves from the *consequences* of sin. It saves from the consequences of sin in this life. By inspiration, and perhaps out of his own experience, Solomon said, "But the way of the transgressor is hard." (Prov. 13:15.) David found the way of transgression to be hard. Though forgiven of his sin, David suffered the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba through the remaining days of his life. (2 Sam. 12.) A young woman paid a dear price for her sins when she lost the fine young man whom she loved because he could not bring himself to accept her as his life companion.

And yet the consequences of sin in this life are insignificant as compared to the con-

sequences in the life to come. However difficult and hard they may turn out to be here, they will sooner or later come to an end; but in the life to come the punishment of sin knows no end. The rich man begged for mercy when no mercy could be extended. (Luke 16.) In the last day the great Judge will have to say to many, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41.) "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." (Rev. 14:11.)

### COMMON

The salvation offered to man lost and dying in sin is great because it is *common*, common in that it is offered to all the sons and daughters of Adam's race. In describing this salvation, Jude said, "... I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation." (Jude 3.) The power of God to save is the gospel (Rom. 1:16); and Christ intended for this power to be made available to all men in that he has given the responsibility to his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15.) In writing to Titus about this salvation, Paul said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." (Tit. 2:11.) As all men are guilty of sin, and all have a common need of salvation, God has provided for all a common means of salvation in the gospel of Christ.

### COSTLY

It is a great salvation because of its *cost*. Four millenniums were needed in the development of God's great plan of salvation. It cost the blood of the prophets of old as they brought the message of God to the people of their day; and, above all, it cost the precious blood of Christ the Son of God. Without his death, his burial, his resurrection, there could be no gospel, no means of salvation for man lost in sin. (1 Cor. 15:1-4.) But Christ came from heaven and paid the dear price to make possible our salvation. Concerning the price that Christ paid, Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was

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# I Shall Not Want

Curtis E. Flatt

The twenty-third Psalm is one of the very best known sections in the Bible. It is so often read or quoted at funerals or when death or calamity seems near. It ought to be quoted in view of living, for it is a psalm of life rather than a psalm of death. The literal background of the Psalm is that of a shepherd caring for his sheep, leading them to and from pasture and fold through wood and valley and ravine where dangers may lurk in each hidden place. This psalm is a metaphor depicting a spiritual application. These six verses show how Jehovah looks over his people even as the shepherd looks over his sheep. In this Christian dispensation in which we live, Christ is our shepherd. (John 10:11.) The Lord's people are his sheep. Through the years, many articles have been published in this paper showing how we may become his followers--his sheep. At this point in this study, let each reader make sure that he is really a follower of the Lord. If we are truly the Lord's people, then there are certain necessary things which we can rest assured the Lord will provide. We shall not want for any of these.

## I Shall Not Want For Food

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." (Psalm 23:2.) The idea is that of a shepherd taking his sheep to a good range which suffices so that the sheep then lie down in contentment. The Lord provides food for his people. This is literally so. In Psalm 37:25 we read: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt. 6:11.) If the Lord's people will do as the Lord directs, they will be provided for. More important than this is the fact that the Lord provides spiritual food. He has given the sincere milk of the word and the strong meat of the gospel to satisfy our hunger and spiritual things. (1 Peter 2:1,2; Heb. 5:12.) He has promised fulfillment: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6.) The Lord's people will not want for food.

## I Shall Not Want For A Leader

I shall not want for a leader, for the psalmist said: "He leadeth me beside the still waters ... he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." (Psalm 23:2,3.) Our shepherd, Jesus, leads us. We are to look unto him as the author and finisher of our faith. (Heb. 12:2.) We are told that Jesus left us

an example and that we should follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21.) The faithful baptized believer can sing with much feeling: "He leadeth me! O blessed thought! "

## I Shall Not Want For Renewal

"He restoreth my soul" is the claim of Psalm 23:3. Followers of Jesus have a great restorer. Through his word we are renewed day by day. (2 Cor. 4:16.) When I have sinned and seek to be made new again, I have one who pleads my case before God in heaven. (1 John 2:1,2.) Only my own impenitence will prevent this renewal. (Heb. 6:6.)

## I Shall Not Want For A Safe Path

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." (Psalm 23:3.) If I follow the good shepherd, I shall not want for a safe path. Followers of God have long been assured of a safe path. "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:104,105.) Christ, my shepherd, has given unto me everything which pertains to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3.) It is to the law and to the testimonies of God we must go. They will safely guide us through the valley. The safe way is the gospel way. (Romans 1:16.)

## I Shall Not Want For Protection

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." (Psalm 23:4.) Christians have the grand promise of protection. We need not fear evil though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death. "... For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. 13:5,6.) We have no reason to be afraid unless we provoke our protector, and then we have great reason to be afraid. He is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt. 10:28.)

## I Shall Not Want For Companionship

"For thou art with me" is a most comforting statement. (Psalm 23:4.) Our shepherd is with his sheep. Christ dwells with his people in a certain sense. (Eph. 3:17.) Christ promised his disciples that where two or three are gathered together in his name there he will be. (Matt. 18:20.) Again, in giving the great commission, he said: "... Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) I shall not want for companionship, for Jesus is with me. He is near, to comfort and cheer,

just when I need him most.

## I Shall Not Want For Comfort

"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4.) As the rod and staff of the shepherd was protection for the sheep and would have been comfort if the sheep had understood, even so our shepherd is armed and protects his sheep. That is a great comfort to us, his sheep. When we conduct ourselves as we ought, there is no one who can take us away. There is no one who can separate us from the protecting love of Jesus. (Romans 8:35-39.) In the arms of Jesus we are safe no matter what takes place.

## I Shall Not Want For Honor

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." (Psalm 23:5.) The assurance is given that honor is sure for those who really follow the Lord. That is still true. I shall not want for honor. A banquet is prepared for me. I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever if I live as I am instructed. (1 Peter 1:7-12; 1 John 3:2.)

## A Most Gracious Promise

A most gracious promise is given to those who follow the shepherd. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." -- 1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Alabama 35208.

## "... SO GREAT SALVATION "

(continued from page 1)

also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with 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.)

After all that God has done in providing this salvation, the tragedy is that not all men will be saved. Some will not enjoy this great salvation no doubt because of ignorance of it. Some even oppose it. Perhaps the greatest tragedy is that some will miss it because of carelessness. It will be in their grasp, and yet they will let it slip away through neglect: neglect that may show itself as procrastination, or indifference, or gradual drifting and slipping back into the beggarly elements of the world. But after all, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"--B.N.

# THE WORD OF GOD

Bobby Graham

As has probably always been the case, ours is a day when men in general have little regard for the Word of God. Any favorable thought that they might have toward it, or any compliment that they might pay it usually amounts to lip service, for the thought and compliment hardly ever become manifested in a life of dependence upon the Word and obedience to it. Even some professing to be children of God are sometimes heard to refer to the "mere Word," as if to say that it is a weak and inadequate Word. Such efforts to disregard and downgrade the Word of God are nothing less than manifestations of unbelief, for one cannot believe what God has said about His Word and maintain the attitude that many have toward the Word. To believe what God has said is to believe that God has provided for the spiritual well-being of His creatures in His Word, which fully reveals His will and is completely adequate to accomplish every Divine purpose that God assigned to it. Let us notice some of the features that the God of heaven has ascribed unto His Word.

## God's Word Is Revealed

God has arranged for and worked out the revelation of His will, those things that man needs to know about and to be concerned about in this life. In Deuteronomy 29:29 Moses made a distinction between things secret and things revealed: those thoughts not relevant to man's faith and obedience are secret in that they remain undisclosed to the mind of man; but whatever God deems necessary to man's salvation has been revealed. In 1 Corinthians 2:10, in reference to God's former mystery, His wisdom, or the things that God has prepared for them that love Him, Paul affirmed that God has revealed these things. What a glorious thought to consider: that the great God and architect of the universe and salvation has communicated Himself to men. For this very purpose Jesus came. (John 1:18.) Now if God has revealed His Word to men, why are many dissatisfied with it? Why do some count it as not enough and insist that God continue to reveal in our time? The reason must be a dissatisfaction with and unbelief of His Word!

## His Word Is Inspired

Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is inspired of God: it emanated from God just as breath from an individual. To provide for an inspired Word, God assigned the task of revelation to the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 1:10.) In this way God assured the

accurate transmission of both content and words to convey the content from His mind to the apostles and prophets. Is it not ironic that many would re-activate the Holy Spirit in this same work and have Him do His work again? Why? Was His first work ineffective or incomplete? If He resumed the work of revelation, what more could He say than He has said? The need for believing what God has said about His Word in His Word is apparent.

## His Word Is Complete

So complete is the revelation of the Word of God that Paul said "even the deep things of God" have been made known. Peter said that God gave a knowledge of all things pertaining to life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3.) Second Timothy 3:16-17 declares that the inspired Scriptures are complete in the uses that may be made of them--doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness--and the benefit that may be gained from them--completing of the man of God and fully supplying him unto every good work. God has not forgotten or omitted from His Word anything.

## His Word Is Adequate

God designed His Word in such a fashion that it might do all that He wanted it to do. As we study the Word that He gave, we are impressed with the great design that God had and the tremendous power inherent in the Word, if it is to accomplish His design. Such a thought should not surprise us, however; for the same power that Jehovah exerted in creating the worlds and that He continues to exercise in upholding all things was available to Him in the framing of His revelation and in the work that He seeks to accomplish by it. The Word of God can produce faith (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7), sanctify (John 17:17), save (Jas. 1:21; Rom. 1:16), complete a man (2 Tim. 3:17), and give him an inheritance. (Acts 20:32.) If it needs to be done and has to do with the soul, God's Word can do it. To doubt or deny such is to disbelieve God. Yet we hear some saying that man's own experience must confirm the Word. Such is an outgrowth of the godless philosophy of existentialism that has been promoted and pawned off by unbelievers, though some do not realize it. What they need to realize is that the Word of God does not need additional confirmation.

## God's Word Is Confirmed

Just as the Lord arranged for the revelation and proclamation of His Word, He also

provided for its confirmation. He did not expect men to believe the preaching of Peter just because Peter preached it: He supplied proof for what Peter said that observers might know Peter's preaching was from God, not men. The confirmation came in the form of miracles wrought by Peter (or another apostle or person empowered by an apostle). The miracles were not intended for all people, even during the first century--just those observing them. The fact of miracles was, no doubt, related to many not observing them. If it was the Lord's pleasure to have some rest their belief on the testimony of someone who saw the miracles, why are men suddenly alarmed to hear that faith today must depend on the accredited testimony of the Word of God? (John 20:30-31.) This is exactly what the Bible teaches! Enough miracles (signs) are written of to generate faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son. The Lord apparently never knew that miracles must continue, as some insist.

## His Word Is Understandable

Regardless of what some "learned" men claim, God's Word can be understood. Furthermore, one knowledgeable in the Scriptures cannot avoid admitting that the Bible writers believed and said that all men of faith could understand the Bible alike. God's Word is not, in most cases, susceptible to different understandings. While it is true that man's intellect must be employed to understand the Bible, it is also true that any understanding that conflicts with whatever else the Bible teaches is a misunderstanding. Knowledge of God's free gifts is possible (1 Cor. 2:12), as is an understanding of God's will. (Eph. 5:17.)

## His Word Is Binding

Some treat God's Word as if it were a recipe that does not need to be followed or a game plan that is flexible. It is not; for man cannot change it in any point. Nor can he disregard it if he would please God. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, he conditioned salvation upon faith in the gospel. He further told the apostles to teach baptized believers to observe all things that He commanded. (Matt. 28:20.) Does this sound like something that can be loosed at will or brought up to date? It certainly sounds like a pattern to be followed, or ordinances to be heeded. (1 Cor. 11:2.)

Lord, help us to know the truth, to love it, and to believe it so that we might obey it and follow it through all of life in order to be saved by Him who revealed it.--1214 Condo Rd., Richmond, Virginia 23229.



## Preparing The Heart To Seek The Law Of The Lord

"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." (Ezra 7:10.)

In seeking the law of the Lord, just any heart will not do. This passage shows that one must prepare his heart to seek the law of the Lord. Tom Payne read the Bible, but with the idea of seeking to destroy it. His heart was not truly and properly prepared.

How does one prepare his heart to seek the law of the Lord?

**I. BY RECOGNIZING THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD.** In the beginning God told Adam and Eve that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This command was given with the authority of the one who by his word created the heavens and the earth. By his supreme authority God told them that in the day they ate of the forbidden fruit they would surely die; but they listened to another word. The serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die." Since the devil's word proved to be a lie, and God's word proved to be true, Adam and Eve had to suffer the consequences of their transgression. Indeed, they brought themselves under the sentence of death; they lost their paradise on earth and their former relationship with God by not recognizing the supreme authority of God's word. (Gen. 2, 3.)

If our hearts are to be prepared to seek the law of the Lord, we must realize that God's word has authority over our feelings, over our conscience, friends, loved ones, preacher, priest, pope, synod, convention, discipline, creed book.

Today, as in times past, people have put great confidence in their feelings. Even though they may not have met all the conditions God has made

essential to man's salvation, they have a good, secure feeling. No doubt Eve had a good feeling when she decided it was best for her to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but feelings could not take the place of the authority of God's word. King Saul listened to the word of the people and substituted their word for the authority of God's word; but it did not work. (1 Sam. 15.) Many listen to the preacher without seriously and painstakingly checking his word by the authority of the word of God.

**II. BY REALIZING OUR NEED OF GOD'S LAW.** Young Solomon, realizing his need of God's guidance, said, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in... Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad..." (1 Kings 3: 7-9.) Jeremiah clearly and accurately stated our need of God's guidance, "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.) In his word God has given us light to give us understanding and to direct our steps. (Ps. 119:130, 105.) His word is the power to save our souls, to furnish us completely unto every good work. (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) It is perfect. (Jas. 1:25.) How desperately we need to prepare our hearts by realizing our need of it.

**III. BY DESTROYING HUMAN JUDGMENT AND REMOVING PREJUDICE FROM OUR HEARTS.** God has provided a wonderful plan of salvation through Jesus Christ his Son; and yet this plan is deliberately designed to destroy human judgment. (1 Cor. 1:18-25.) Some of God's commands are galling to human judgment, for in his wisdom man just cannot see the need for them. God again and again in his

word tells us that we are to be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2: 38; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21); but human judgment calls it a work and rebels at accepting God's plain command.

God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering. (Gen. 22.) This command was contrary to human judgment, but Abraham, because he was a man of faith, did not rebel. He did what God told him to do, and thereby demonstrated his faith. It is strange that those who claim to have so much faith are the very ones who rebel at accepting God's word in regard to baptism. By hearing them preach, or in debate, we can see that they have given much time and thought to devising ways to get around the passages where God's word is so plainly stated in regard to the essentiality of baptism.

**IV. BY STUDYING AND MEDITATING UPON THE LAW OF THE LORD DAY AND NIGHT.** God told Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Josh. 1:8.) Paul said, "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.) All should long for a knowledge of God's word, for in it he reveals our origin, our purpose for being here, our possible destiny. In it he lets us know how to live and have "good success" in his sight, how to make our way "prosperous," and how to be saved to enjoy his wonderful blessings in this life and the life to come.

**V. BY BEING WILLING TO APPLY GOD'S LAWS TO OURSELVES.** When  
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## PREPARING THE HEART...

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Nathan the prophet told David about a rich man who had entertained a traveler by taking the poor man's only little ewe lamb, David was so incensed he said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." But Nathan answered, "Thou art the man." (2 Sam. 11, 12.) David had taken another man's wife, all that the man had, while David as king had everything, wives and wealth, and all that the heart could desire. He could see the sin of the man who took another man's lamb but not his own sin in taking another man's wife and in having the man killed in order to have the woman. We prepare our hearts to seek the law of the Lord when we are ready and willing to apply his great principles to our own lives.

What will be the result of our truly preparing our hearts to seek the law of the Lord?

1. We will do it. "For Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it." There will be no quibbling, no mental reservations, no rebellion, no dissatisfaction, but humble, joyous, full and complete obedience.

2. We will teach it to others. "For Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." The riches of God's word are so great, the story of the cross so wonderful, we must teach it to our family, to our neighbors, to all the poor, sinful, dying sons and daughters of Adam's race. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.)

How is your heart in relationship to the word of God? -- B. N.

Some tell us that one can be a Christian without assembling for worship. The Lord is specific on this and asks that we not forsake the assembling. We are to follow the example and teaching of inspired men rather than the example and teaching of men who would ignore the commands and examples that teach us the Lord's will on worship. -- Irven Lam, "Speaking as the Oracles of God."

## BARRICADES IN THE NARROW WAY

(continued from page 5)

and many are "overcome by evil" rather than "overcom(ing) evil with good." (Rom. 12:2, 21.) In Galatians 5:19ff the inspired writer gives a catalogue of "works of the flesh" and concludes that "those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God!" James reminds us that "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (Jas. 4:4); and this is exactly what Satan desires, for he knows that this is one way of blocking the way to heaven for us.

**LAZINESS.** Salvation is indeed by grace, but those who would "lay hold on eternal life" provided by our Lord must be "good stewards." Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a man going out to "hire laborers into his vineyard." (Matt. 20:1.) The "one talent" man of Matthew 25 did not use that with which he was intrusted, and so was declared to be "wicked and slothful." As a reward he was "cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The church at Laodicea was "neither hot nor cold," but lukewarm and indifferent; and Jesus said, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." The unfruitful branch shall be "cut off and cast into the fire." (John 15:1-6.) The apostle Paul admonishes, "...be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labors are not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.)

Thus, Satan would be just as happy to see us fall, from hardships, conformity to the world, or becoming lazy and fruitless, as to see others hindered from entering the way by other things; yea, and even by OUR BAD EXAMPLES!

How badly do YOU want to go to heaven? Satan does not want you to make it, and thus the barricades. God and His Son desire that you obtain eternal life; and they have provided it for you. They describe in the Inspired Scriptures "the way of truth"; and we are assured that we can so live as to be "more than conquerors through him that loved us..." (Rom. 8:37.) By the help of God we CAN surmount all of Satan's barricades and make it to the end of the "narrow way" and to eternal life--but it depends upon how strong is our desire to do so! We cannot do it alone; but with "the pow-

## BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED...

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yoked with unbelievers in doing these things is that which is forbidden. This is not to say that it is all right for Christians to marry unbelievers. There is ample evidence elsewhere in God's word to show the impropriety of such unions. If 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 refers to the making of marriages, it also refers to the obligation of ending the marriages when the Christians learn about this, for the instruction is, "Wherefore come out from them and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (2 Cor. 6:17.)

### Relationships Wholly Christian

There are other relationships involving many things where Christians only act together. In these the unbeliever is excluded just as the Christian is to be excluded from the first relationships of our discussion. These unions which are peculiar to Christians are such things as prayer and fellowship in the Lord's supper and in the common pursuit of the religion of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Here the Christian must not be yoked with the unbeliever.

As a body, the church is not to be yoked with unbelievers or worldliness or with the innovations of the world, either. This is just as unequal yoking as on the individual basis.

### Come Out from Them

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:17, 18.)--1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Al. 35208.

er (dynamite) of God"--"the gospel of Christ"--we can blast away all of Satan's barricades!

Study, that you might understand His will. Comply with His conditions of salvation--both in order to become a child of God and to serve him faithfully, that you might hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: ... enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Do not let the Devil cheat you out of your reward! --P.O. Box 339, Red Bay, Ala. 35582.



# 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 Acquila 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 conversa-

tion, 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. Acquila 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 publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." (Acts 18:27, 28.)

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# 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. (Jas. 5:2-4, 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

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## GOD'S CRAZY PEOPLE

(continued from page 1)

terized 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, Michaelangelo 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 super-human effort, to preach Christ and him crucified.

**CORNELIUS ...** (continued from page 4) 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 SHALL I JOIN?

(continued from page 5)

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.

## 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.



## MEASURING GOD'S LOVE

*"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."* [Eph. 3:17-19.]

The love of God and Christ passes knowledge, and yet Paul prays that we may know this love. The King James Version, quoted above, uses the word "comprehend." The American Standard Version of 1901, more accurate in using words with the present day meanings, uses the word "apprehend." We may not be able to comprehend, to understand fully, the love of God because of its greatness, but we can apprehend it, that is, we can know this wonderful love to the extent of our own finite limitations. One who may not be able to see the mountain's cloud-capped peak may explore its base. One who may not be able to see the illimitable stretches of the ocean may be able to know the neighboring bays.

Paul says that we might apprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth of God's love. This means then that God's love has dimensions, that it does have certain limitations, that it is measurable. No one knows all about electricity, and yet man has found the way to measure it through a meter.

John 3:16 is the meter that measures God's love for man. "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."

I. It measures the *length* of God's love.

It reached out even to the gift of his Son, to be the lamb of God, to die for

the sins of all mankind. It reached out to provide salvation through the gospel of Christ. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4.) But God's love does not reach beyond the sacrifice of his Son to save lost man. If one does not accept Christ, no other sacrifice will be provided. "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Heb. 10:26.)

God's love does not reach beyond the terms of the gospel to save lost men. Jesus said men must believe in him, must repent, must confess their faith in him, must be baptized in order to be saved, and must continue faithful unto death. (John 8:24; Luke 13:3,5; Matt. 10:32,33; Mark 16:16; Rev. 2:10.) God's love does not reach out to provide salvation by faith only, special experiences, joyful feelings, direct operation of the Holy Spirit, or any of the other multitudinous ways man has devised for salvation of the lost.

It is a fearful thing to try to stretch the love of God too far. "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." (Matt. 7:21.)

II. It measures the *breadth* of God's love—"whosoever."

It reaches out to all men. "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." (Tit. 2:11,12.) So far as salvation is concerned it reaches out only to those who believe (John 3:16), and who show their faith by obedience—to those who live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. "He

that *believeth* on the Son hath eternal life; but he that *obeyeth* not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36, ASV.)

It is a fearful thing to try to stretch the breadth of God's love too far—by adding "only" to "believe." Such an effort to broaden the love of God would nullify other commands which he has made essential to salvation. Christ taught that repentance is essential. "I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3.) Christ taught that baptism, as well as faith, is essential. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16.) Christ taught that we are to observe all his commands. (Matt. 28:20.) In all of his dealings with man God has never permitted him to take liberties with his word, but, to the contrary, he has warned both in the Old Testament and the New Testament that there is to be no deviation from his word, either by adding to it or by taking from it. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deut. 12:32.) The very end of God's revelation to man is the warning that we must respect his word exactly as he has given it. (Rev. 22:18,19.)

III. It measures the *depth* of God's love.

It reaches down to those guilty of the blackest sins, even to those who crucified the Son of God, to the abominably wicked Corinthians, to Saul of Tarsus, who in persecuting Christians—when once he had learned the truth—considered himself the chiefest of sinners. The blood of Christ is of such efficacy as to cleanse "from all sin." (1 John 1:7.)

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## MEASURING GOD'S LOVE

(continued from page 1)

God's love does not reach beyond death and into hell to save those who throughout life have spurned his grace and defied his will. It is a fearful thing to try to stretch the depth of God's love to provide a "second chance," or "baptism for the dead," or Purgatory as a means of salvation for those who lived and died in disobedience. "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.)

IV. It measures the *height* of God's love.

It is this dimension that may be so difficult for us to understand. Who can comprehend a love so great that it reaches down to lowly, sinful man and offers to him the joys and felicities of eternal life in the heavenly home, in the very abode of God himself, perfect in his power and wisdom and holiness?

Recognizing the dimensions of God's love, will you obey the gospel that you may be the recipient of it in this short life, and then in the life that *knows* no end in the Father's eternal home?—B.N.

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## MEN OF CONVICTIONS

(continued from page 4)

approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

2. Do not allow prejudice, tradition, emotion, crowds, big preachers or big churches to confuse and blind you to the truth.

3. Learn to take the Bible and support your convictions.

4. Do not be weaklings concerning your convictions. Resolve, "I shall not be, I shall not be moved"—not until the Bible proves I am wrong. Do not be ashamed of them. Sandy Koufax, a Jew, was not ashamed to refuse to pitch on one of their "holy days."

5. Do not encourage and support doctrines and practices you know to be **contrary** to your Bible-based convictions.

6. Do not drop them when you begin courting or when you go to college.—Route 3, Box 175-A, Athens, Alabama 35611.

## GOD'S PLAN OF PARDON

(continued from page 5)

body of Christ and thus brought *into* Christ. (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-6.) Then he must henceforth yield his total self to a life of service to the Master. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18.)

The Divine side of our salvation (the Saviour, the Spirit, and the Scriptures) will never fail. The human side depends on you and me. Have you given genuine obedience to the Lord who can pardon your sins? If not, your sins are still with you and will cause you to perish eternally.—2710 21st Ave. South, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

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## LACK OF CONFIDENCE

—THE BESETTING SIN

R. L. Whiteside

The besetting sin of the human family is a *lack of confidence in God!*—manifested in every kind of departure from the word of God. If our confidence in God were what it should be, we should never want to turn aside from His Way.

Eve lacked confidence in God, and so she followed the devil; Adam lacked confidence in God, and so he followed his wife. Why did Abel do what God said, and why did not Cain do what God said? Abel had confidence enough in God to follow his commands; Cain did not. No man today would depart from the plain Word of God if he had full confidence in God; and the elders of Israel would not have asked for a king, had they not lacked confidence in God's Way.—via *The Challenger*, Red Bay.

## "THE LAW OF FAITH"

(continued from page 3)

unseen faith, and without blessing. Only a working, moving, obedient faith will bring us God's blessings of grace.

### "Boasting Is Excluded"

Some erroneously conclude that if anything is required of the sinner then salvation is not by grace, and that the saved person would have reason to "boast." However, in our text of Romans 3:27 Paul declares that "the law of faith" rules out boasting.

The God of grace has laid down in His "Law of Faith" certain requirements which will bring certain blessings. By our submitting to His *law* we receive the blessings of His grace, and *have nothing of which to boast!*—"Boasting Is Excluded."

Noah built an ark, to the saving of eight souls from the flood; but he had nothing of which to boast, for he had only followed God's wisdom. In Luke 17:10 Jesus says that when men do God's commandments they should conclude "we are *unprofitable* servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

God has, according to His wisdom, set forth in the "law of faith" a plan of salvation which has "made foolish the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor. 1:20), and thus when man obtains His blessings by submitting to that law, he knows that "no flesh should glory (boast) in his presence." (1 Cor. 1:29.)

### "Examine Yourselves"

In 2 Corinthians 13:5 the inspired writer urges, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith...." You can, by comparing your behavior with "the law of faith," determine whether you are "in the faith." You can by this determine whether your life now pleases God; and if not, what you "lack yet."

You can become a "child of God by faith" (Gal. 3:26), "walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7), be "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10), and receive "the crown of life" when this life is over—and when you shall have done this you will have nothing of which to *boast*—but shall then truly know the "Amazing Grace" of God!—P. O. Box 339, Red Bay, Alabama 35582.

# WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE? ✓

Curtis E. Flatt

In Exodus 32:26 a very interesting question is asked: "Who is on the Lord's side?" At the time this was asked, a rich period in Israel's history was in the making. Moses had been called back to Egypt to deliver his people from bondage. He and Aaron had been before Pharaoh time and again in behalf of the people. God had used Moses to bring plagues upon the Egyptians to change their attitude toward the Israelites. Moses had led the people to the wilderness, across the Red Sea, and up to the place where the Law of Moses was given. God had called Moses up into the mountain to receive the ten commandments. While he was there, the people, with Aaron's help had made them a golden calf to worship. God sent Moses back down to the people who had corrupted themselves. He found them dancing naked in worship to this idol thus violating the first two of the ten commandments which he then had in his hand. After disposing of the calf, Moses sought to separate between the true and false followers. He stood in the gate of the camp with this word upon his mouth: "Who is on the Lord's side?" Only the Levites were on his side. This is still a pertinent question. Let us consider it.

## Not Everybody

In considering who may or may not be on the Lord's side, let it first be understood that not everybody is on the Lord's side. Many are against him. Jesus said that many were going another way. "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.) The Lord forever settles this. Many are not on the Lord's side. Who is?

## Not Everyone Who Thinks He Is

Not everyone who thinks he is on the Lord's side actually is on his side. People know that they believe on the Lord and thereby assume that they

are on his side. They mean to be on his side. They think they are on his side because they believe in him. However, all of us know that there are certain movements or projects of men in which we believe and even support in our hearts, but we are not a part of them unless we do whatever is required to be a part of them. The same thing is true with being on the Lord's side. Believing in him is not enough to put us on his side. King Agrippa believed. Paul knew that he did. But Agrippa was not on the Lord's side. (Acts 26:27.)

People may be religious, even very religious, and think they are therefore on the Lord's side. Cornelius was very religious. He was a devout man. He feared God with all his house. He gave much alms to the people. He prayed to God alway. He was very religious. (Acts 10:2.) But he was not on the Lord's side. Peter had this revealed unto him and proceeded to tell him words whereby he and his house could be saved. (Acts 11:14.)

People may obey the gospel, have thereby remission of their sins, and be added to the Lord's church, and then still come to a period when they are not on the Lord's side. To a group of church members like that Jesus sent this message. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15,16.) Were they on the Lord's side?

## The Sons Of Levi Were

Moses found that the sons of Levi were on the Lord's side. Why? The implication is that they had done what the Lord commanded. That is what it takes to be on the Lord's side in the Christian dispensation. Jesus, himself, said this: "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." (Matt. 7:21.) Those who do his commandments are on his side. Jesus told his disciples: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14.) John wrote:

"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him." (1 John 3:24.) In the closing scene of the Bible we read of the one who has a proper relationship with Jesus—one who is on his side. "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.) People who do what the Lord tells them to do are on the Lord's side.

## We Are On One Side Or The Other

We are either on the Lord's side or we are against him. Many people would rather be neutral. They have no desire to oppose the Lord. Neither do they really want to do what he says. They would rather not be involved. But none can do that. We are either on his side or else we are against him. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matt. 12:30.) This was what Jesus, himself, had to say about the matter.

## Are You On The Lord's Side?

Are you on the Lord's side? You can tell! It is not that difficult a matter to know. You can tell if you believe in Jesus. (Acts 16:30,31.) You can tell if you have repented of your sins. (Acts 17:30.) You can tell if you have confessed your faith in Christ. (Romans 10:9,10.) You can tell whether or not you have been baptized for the remission of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21.) These are commanded. These are all acts of intelligence which any of us can assuredly know. None of it is left up to feelings. Once having gotten on the Lord's side you can tell if you are being faithful to the cause you have espoused. (Rev. 2:10.)

I again say that you can tell if you are on the Lord's side. Are you?—1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Alabama 35208.

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Some men think they are saints because they are selective in their sins.



## THE COST OF *NOT* BELIEVING

Christ made plain the cost of discipleship—the cost of believing. “And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” (Luke 9:57,58.) Jesus was letting the man know that if he followed him, he could not expect great earthly rewards, that there was a certain cost to discipleship. On another occasion he said, “And whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:27,33.) Discipleship requires cross-bearing and sacrifice. It requires putting the kingdom before all else. (Matt. 6:33.)

But, on the other hand, we should figure the cost of *not* believing.

### Examples Of The Cost Of Not Believing

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews a long list of the faithful is to be found, but Adam's name is not there. God gave to him a paradise and made provision for his happiness and well-being in every way. “And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is *pleasant* to the sight, and *good for food*; The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” (Gen. 2:9.) Because of lack of faith, resulting in disobedience, Adam forfeited this beautiful and fruitful place for a world of work and woe. (Gen. 3.) Adam and Eve paid a fearful price for *not* believing.

Moses was a faithful servant of God, but on one occasion God told him and Aaron that they did not be-

lieve in him. This was in the wilderness when God told Moses to speak to the rock that water might come forth to quench the thirst of the people. Instead of doing exactly as God told him, Moses said to the people, “Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?” and he smote the rock twice. The water came forth abundantly, and the people drank, but God said to Moses and Aaron, “Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.” (Num. 20:12.) It is undeniably evident from this passage that faith and obedience are inseparable. When Moses disobeyed, God said that he did not believe. When people believe, they do exactly what God says. Their faith is demonstrated in obedience. Later God showed the promised land to Moses and said, “I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.” (Deut. 34:4.)

Adam and Moses are not the only ones who constitute examples of the cost of not believing; all unbelievers must pay a fearful price. “But the fearful and *unbelieving*, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth, with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Rev. 21:8.) The cost of not believing is condemnation. “But he that believeth not is condemned already.” (John 3:18.)

### Wisdom Of Believing

God has always given sufficient evidence and reason for faith upon the part of man. Without exception his word has been proved true over and over again. It has been thoroughly

confirmed by fulfilled prophecies, miracles and mighty works. It is his word, which is truth (John 17:17), that is the basis of faith: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17.)

The cost of not believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is a price too great for anyone to pay. The evidence that he is the Son of God is so abundant, is so strong that it cannot be successfully denied. Read Luke 1, Matthew 1, Matthew 14:33, Matthew 16:16,17, John 1:33,34, John 11:17, Matthew 27:54. If it turns out, then, that Christ is indeed the Son of God, the unbeliever has everything to lose, for he must stand in judgment before the very one whom he has not believed and whom he has denied. All judgment has been committed to the Son. (John 5:22.)

The cost of *not* believing that baptism is essential to our salvation is a price too great for one to pay. Jesus said that it was a prerequisite to salvation: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16.) Salvation is the result of obedience to all the conditions required by God. Here we see in this passage, faith and baptism—not faith alone, not baptism alone, for both are set forth as essential to the desired result—salvation. Condemnation is the result of disrespect for and disobedience to any requirement of God, even one requirement of God. “But he that believeth not shall be damned.” “But he that believeth not is condemned already.” (John 3:18.) One who believes will obey all commands. He will gladly be baptized that he might be saved. In fact, his faith is the reason for his being baptized, for human judgment would not lead him to follow this course. Strangely, those who are so

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them that obey him." In Revelation 22:14 we read, "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." True, "God is not willing that any should perish..." and He has provided salvation for "the whole world," but that salvation will be enjoyed by only those who obey His will. (cf. Matt. 7:21.)

#### Law—And Obedience To It Does Not Nullify Grace!

In Romans 3:27 we read, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." As we have seen in Ephesians 2:8f, salvation is by God's grace, through man's faith. The Roman Christians had been "justified by faith," through which they had "access into God's grace" (Rom. 5:1f), but we see just when this justification came, as recorded in Romans 6:1-18. They ceased to be servants of sin and became servants of righteousness when they obeyed from the heart the will of God...and so may you be!

#### Final Judgment—By The Law Of God

John said (Rev. 20:12), "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books (God's law-cgm) according to their works." Jesus cautions (John 2:48), "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken (God's law, through Christ cgm), the same shall judge him in the last day."

Dear reader, may we urge you to submit to "The Law Of God," that you may be the recipient of His grace, and be prepared to be judged by His law when this life is over!—1744 Steiner Ave., S.W., Birmingham, Alabama 35211.

"When brethren get where they cannot talk like the New Testament, then they no longer think like it. If they thought like it, they would talk like it talks."—James P. Miller, Franklin Road Sermon Series, Vol. 5.

#### THE COST OF NOT BELIEVING

(continued from page 1)

vocal in claiming so much faith are often the ones who repudiate baptism as being essential to salvation. In their "great" faith they have made quite a study of how to get around Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38 and other passages of scripture showing clearly that the Savior of men has placed baptism as an essential condition in his wonderful plan of salvation.

It is not enough for one to believe in and submit to baptism as only a condition of church membership. In that case he does not believe what Christ said: he does not believe that baptism is essential to salvation. Then, he does not believe what Peter said on the day of Pentecost, when he spoke as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance—Acts 2:38, that baptism is for (unto) the remission of sins—or what Peter said in 1 Peter 3:21. Then, he does not believe what Paul said in Romans 6:3, that baptism is into Christ, into the death of Christ, wherein he shed his precious, atoning blood. You can readily see, then, why the Lord would say, "But he that believeth not shall be damned," for the one who believes not rejects passage after passage, places interpretations on passages to justify what he wants to believe—and all the while calls this *faith*.

If it turns out that baptism is essential to salvation the unbeliever has everything to lose, for he will have to stand in judgment before the very one who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16.)—B.N.

#### "LOOKING INTO THE LAW OF LIBERTY"

(continued from page 3)

answer which the scriptures gave them. We must be careful as to our motive. Why do we look and search? Is it to know what to do to be blessed of God or for some other reason? Only those with the right motive will be blessed.

Please remember! The man who looks in the right place with the right attitude and the right action will find something which is of real value.—1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Ala. 35208.

#### ARE OUR PREMISES SOUND?

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man, the publican and the thief on the cross were never joined or married to Christ in a spiritual union; because this was something that did not take place until He was raised from the dead. Hebrews 9:16,17 shows us that the will or testament of Christ did not go into effect until after He died. So those living before the cross were not under that will and testament.

#### Premise IV

In the Lord's work we must not add to or take from the word of God. We should use it as a pharmacist fills a prescription, or as a contractor follows the plans of the architect. The doctor does not need to write, "Don't add paregoric, or don't add digitalis." The pharmacist and the contractor will not add these.

This premise is established by such passages as Revelation 22:18,19, 2 Timothy 1:13, 2 John 9,10 and 2 Timothy 3:16,17.—Rt. 3, Box 175A, Athens, Alabama 35611.

#### HOW IS YOUR T.V. WORKING?

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burden, comfort in his sorrow, and joy to press forward...where does he go?

The answer is the Heavenly Father. The child of God can call on the Father in prayer and pour out his soul to Him. He will understand if you but have a penitent heart. Yes, when sin enters our life, something *must* be done to correct the situation or our picture to the world becomes distorted.

How is your television working? Yes, my friend, what condition is your spirit in this very day? What sort of an image of Christ do you show to the lost world? In that great day of judgment you will answer to God for how you are now living. Are you ready?—2710 21st Ave. S., Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

"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."—James A. Allen, F.R.S.S., V.9.



## WHO NEEDS CHRIST? ✓

Many have thought that they did not need Christ. "His own" did not need him, for, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John 1:11.) The people of Nazareth, where he grew up, did not need him, for they sought to kill him. When he read in the synagogue a prophecy from Isaiah, and applied it to himself, they were filled with wrath, and thrust him out of the city, and sought to cast him headlong from the brow of the hill upon which the city was built. (Luke 4:16-30.) The scribes, Pharisees, elders, chief priests did not need him, for they too sought at different times to destroy him. The people of Jerusalem did not need him, for his plea to them was of no avail: "O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (Matt. 23:37.) Even some of his own disciples did not need him, for they "went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:66.)

### Everyone Needs Christ

Those who thought that they did not, those who would not receive him, those who sought to destroy him, those who turned back from him, all of them desperately needed Christ.

The *devoutly religious* need him. When Peter preached to people on the day of Pentecost, he was preaching to very religious people, people who had travelled great distances from many countries to be in Jerusalem for the feast of the Pentecost, people who are described as "devout men out of every nation under heaven." And yet these devoutly religious people were guilty of sin and in need of salvation. They no doubt were satisfied and secure in their religion until Peter's preaching

pricked their hearts and convinced them of their sin and error. It was then that they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" These people who were so devoutly religious under the law of Moses were told to repent and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:37,38.)

The *morally good* need Christ. Cornelius was a good man, "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always"; and yet he was told to send to Joppa for Peter who would tell him words whereby he and his should be saved. (Acts 10:2; 11:13,14.) Though morally upright, he needed Christ. He needed to obey the gospel, God's power to save. (Rom. 1:16.)

The *dreadfully wicked* need Christ. Even in a morally corrupt heathen world Corinth was noted for its wickedness. When Paul came to that place, he was determined to bring the gospel of Christ to them, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2.) The gospel reached into the hearts of some in this evil place, for Paul said, after mentioning a long list of sinful people, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) He further said that they were saved by the gospel. (1 Cor. 15:1,2.)

The so-called "*wise*," the *rich*, the *poor*, *all people* need Christ. (1 Cor. 1; Matt. 19.) All need Christ because all need salvation. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) "And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21.)

### Why All Need Christ

1. We need his *gospel*. It is the power which God has provided for our salvation from sin. "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." (Rom. 1:16.)

2. We need his *blood*. "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.) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:18,19.)

3. We need his *church*. He purchased it with his precious blood (Acts 20:28), and he is the savior of it. (Eph. 5:23; 1:22,23.) It is that which will be delivered up to God when the end comes. "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.)

4. We need his *example*. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Pet. 2:21,22.)

5. We need his *great principles of conduct* to govern our behavior. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in

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## WHO NEEDS CHRIST?

(continued from page 1)

danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire." (Matt. 5:21,22.) "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:27,28.)

6. We need the *love* of Christ. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.) Without this love that caused him to lay down his life for us there would be no hope of salvation.

7. We need his *intercession*. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25.) "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous: and he is the propitiation of our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:1,2.)

Though many may not realize it, we all need Christ, for only he can supply these things so vital to our present and to our eternal well-being.—B.N.

The only instrument that Samuel used, or that God permitted him to use, in trying to turn the Israelites from their evil course, was the power of truth. The only instrument that we may legitimately use in keeping others from going astray is the sword of the spirit, the power of the truth. We can't use pressure; we can't use "politics." We can't use anything **except** teaching and persuasion based on the word of God. Those who will not be converted by the truth cannot be converted. When the Israelites could not be stopped in their mad rush for a king by God's word, then God told Samuel to let them go ahead. So God doesn't want us to use anything **today** in trying to get people to do right except the power of His word in teaching and persuading.—Harris J. Dark, *Give Us A King*, Franklin Road Sermon Series, Vol. I.

## WHY BE BAPTIZED?

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not verbalization (in the sense of empty claims).

### You Have The Opportunity

Do you realize that the present is the only opportunity that you have? The past is gone forever and cannot be recalled. The future is yet to come and, in fact, may never come for you or for any. The time that you learn the Lord's will on this important matter is the time for obeying it. Do not put off this urgent act of obedience. You can put off material affairs, and should, in order to render your obedience to the Lord so that you might claim all of the benefits promised you in the word of the Lord. Will you not use this occasion for being baptized?—Route 6, Box 207, Athens, Alabama 35611.

### "THE GRACE OF GOD"

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boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but *by the law of faith.*" Anything man does *by faith* (the instructions of God, Rom. 10:17) gives him no reason for boasting over the blessing he receives in return!

### None Saved, But By God's Grace

Although the Bible does not teach that salvation is "wholly of grace," it very clearly teaches that every accountable person who fails to avail himself of God's unmerited favor, through his *obedience by faith* (cf. Rom. 5:1f; 6:17f), shall be lost! (Consider Romans 1:16; 6:1-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.)

If you would be saved—from your sins here, and from the bottomless pits of hell in the world to come—then you must *do His will*. *Believing* that Jesus is the Christ (John 8:24), *repent* of your sins (Luke 13:3), *confess* your faith in Him before men (Matt. 10:32f), and *be baptized* "unto the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16.) Then, as a child of God, "be thou faithful unto death," and He will *give* you the "crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.)

In all of this—acting by faith—you will avail yourself of the "amazing grace" of God, come into His favor,

## HOW DOES GOD WORK?

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into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven."

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, 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..."

Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation *unto all them that obey him....*"

What must I obey to become a child of God? Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...." (Mark 16:16.) On the day of Pentecost when the multitude cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "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 2:37,38.) Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus, "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.)

There are people who actually seem to dictate to God how he shall work in their lives. They *demand* that God come down and save them. They *bargain* with God to serve him provided he gives them some tangible sign of his presence. In short, many people want to *set the conditions* that God must meet if he wants to save them!

God has spelled out clearly in his revealed word how He works with men and what His will is. The question is, are you going to be content to make God's will your will and be obedient to His commandments? Or will you vainly imagine your own way you think God should work and reject His word and give up hope of eternal life? If you believe on Jesus Christ, then repent of your sins and be baptized in order to have your sins washed away, thus becoming a child of God.—907 Carson Lane, Jacksonville, Alabama 36265.

and have nothing of which to boast; but to fail to meet these divine requirements is to reject His grace, and condemn your eternal soul!—1744 Steiner Ave., S.W., Birmingham, Alabama 35211.



## "YE KNOW NOT WHAT YE ASK"

"Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask." (Matt. 20:20-22.) Their improper petition was prompted by a misunderstanding of the mission of Christ and the nature of his kingdom. Apparently James and John and their mother had in mind that the kingdom of Christ was to be an earthly kingdom, and in view of the establishment of such a kingdom they desired prominent places.

Even though they might not have understood the true nature of the kingdom of Christ, they could have remembered the teaching which Christ had given in regard to humility and the way to true greatness in his kingdom. Before they made their request, when Jesus and his disciples came to Capernaum, he asked them, "What was it ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" But they held their peace, for they had disputed among themselves who should be greatest. "And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all." (Mark 9:33-35.) After they made their request, he taught the same lesson, "And Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto,

but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:25-28.)

Improper petitions are made to God today because of a misunderstanding of the will of God. Later the same apostle John said, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." (1 John 5:14.)

I. Some ask for God to perform miracles today when actually miracles have long since served their intended purpose. God confirmed his word through the use of miracles, but when once the word was perfected, there was no further need for miracles. To claim such a need today would be to discredit the "perfect law of liberty." (Jas. 1:25.) "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16:19, 20.) "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:3, 4.)

The apostle Paul, discussing spiritual gifts in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters of First Corinthians, shows that when once the miracles had served their purpose they were to cease. "Charity never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part

shall be done away." (1 Cor. 13:8-10.) Since the gospel has been given in its perfection, and will completely and perfectly furnish one unto every good work, there is no further need for the spiritual gifts to confirm the word of the apostles and early disciples. (Jas. 1:25; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.)

II. Some ask for the baptism of the Holy Spirit today when the baptism of the Holy Spirit has long since served its purpose. Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would be with them to bring to their remembrance that which he had taught them. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:25.) Again he promised them, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." (John 16:13.) Before Christ ascended into heaven to return to the Father, he promised the apostles, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.... But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:5-8.) A few days later this promise was fulfilled, as seen in the very next chapter of Acts: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they

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## "YE KNOW NOT WHAT YE ASK"

(continued from page 1)

were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4.)

Thus through the fulfilling of the promise of Christ to the apostles, they were empowered to preach the word so that people gathered in Jerusalem from many different nations could every man understand what was being said, even in his own language. (Acts 2:5,6.) Later Cornelius and his house, the first Gentile converts, were also baptized in the Holy Spirit. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then Peter said, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we." (Acts 10:44-47.) After when Peter gave a report to the Jerusalem church about his taking the gospel to the Gentiles, he said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:15-17.)

The New Testament record shows that the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred twice--when the apostles were baptized on the day of Pentecost in keeping with Christ's promise, and when Cornelius and his house were baptized in the same way as the apostles "at the beginning," the day of Pentecost. On both occasions the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to bear witness of the truth, to make possible the preaching of the gospel to both Jew and Gentile. Now that this purpose has been fulfilled one would be asking in vain for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

(To be continued next month in Part II)

## WHY DO PEOPLE SIN?

(continued from page 6)

that, whereas they "did run well," they had been "hindered," and had been "removed from him who called (them) into the grace of Christ." (Gal. 1:6ff; 5:7.) The apostle Peter warns, "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you..." (2 Pet. 2:1.) John cautions, "...believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1.)

This danger reminds us of the importance of CAREFUL EXAMINATION of "every teaching"! As the Bereans of old (Acts 17:11) we need to "search the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." We need to "watch and be sober" (1 Thes. 5:6); be on guard lest Satan entrap us by deception!

Then others are deceived into thinking they can "sow to the flesh," and yet "reap of the Spirit." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!" (Gal. 6:7.) We SHALL reap; and we shall reap AS WE HAVE SOWN! If we sow in sin, we shall reap the "wages" of sin!

### Conclusion

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# WHY DO PEOPLE SIN?

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

When we consider the RESULTS or FRUITS of some behavior we are made to wonder WHY people behave in that particular manner. This is certainly true with SIN! The importance of our subject is indicated in that to which SIN will eventually lead. God, through Ezekiel (Ezek. 18:20), says "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The inspired apostle Paul says in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death..."; and we know that the "death" in each of these passages is not PHYSICAL death; for even the righteous have an appointment with physical death (Heb. 9:27); but it must refer to "the second death" of Revelation 21:8. In view of this, it would seem that every accountable creature would determine NOT to sin. But the apostle says, "...all have sinned...." (Rom. 3:23.)

Then WHY do people sin? I believe there are at least five basic reasons why men sin.

## Some Sin Because of Ignorance

God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hos. 4:6.) The apostle Paul said of his people, the Jews, "...they being IGNORANT of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:1f.) You might question the WHY for the Jews' ignorance; but there is no argument but that ignorance, in some sense, kept them from submitting to the righteousness (commandments -- Ps. 119:172) of God.

The idolatry of the Athenians (Acts 17) was at least to some degree attributed to ignorance. (v. 23.) But then we see God's attitude toward such in Paul's warning, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (v. 30.)

More teaching, preaching and studying would help to eliminate this source of sin. There are many people in religious error who would not be if they would, as the Bereans (Acts 17:11), "search the Scriptures daily...."

## Unbelief Causes Sin

Although the source of FAITH is the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), there are many people who KNOW what the Word says (they are not IGNORANT); but they simply do not BELIEVE it! God said to Moses, "Because ye BELIEVED ME NOT, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel..." (Num. 20:12.) Moses KNEW God said "Speak" to the rock; but he STRUCK the rock. He, as Cain, Nadab and Abihu, and millions of people today, just did not BELIEVE he had to go "strictly by the Word of God"!

The Jews failed to enter into the land of promise, not because of ignorance of God's commands, but "because of UNBELIEF." (Heb. 3:19.) Some of Jesus' own disciples were characterized by "unbelief" (Mk. 16:14), and many of His disciples of today evidence the same!

## Pleasure Promotes Sin

No one who gives fair judgment will conclude that there is no pleasure in sin. Moses, according to the inspired writer (Heb. 11:25) refused the "pleasures of sin." Yes, it is but "for a season," and the price ("wage"--Rom. 6:23) certainly makes him a fool who gives himself over to pleasure; but this is, in our time and affluent society, one of the major enticements to sin. In the parable of the sower (Luke 8) our Lord said the "rocky ground" hearer is one who allows "cares, riches and PLEASURE" to choke out the fruit-bearing that would otherwise result. It is because of this brief "pleasure" that people become fornicators, gamblers, drunkards, "and such like." (Gal. 5:19-21.) But Moses compared the "pleasures" with the "recompence of reward" and cast his lot with the people of God! He may have been tempted by the "pleasure" to sin, but he, unlike so many today, knew it was not worth the PRICE he would have to pay.

## Love for Money

Money, within itself, is NOT evil, as some have concluded; but the inspired apostle says, "For the LOVE of money is the root of all kinds of evil." (1 Tim. 6:19--ASV.)

We have inspired record of a number of cases where the love for money was the root of evil. Peter says (2 Pet. 2:15) that for the "hire of wrongdoing" some "forsake the right way," as Balaam. Judas betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen would rather let their men continue in idolatry than lose the wealth they obtained from their trade of shrine making, should they not obey the truth preached by Paul (Acts 19.)

Surely there are multitudes in our time who for the love of material things neglect their eternal souls, as did the rich man of Luke 12. For money we walk in the way of sin, which will lead us into torments, where all their works will be in vain, even if they could "take it with them," they could not obtain for them one moment of relief from agony!

## Deception

The first sin committed by the human race was attributed to deception. Through subtlety the serpent deceived Eve (2 Cor. 11:3); and ever since that time this has been one of Satan's most effective devices.

We can deceive ourselves. This is the case when we judge ourselves to be better than we really are. The apostle Paul warns, "...not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly..." (Phil. 2:12:3); and again, "For if a man deceives himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." (1 Cor. 13:6:3.) The Laodiceans had deceived themselves into thinking they were "rich, and...have need of nothing," but the Lord considered them "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. 3:17.) This points up the importance of SELF-EXAMINATION!

We can be deceived by others, especially by FALSE TEACHERS ("ministers" of Satan). "Beware of false prophets..." (Matt. 7:15) is a warning of our Lord. "Take heed that ye do not deceive one another. The Galatians had been deceived by perverters of the gospel.

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## "YE KNOW NOT WHAT YE ASK"

(continued from page 1)

were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4.)

Thus through the fulfilling of the promise of Christ to the apostles, they were empowered to preach the word so that people gathered in Jerusalem from many different nations could every man understand what was being said, even in his own language. (Acts 2:5, 6.) Later Cornelius and his house, the first Gentile converts, were also baptized in the Holy Spirit. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then Peter said, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we." (Acts 10:44-47.) Later when Peter gave a report to the Jerusalem church about his taking the gospel to the Gentiles, he said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:15-17.)

The New Testament record shows that the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred twice--when the apostles were baptized on the day of Pentecost in keeping with Christ's promise, and when Cornelius and his house were baptized in the same way as the apostles "at the beginning," the day of Pentecost. On both occasions the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to bear witness of the truth, to make possible the preaching of the gospel to both Jew and Gentile. Now that this purpose has been fulfilled one would be asking in vain for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

(To be continued next month in Part II)

## WHY DO PEOPLE SIN?

(continued from page 6)

that, whereas they "did run well," they had been "hindered," and had been "removed from him who called (them) into the grace of Christ." (Gal. 1:6ff; 5:7.) The apostle Peter warns, "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you..." (2 Pet. 2:1.) John cautions, "...believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1.)

This danger reminds us of the importance of CAREFUL EXAMINATION of "every teaching"! As the Bereans of old (Acts 17:11) we need to "search the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." We need to "watch and be sober" (1 Thes. 5:6); be on guard lest Satan entrap us by deception!

Then others are deceived into thinking they can "sow to the flesh," and yet "reap of the Spirit." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7.) We SHALL reap; and we shall reap AS WE HAVE SOWN! If we sow in sin, we shall reap the "wages" of sin!

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## "WHEN THOU ART CONVERTED" ✓

Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may 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.)

I. When people are converted, they are changed. The American Standard Version renders the passage, "when once thou art turned again, Christ prayed that Peter might be converted, that he might be turned, that he might be changed from weakness to strength, from denial--which Jesus had prophesied--to steadfastness."

1. In conversion that results in the salvation of the soul one's mind must be changed by faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17.) On the day of Pentecost Peter and the other apostles were accused by some of being full of new wine. These people had an ugly, hostile attitude toward the apostles. Peter proved that they were not under the influence of wine, but that all that was happening that day was in fulfillment of prophecy and according to God's will. Peter further proved to the people that they were guilty of crucifying the one whom God had made both Lord and Christ. When they heard this, knowing that Peter's charge was true, they were pricked in their hearts. Hostility had now turned to humility, anger to anxiety, wrath to willingness to do God's will. When the great facts of the gospel were presented, their minds were changed by faith. (Acts 2:13-38.)

2. In conversion one's practice is changed by repentance. Repentance is a change of mind brought about by godly sorrow and that leads to a change in one's conduct. Paul said that godly sorrow works repentance. (2 Cor. 7:10.) Jesus said that the son who told his father that he would not work in the

vineyard afterward repented. (Matt. 21:28, 29.) He changed his mind and went and worked. Before conversion one might engage in activities not becoming to a child of God, but in repentance one turns from those practices to walk after the example of Christ.

3. In conversion one's state is changed by baptism. One's mind might be changed by faith, and his practice by repentance, but he is still in the state of sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) When, however, one is baptized, his state is changed, his sins remitted. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38.) Before baptism one is in the kingdom of darkness, but after baptism one is in the kingdom of God's dear Son. Paul said that he was delivered from the power of darkness and was translated into the kingdom of his dear Son. (Col. 1:13.) Before baptism one is out of Christ, but when one is baptized, he is baptized into Christ, where is every spiritual blessing. (Eph. 1:3.) "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. . . . 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. 6:3, 17, 18.) When one obeys from the heart the form of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ by being baptized, he is made free from sin--his state is changed from guilt to pardon.

II. When people are converted, they are constant in the Lord's service. They constantly study the word of God. When they first obey the gospel, they realize that they are newborn babes in Christ and need to feed upon the sincere milk of the word that they may

grow thereby unto salvation. (1 Pet. 2:2.) They constantly worship. They do not forsake the assembling (Heb. 10:25), but, like David, are glad to go into the house of the Lord. (Ps. 122:1.) They constantly pray. They pray without ceasing. (1 Thess. 5:17.) They want to talk to their Father and do talk to him every day. They constantly work in going about doing good in the name of Christ and in helping to spread the kingdom through teaching and preaching the word. There is so much work that needs to be done, and the truly converted will constantly put their heart and their hand to it. The building needs to be cleaned. The yard needs to be kept. Classes need to be taught. Visits need to be made. Tracts need to be distributed. The desolate need to be encouraged. The unfortunate need to be helped.

III. When people are converted, they are charged to strengthen the brethren. "And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The converted strengthen their brethren by their good example, by their great faith and courage, by their boundless zeal. Peter answered the charge of Christ. He set a great example of faith and courage. He stood forth before the enemies of Christ on the day of Pentecost, proclaimed to them the gospel, and impressed upon them their guilt and their need to do God's will. (Acts 2.) Later, even though he was charged by the enemies of Christ not to speak any more in the name of Christ, his mouth could not be stopped. He said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20.) Being let go by the council, he further strengthened the brethren by praying with them that they might speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:23-31.)

Partial conversion is a tragedy--  
 (continued on page 7)

## "WHEN THOU ART CONVERTED"

(continued from page 1)

when the mind is not fully changed by faith, when the practices are not fully changed from the world, when one is not constant in his service to the Lord. Jesus told about an unclean spirit going out of a man and seeking another place, but the unclean spirit said, "I will return into my house from whence I came out." When he came back, he found the house empty, swept, and garnished. It had not been filled with good. Then the evil spirit went out and found seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they all entered into the man. Jesus said that the last state of the man was worse than the first. (Matt. 12:43-45.) Jesus was applying the teaching to the wicked generation of his day, but even so it shows the plight of the partially converted.

When one is truly converted, he will be changed by the gospel, he will be constant in his service to the Lord, and he will be a source of strength and encouragement to his brethren.

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## THANK YOU

(continued from page 2)

their willingness to share their knowledge of the word of God, we could not have published the paper. By writing they have multiplied their usefulness in the service of Christ, for every article has gone into the hands of several thousand people. Since the paper goes throughout the United States and into Canada, we would like to have sound and godly men from each section of the country sending articles to us, articles that fit the design which we have for it.

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## BLINDNESS

Physical blindness is tragic because it shuts out the beauties of the heavens which declare the glory of God and of the earth which shows his handiwork. Spiritual blindness is far more tragic because it shuts out truth, by which men may be made free from sin. (John 3:32.) By closing their eyes to truth the spiritually blind are actually blind to their own best interest.

When we open our eyes to truth, we so open our eyes to our own needs, to the fields white unto the harvest, and to the glories of the heavenly home.

## SALVATION

(continued from page 3)

these feelings become his constant companions. This fact need not continue to be true, however. Even in the garden our merciful Father held forth the hope for a day when these enemies of peace and happiness would be done away. (Gen. 3:15.) In a very real sense, everyone born into this world is an Adam. You were once as sinlessly perfect and pure as Adam was before his fall. The meanest, vilest criminal that ever lived was once as pure as the new-fallen snow. Actually, each of us has his own personal fall. Adam's fall is ours only in the premonition his fall gave that his children would be no better than he. But, as I said, each of us, when born, has the same chance Adam did; and we, like Adam, have forfeited our lives. Such has been the case of all men except one; and in that one is the only hope man has for salvation. Jesus was sinlessly perfect. He needed not to die for his own sins, for he had none. He died for sinful men to save them. It is not for man's finite mind to fathom the depths of God's mercy and redemption. It is enough to know that we are bought with a price, redeemed, that our sins have been washed away, remitted, blotted out, purged, atoned for, and expiated, that Christ tasted of death for every man, that he through death brought to nought him who had the power of death. (1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 1:7; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 2 Pet. 1:9; Rom. 5:11; Heb. 2:9, 14.) How fruitless to discuss the diverse and speculative theories men have advocated concerning the atonement when God has so richly and simply set forth the idea of the atonement and man's redemption. These are the things accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

## HOW SALVATION FREES US

The gospel is God's power unto salvation. But, how does it free us from the curse of sin? First, it strikes at the root by enabling the guilt of sin to be removed. The gospel itself does not actually forgive our sins, but it is the agent or means by which the blood or death of Christ forgives us of our sins. When sin is forgiven, the fact of guilt is blotted out for all past sins. With removal of the fact of guilt, the feeling of guilt also flees away. The burden

is lifted from man's shoulders. Since spiritual death is the result of sin and only of sin, when sin is remitted, death is no more; and man is truly made alive. (Eph. 2:1, 2.) Instead of anxiety he has the assurance of a son that his Father will provide if he seeks first the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 6:33.) By his obedience to the gospel, man moves from sorrow to joy, from fear to anticipation.

As you have read this article, have you been aware that you are either guilty, dead, anxious, sorrowful, and afraid--or forgiven, alive, content, blessed, and assured? My desire is that if you are caught in the toils of sin, you will avail yourself of the way of escape God has provided and know the peace that passeth understanding.

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## AND YE WOULD NOT

(continued from page 5)

world after understanding His will, it will be because "ye would not" render obedience to the loving Saviour. It will be because you "will not come" to Christ on His terms. They are plainly taught in His word. You can and should read, understand and obey them now. Your last opportunity may be nearer than you think!!!

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## OUR USE OF OLD TESTAMENT

(continued from page 6)

Lord. (Acts 2:47.) They were not required to burn incense, offer animal sacrifices, build an ark, keep the Sabbath or go to Jerusalem to worship; but they were required to render the same kind of OBEDIENCE as was required of Abraham, Noah or Moses. Those who had thus submitted to God's will--expressed in times past directly, as to Noah and Abraham, or through Moses, but now through HIS SON--turned to the NEW COVENANT to know what they were to do in worship, service and daily living. To the same WE must hearken if we would please our God and save our eternal souls.

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Esau bartered away his birthright for a dish of soup. Herod was willing to give away half of his kingdom for the sight of an immoral dance. The race of Esau still lives, men who sell their spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage--for the gratification of passion, for the acquisition of money, for the acclaim of men.

# "VAIN RELIGION"

Curtis E. Flatt

Even to think about discovering at the judgment that our religion is vain and has been vain is a most horrible thought. Yet, there is such a thing as vain religion. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James 1:26.)

The word "religion" is a word which refers to the externals of divine service. These externals may be genuine or they may be in vain. Even heathens may have the externals of divine service, thus religious. Some in Athens were religious but were not even acquainted with the God of the Bible. "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious (religious-ASV)." (Acts 17:22.) They had the externals but these were vain or worthless. The word "vain" means to be of no real value or importance, hence, worthless. Several things are said about vain things in the New Testament. Let us consider these.

## Not In Christ—Vain Religion

The religion of people who are not in Christ is said to be vain. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (behavior or manner of life) received by tradition from your fathers...." (1 Peter 1:18.) Before they had been redeemed, theirs was a vain way. After they were in Christ they had that which was real. (1 Peter 1:3-5.) One may be very religious but still not be in Christ. Cornelius is an excellent example of this. (Acts 10:1-3.) He was a devout man who feared God, but he was not a Christian. He had not yet been baptized into Christ where all spiritual blessings are. (Acts 10:48; Eph. 1:3.) People get into Christ when they are properly baptized. (Romans 6:3,4; Gal. 3:26,27.) Legion is the number of those who are religious but have not been baptized into Christ. The only possible conclusion is that their religion is vain. What a horrible thought!

## Believing But Not Doing— Vain Religion

People, who profess to believe but

do not do what is required, have a religion which is vain. Some people call this hypocrisy. The New Testament calls this vain religion, no matter what else it may be. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:20.) What makes that man vain? Is it not that he professes to believe but does not do that which is required? When men profess to believe that which is right and then do this, they are assured that their labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58.) This was the charge that Jesus made against his people, the Jews. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matt. 23:2,3.)

But, how about your religion, dear friend? Do we profess to believe the necessity of giving diligence to knowing the will of God? (2 Tim. 2:15.) Do we give this diligence or is our religion vain? Do we profess to believe that we have to obey Jesus? 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.) Do we really believe that we have to obey Jesus, or is our religion vain? We profess to believe that we must live godly and righteous lives. (James 1:17; Titus 2:11,12.) But, do we really try to do this, or is our religion vain? We profess to believe that Christians must love one another. (Heb. 13:1.) But is our religion pure or vain?

## Teaching Wrong Doctrine— Vain Religion

Jesus said that the religion of some people, during his lifetime, was vain because they taught for doctrine the commandments of men. (Matt. 15:8,9.) Each one ought to be extremely careful what he teaches, whether it be from the pulpit or at mother's knee. If it is not authorized of God in the New Testament, one spends his time and effort in vain when he teaches it. We ought all to investigate that which we believe as to whether or not it came

from God. Otherwise, it is vain, no matter how dear it may be to us. The admonition sent to the church at Corinth is timely for each one: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5.) If the religion of God's chosen people deteriorated to a religion which Christ called vain, what guarantee do you have that your religion is not vain, too? One has only one guarantee, and that is the application of the above quoted admonition.

## An Example

An example of vain religion is given in our text. One who does not bridle his tongue has a vain religion. The reason such religion is vain is that it disregards the requirements of the lawgiver and judge. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1 Peter 3:10-12.)

Following and practicing the religion of Christ is a serious matter. He set the standard. He requires that we obey. If we change the standard or fumble carelessly along the pathway of life, one day we will discover that it has all been in vain. What a horrible thought!—1349 45th Street, West, Birmingham, Alabama 35208.

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Post Office Box 488  
Russellville, Ala. 35653

JUNE 1975

Application to mail at second-class  
postage rates pending at Russellville, Ala

Editor: Billy Norris

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## QUITTERS

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...." (2 Tim. 4:10.) This is a sad statement, for Demas was one of promise. He was engaged in the Lord's work and associated in that work with one of the greatest of the Lord's servants, with the apostle Paul. He was with Paul when the apostle wrote the epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. (Col. 4:14; Phm. 24.) But by the time he wrote the second letter to Timothy Paul had to say, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." This would not only suggest that Demas had forsaken Paul but had also quit the service of Christ.

### Who Is A Quitter?

The word does not have a good connotation, for it suggests a shirker, even a coward. From the spiritual standpoint, it is one who quits assembling with God's people.

*In quitting the assembly he quits the Lord.* for Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20.)

*In quitting the assembly he quits the Lord's work.* Christ has given the responsibility to his people of carrying the gospel to others. (Mark 16:15.) But the one who quits assembling with God's people more than likely is going to feel little responsibility for teaching others that which can save their souls. Having obeyed the gospel at one time, he knows that it is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16.) He has had opportunity to know that every precious soul is worth more than all the world. (Mark 8:36.) But a quitter will hardly have concern for either the gospel or lost souls.

*In quitting the assembly he quits supporting the Lord's work.* Christians are told, "Now concerning the

collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. 16:1,2.) God's people are to support the work of the Lord by giving on the first day of the week as they have been prospered, but the quitter does not do this. He receives from the Lord, but he does not return to the Lord that which rightfully belongs to him. Everything belongs to God, for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof (1 Cor. 10:26), and yet God requires that only a reasonable portion be returned for his work. But the quitter does not return anything to carry on the Lord's work. He simply robs God. The Israelites robbed God and were cursed. (Mal. 3:8-10.) The thief cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9,10.)

*In quitting the assembly he quits the Lord's table.* And yet Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:24.) It is a communion with Christ, with his body and with his precious blood. (1 Cor. 10:16.) But this apparently makes little difference to the quitter.

*In quitting the assembly he quits the Lord's people.* He is not meeting with them to teach and admonish one another, to edify and to be edified. (Col. 3:16; Rom. 14:19.)

### Why Would One Quit?

At one time he pledged his complete allegiance to Christ with the confession, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:37.) The Christ to whom he pledged his loyalty has not changed. He is the same Christ who suffered and died for him, "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Heb. 13:8.) Nor has

the loving God, or the Holy Spirit changed. Why then would he want to turn his back on them?

There may be many excuses. "My job makes it hard for me to get there." "I don't care for the preacher." "They are not friendly." "The services are dull and draggy." There, however, is usually one basic reason why one quits: other interests have come in and filled the heart of the quitter, crowding out the desire, the faith, the courage that characterize every true, faithful child of God.

### What Are The Results Of Quitting?

1. The quitter joins a very large and undesirable crowd. Through the ages people have been turning away from the Lord. In Samuel's day God said in effect, "They have not quit you, Samuel; they have quit me. They have not rejected you; they have rejected me." (1 Sam. 8:7.) Some of Christ's own disciples "went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:66.) Judas Iscariot quit the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. (Matt. 26:14-16.) Christ said, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." (Matt. 26:24.) The quitter follows the crowd along with Demas.

2. The quitter joins Satan in opposing God's eternal purpose to save man. (Eph. 3:8-10.) The church as the "pillar and ground of the truth" has the responsibility of supporting and upholding the truth. (1 Tim. 3:14,15.) Though a member of the church, he really is on Satan's side and shames the truth by his own defection.

3. The quitter sets a terrible example. One of the first lessons God taught man was that he was his brother's keeper. He had a responsibility for his brother's welfare. (Gen. 4:9.) By his example the quitter says

(continued on page 7)

## QUITTERS

(continued from page 1)

to all upon whom his influence may fall, "It is not necessary to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Thus opposing God's will in his own life he becomes a stumbling block to others. Concerning one who would cause others to stumble, Christ said, "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18:6.)

4. The quitter disobeys God. God tells him not to forsake the worship, to be steadfast. (Heb. 10:25; 1 Cor. 15:58.) By quitting he turns his back on the will of God for him.

5. The quitter will spend an eternity in hell. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62.) Peter shows the deplorable state of the quitter: "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 Pet. 2:20,21.) The one who knows the Lord's will and does not do it "shall be beaten with many stripes." (Luke 12:47.) The fearful, the unbelieving "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8.)

### What Should Be Done About The Quitter?

Every effort should be made to retrieve him. The owner seeking fruit from his fig tree, and finding none, said to the dresser, "Cut it down," but the dresser replied, "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." (Luke 13:6-9.) But the quitter has the responsibility of repenting, or else perishing. (Acts 8:22; Luke 13:3,5.) If such a one does not repent, indeed he will perish. — B.N.

## NEW WORLD TRANSLATION

(continued from page 5)

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Among many other NWT perversions of the Bible we will notice a few:

Acts 20:7 - "On the first day of the week when we were gathered together to have a meal." The word "meal" does not belong in the text, but should be "breaking bread" as the King James and American Standard versions say. The NWT perversion of this verse makes it appear that the disciples were eating a common meal rather than eating the Lord's Supper.

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John 1:4 - "What has come into existence by means of him was life..." If you look for this in a reputable translation of the Bible, you will not find it because it was added to the Bible by the Watchtower Society.

These errors and perversions could be multiplied, but these should be sufficient to show that the claim of accuracy of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures is emphatically false. If you are a Jehovah's witness or if you are studying that way of thinking, remember what God

## NOW

(continued from page 6)

Satan till he is old, then bear a good crop of fruit for the Lord. I know of men who have obeyed in old age, but not until they had lost their children; and now they cannot win them.

4. If God does not have your service, Satan will. One cannot be neutral. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matt. 12:30.)

5. Man's mind is so constituted that he becomes hardened to the most horrifying situations. Death is all around us: men die of sudden heart attacks, disasters strike and kill, accidents take a terrible toll. But we feel safe and unalarmed. Just so, sinners become hardened to the tender appeals of the gospel and the terrible threats against those who spend their lives in the service of Satan. Paul writes about those whose consciences are seared as with a hot iron. (1 Tim. 4:2.) When one's conscience loses its tenderness God has no way of bringing him to obedience and righteousness. Procrastination has the effect of hardening the heart or conscience. — Route 3, Box 175-A, Athens, Alabama 35611.

"The churches of Christ in the whole land owe it to themselves, and to the high and just ground they have taken, to guard with sleepless vigilance against even a semblance of an innovation on the practices and usages of the apostolic church.

"Apostasies begin with things that 'have no harm in them,' and end in ruin. At first they creep, but in the end, they stride continents with a single step. Finally, we say, Watch, Beware!" — Moses E. Lard, *Lard's Quarterly*, 1864.

said concerning those who would add to or take away from His word (Revelation 22:18-19) and what Paul said regarding false prophets who come bringing "another gospel." (Galatians 1:6-9.)

The New World Translation, published by the Watchtower Society and distributed by the Jehovah's witnesses is not a true translation of the scriptures, but a perversion of God's holy word. — Box 21, Brilliant, Ala. 35548.

# NOW

Gardner S. Hall

This article is offered as special encouragement to those who are neglecting their duty toward God. Many are in this category. No effort will be made to excite, but to give sensible reasons and Bible teaching on why the disobedient should become obedient now. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. 5:11.)

The word of God says now is the time to obey. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 4:7.) It is not God's will that any lost person wait a few weeks, wait till the meeting, or even wait till next Lord's day. God says, "Now"; and if anyone should die while waiting for a convenient time, he would stand in God's judgment without excuse. This is true whether the need be obedience by an alien sinner or a backslider.

## The Word Is A Sufficient Warning

The word of God is a sufficient warning, even though one may say he is not impressed by the mere reading of it. One may say, "The preacher does not appeal to me; he does not stir my emotions." This will not excuse him. The rich man in Hades did not consider Moses and the prophets sufficient as a warning to his five lost brethren. He wanted the sensationalism of a warning from one risen from the dead. Abraham considered Moses and the prophets enough. (Luke 16:27-31.)

Preachers are commanded to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:2.) They are not required to be sensational, make the hair stand on end, or fill the sinner with horror. Not many preachers are capable of making such appeals; but if the most humble preacher can read the word accurately and earnestly, and read such passages as 2 Corinthians 6:2, 1 Peter 4:16,17 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, he can leave the sinner without excuse for delaying obedience.

Consider the direct, brief, personal appeals of the Old Testament prophets. They prepared no elaborate, homiletically perfect discourses, with parts one, two and three, adorned with studied eloquence and flowery phrases. The power that struck fear in the hearts of kings was their "Thus saith the Lord." Thus beginning they delivered usually short messages of warning or the determined judgments of God. As an example see Nathan's message to David concerning David's sins. (2 Sam. 12:1-12.) The man of God from Judah used seventy words in his rebuke of Jereboam's idolatrous worship. (1 Kings 13:1-3.) Note Elijah's twenty-five words to Ahab in 1 Kings 17:1. "Hear the word of the Lord," they said, and they delivered it without embellishments.

## Examples Of Conversions

We now urge the importance of prompt obedience by the examples of conversions in the New Testament. About three thousand persons gladly received the word and were baptized on the day of Pentecost, and they heard only the one sermon preached by Peter that day. (Acts 2nd chapter.) Philip preached to the Ethiopian officer as they rode in a chariot, and the officer welcomed the opportunity to be baptized. He seemed to exclaim, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:26-39.) Saul of Tarsus had not eaten or drunk anything for three days when Ananias, sent by the Lord, arrived to tell him what to do to be saved. But when the preacher commanded him to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16), he attended to that obedience, then took food and was strengthened. (Acts 9:18,19.) When the Philippian jailor learned the duty of baptism, he obeyed the same hour of the night, which was sometime after midnight. (Acts 16:25,30-34.)

So far as the record goes, those who were not baptized immediately were never obedient. Felix trembled at the preaching of the gospel; but he said, "Go thy way for this time; when I

have a convenient season, I will call for thee." (Acts 24:25.) He was living in adultery and sought and received tainted money. It is never convenient to give up these sins, or any others. Doing so might well be compared to cutting off the right hand or plucking out the right eye. (Matt. 5:27-30.)

No doubt there is significance in the statement concerning the five-talent man: "Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them." (Matt. 25:16, Revised Version.)

## Why Obey Now?

Surely all who have heard the word of God and respect it intend to obey sometime before life ends. Why do it now? Here are some reasons.

1. Delay is rebellion against God. If a child should respond, "Daddy, I will obey your command sometime—I'll obey when I get ready; but I don't intend to now," that would be a rebellious attitude. No child so talks who respects his father.

2. Delay to obey the gospel is the most serious gamble one can make. Life is so uncertain and death is sure. One's life-span is represented figuratively as a day. (John 9:4.) Some of us know our sun of life is low above the western hills. But such is true of many who have not lived more than sixty years. No one can know for sure just where the sun of his life is. Thousands now in their teens will not live to celebrate the dawn of 1975. When we visit a large cemetery we see the graves of those who were born early in this century; but we also see the markers of many who were born in the '40's, '50's and the '60's.

3. Now is the fruitful time of life. The Psalmist describes the man who "bringeth forth his fruit in his season." (Psalm 1:1-3.) There is a time for a tree to blossom, a time for it to put on young fruit, and a time for that fruit to mature and ripen. A tree cannot successfully bear matured and ripened fruit if it waits till fall to blossom. It is difficult for a man to serve

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## QUITTERS

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## "A GLORIOUS CHURCH"

Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27.) This passage tells us that the church for which Christ gave himself is glorious, that is, honorable, esteemed, of high repute. Surely if Christ gave himself for it, it should be highly esteemed.

I. The church for which Christ died is glorious because of its position in its relationship to Christ.

Everything about our Lord is glorious. His voice is glorious. "And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard." (Isa. 30:30.)

His name is glorious. (Neh. 9:5.) His body is glorious. "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body..." (Phil. 3:20,21.) His gospel is glorious. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4.) His appearing shall be glorious—"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Tit. 2:13.)

The church for which Christ died must be glorious because it partakes of his glory as his bride. (Eph. 5:25-32.)

The church is glorious because it partakes of Christ's glory as his body. The Father put "all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body

..." (Eph. 1:22,23.) Writing to members of the church, Paul said, "Now ye are the body of Christ." (1 Cor. 12:27.) Since Christ is glorious in all characteristics, and the church is one with Christ as his bride and as his body, in this intimate relationship it must be honored and esteemed. Any who think they exalt Christ while casting reflections upon the church, actually dishonor Christ himself.

II. The church for which Christ died is glorious because of its purpose. The purpose of the church is to make known the "manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. 3:10.) The word "manifold" means manifesting itself in a great variety of forms. (Thayer.) Indeed, every characteristic feature of the church makes known the wisdom of God. This wisdom is seen in the duration of the church. It will continue forever. (Eph. 3:20,21.) The wisest of men have never been able to establish an institution that will endure forever. The outreach of the church shows the wisdom of God. It not only is universal in its scope, but it reaches out to heaven itself, for there its head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is at the right hand of God. The wisest of men have never been able to set up such an institution. The organization of the church, the laws given to govern it, all make known the wisdom of God.

But the purpose of the church is also to make possible the salvation of man. Paul describes it as the place of reconciliation by the cross, that is, through the sacrifice of Christ. (Eph. 2:16.) It is the place where man, who left God by reason of his sins, may return by obedience to the gospel and be reconciled to the One whom he offended. Christ purchased the church with his blood. (Acts 20:28.) But it is by the blood of Christ that we are redeemed from sin. (Eph. 1:7.) It is abundantly

evident, then, that if we are to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, we must be in that which he redeemed with that precious blood. One would be making a serious mistake in embracing the idea that the church is not essential, and that it has no real part in man's salvation.

III. The church for which Christ died is glorious because of the exorbitant price paid for it. In consideration of the value of the materials used in the construction of the tabernacle, the cost was great. (Ex. 25:1-9.) But the cost of Solomon's temple was even greater. Solomon "made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones." (2 Chron. 1:15.) At least 183,000 workers were used in the construction of this magnificent structure. (1 Kings 5.) But the price paid for the church was far greater. It cost the life blood of the only Son of God. (Acts 20:28.) And again, one would be making a serious mistake in thinking that the church has no part in man's salvation, when God paid such a price for it.

IV. The church for which Christ died is glorious because of its purity. "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, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:15-27.) When one obeys the gospel, God's power to save, and is added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47), he is cleansed from every sin; he is a new creature in Christ, with the old things passed away, and all things become new. (2 Cor. 5:17.) He is to walk in "newness of life." (Rom. 6:3,4.) He is to be pure in mind. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,

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## "A GLORIOUS CHURCH"

(continued from page 1)

whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) As a child of the living God, with Christ ruling and reigning in his life, with only the purest of thoughts filling his heart, he will be pure in speech, pure in conduct, and thus cause the church to have the glory that Christ intended for it to have in its purity.

V. The church for which Christ died is glorious in its perfection, in its all-sufficiency. The responsibility God gave the church lies in three areas: in evangelism, in preaching the gospel to all the world; in edification, in teaching and encouraging every member to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in benevolence, in supplying the needs of those lacking among God's people. (Eph. 5:11, 12.) The success of the early church in meeting its responsibility clearly shows that it is capable of doing all that God has given it to do. Since the Godhead have done their part in making the church glorious, it is for us to see that its glory shines forth into the hearts of all men everywhere.--B.N.

## "TELL US PLAINLY"

(continued from page 2)

we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11, 12.) "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." (Phil. 2:14, 15.) Yes, Jesus has spoken plainly about the manner of life his disciples are to live.

### Whatever You Do

The Lord has spoken plainly. He has even said that whatever we do we are to do it in harmony with his instructions. "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. 3:17.) The Lord has spoken plainly about everything for which we need instruction.--1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Ala. 35208.

## "I AM NOT ASHAMED"

(continued from page 3)

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Christ did not die for us because we deserved it, but despite the fact that we were ungodly and yet in our sins. Will we be stubborn and continue to disobey and forsake the Lord in the face of the matchless grace and mercy he has shown unto us? We have less excuse than the wicked generation we have read about in Judges 2.

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## "A GLORIOUS CHURCH"

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whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) As a child of the living God, with Christ ruling and reigning in his life, with only the purest of thoughts filling his heart, he will be pure in speech, pure in conduct, and thus cause the church to have the glory that Christ intended for it to have in its purity.

V. The church for which Christ died is glorious in its perfection, in its all-sufficiency. The responsibility God gave the church lies in three areas: in evangelism, in preaching the gospel to all the world; in edification, in teaching and encouraging every member to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in benevolence, in supplying the needs of those lacking among God's people. (Eph. 5:11, 12.) The success of the early church in meeting its responsibility clearly shows that it is capable of doing all that God has given it to do. Since the Godhead have done their part in making the church glorious, it is for us to see that its glory shines forth into the hearts of all men everywhere. --B.N.

## "TELL US PLAINLY"

(continued from page 2)

we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11, 12.) "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." (Phil. 2:14, 15.) Yes, Jesus has spoken plainly about the manner of life his disciples are to live.

## Whatever You Do

The Lord has spoken plainly. He has even said that whatever we do we are to do it in harmony with his instructions. "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. 3:17.) The Lord has spoken plainly about everything for which we need instruction. --1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Ala. 35208.

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# "I Am Not Ashamed"

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

The quotation above is part of a statement made by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:16. It had to do with his attitude toward the gospel of Christ and his readiness to preach it, even in Rome. Paul was not, in spite of its unpopularity, ashamed to be a disciple of Jesus the Christ. He was not ashamed to do all in his power to promote a cause which he had once tried to destroy. (Gal. 1:23.) This does not mean, however, that there was nothing, even within the church, of which he was not ashamed. He was certainly ashamed of some things in the church at Corinth, as indicated in his first letter to them. He was ashamed of the early defection of some Galatian Christians. (Gal. 1:6ff.)

**I AM ASHAMED:** There are many things in the realm of religion, even in what is called "Christendom," of which I am ashamed; and I would certainly be ashamed to be a proponent of such. The heathen and the unbeliever chide us because of the many DIVISIONS in what is called "Christianity." Yes, I am ashamed of this image that the world has of the family of God; and I would certainly be ashamed to promote or to be the cause of such!

Jesus prayed that "they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME." (John 17:21.) One of the greatest causes of UNBELIEF is the divisions among those who profess to be disciples of Christ; and yet I hear men, even religious leaders, "thank God" for these many factions! I would be ashamed to picture my Lord as being responsible for such contradictions!

I would be ashamed to "go beyond the doctrine of Christ" for authority for anything in religion. This shows DISRESPECT for His teaching, suggesting that He either could not or did not adequately instruct us in the Scriptures, while He affirms that He did! (2 Tim. 3:16f.) This disregard for the LIMITS laid down in His Word has often caused the aforementioned DIVISION within the Lord's church, and continues to do so. I am ashamed of this!

I am ashamed of many things in the lives of PROFESSED Christians -- members of the Lord's church, those claiming allegiance to Christ while serving another master! This, the apostle Paul saw in the church at Corinth. It seems that many in the church today have taken Paul's statement in Philippians 1:20 ("in nothing I shall be ashamed") literally, after having taken it out of its context! They seem not to be ashamed to be "conformed to the world." (Rom. 12:2.) They seem to be ashamed of almost nothing! The statement of Jeremiah 6:15 is very applicable to many professed Christians: "Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush. . . ." I would be ashamed to appear in public dressed (or undressed) as many of them do. I would be ashamed to use my tongue (with which I have confessed Christ and pray to God) in the way that many "church members" do, in profanity, gossip, backbiting, etc.

Yes, there are many things in religion, even in the church of our Lord, which embarrass me; especially when they are called to my attention by an unbeliever--I am ashamed! But I do my best to show them that my Lord is not responsible for such, nor does He approve, yea, that such is abominable unto Him!

**I AM NOT ASHAMED** of God's divine arrangement, nor of any part of it! Although the Lord's scheme of redemption is "foolish" to "the disputer of this world" (1 Cor. 1:20), I am not in the least ashamed of it.

I. I am not ashamed of THE IGNOMINIOUS DEATH OF THE "FOUNDER" OF CHRISTIANITY. Death by crucifixion was considered the most shameful way by which one could be put to death. (cf. Heb. 12:2.) But I am proud to proclaim that my Lord loved, not only "the world," but ME enough to die that shameful death! That death made salvation available to all the descendants of Adam who had, and have separated themselves from God by their sins. He "gave himself for our sins." (Titus 2:14.) Yes, the Head of Christianity was crucified, but thanks be to

God, the grave could not hold Him. He was raised on the third day; and I am not ashamed to proclaim that!

II. I am not ashamed of THE SIMPLICITY OF HIS PLAN OF SALVATION. You will observe from His "commission" to his apostles to "preach the gospel," and their carrying out of that charge, that He requires that the sinner who would have the benefits of His grace BELIEVE that He is the Christ, REPENT of his sins, CONFESS his faith in the Christ and BE BAPTIZED. (Matt. 28:19f; Mk. 16:15f; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38.) This is "too simple" for many, just as washing in Jordan to have his leprosy healed was to Naaman. (2 Kings 5.) But I am not ashamed of it; nor am I ashamed to affirm that any alien sinner who desires to be saved MUST conform to this same simple plan.

III. I am not ashamed of His SIMPLE ARRANGEMENT FOR WORSHIP. It seems that most of the religious world, even most PROFESSED followers of Christ, ARE. They desire, and thus have instituted, much more "pomp" and show in their worship. They have introduced into their worship many things which the Christ has not authorized.

In His covenant Christ has authorized that we partake of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7); have congregational singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) with no authority for the addition of mechanical instruments; give of our means as the Lord has prospered (1 Cor. 16:1-2); pray unto God (Acts 2:42); and engage in a study of His Word. (Acts 20:7.) This is very simple--too simple for "wise" men! But of such I am not ashamed. Those who are ashamed of or unhappy with such have introduced things into their worship which stand only in the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 2:5), and thus their worship is "vain"! (Matt. 15:9.) I would be ashamed!

IV. I am not ashamed to wear HIS NAME IN THE DIVINELY ASSIGNED NAME FOR HIS DISCIPLES. The apostle Peter says, "But if anyone suffer as a CHRISTIAN, let him not be  
(continued on page 7)

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## "WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?"

This is the question which Moses asked when he came down from the mountain and found the children of Israel worshipping the golden calf. (Ex. 32.) This question implies a conflict between good and evil, the Lord's side and the devil's side. It was a conflict existing in the time of Moses, and it is a conflict existing today. We are involved in this battle. There is no neutral ground, no place for compromise. Aaron in trying to be on both sides miserably failed the Lord's side. 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 the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6:24.) And further he said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matt. 12:30.) The psalmist said, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." (Ps. 97:10.)

### "Who Is On The Lord's Side?"

1. *People who respect and obey his word.* God had previously given the commandments, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." (Ex. 20:3,4.) The people showed that they were not on the Lord's side by disobeying these commands. The people in the majority showed that they were on the devil's side, for when Moses asked the question, of all the tribes of Israel, only the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto Moses. Today we show whose side we are on by our allegiance. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) And again, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14.)

In the gospel, under which we live and by which we shall be judged in the

last day (John 12:48), God has given certain commandments. "And this is his *commandment*, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (1 John 3:23.) "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now *commandeth* all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30.) "And he *commanded* them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48.) "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.) We show, then, that we are on the Lord's side by believing in Christ with all our being, by repenting and turning from our sinful practices, by being baptized in his name that we may walk "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), and, having been baptized, by observing all things whatsoever he has commanded. Since there are only two sides—the Lord's side and the devil's side—and those who are on the Lord's side identify themselves by obedience, then those who fail to obey are in the other camp, standing opposed to God and his will.

2. *People who listen to God rather than to men are the ones on the Lord's side.* "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." (Ex. 32:1.) And Aaron listened to the people rather than to the Lord God who had said, "Thou shalt have no other gods

before me; thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image." By making them a golden calf, by listening to the people, Aaron showed that he was not on the Lord's side. Many doctrines are in the world, and many of them may be represented by men of admirable character, by men who work and sacrifice for their cause, but unless their word is the word of God, those who follow them are making the mistake that Aaron made in the long ago when he listened to men rather than to God, and thereby showed that he was not on the Lord's side.

3. *People who live above sensual satisfaction are on the Lord's side.* The people who wanted a god they could see also wanted a religion they could enjoy in satisfying the fleshly appetites. When they had their golden calf, they had a religion that satisfied their sensual desires. "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." (Ex. 32:6.) This seems to be descriptive of the kind of religion that is so pleasing today—the kind that allows the people to eat and drink and play.

4. *People who love God more than they love their own are on the Lord's side.* When Moses asked the question, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and said, "Let them come unto me," "All the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." (Ex. 32:26.) Then Moses said to them, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every one his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the chil-

(continued on page 7)

## "WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?"

(continued from page 1)

dren of Levi did according to the word  
"Moses: and there fell of the people  
...at day about three thousand men."  
(Ex. 32:27,28.) It must have been a  
difficult task for the sons of Levi to  
carry out this assignment, but they  
showed that they loved God more  
than they loved their rebellious brethren,  
and by doing what God told them  
to do, they associated themselves  
with Moses on the Lord's side.

People today are sometimes  
confronted with the situation where  
they have to show whether they love  
God more than members of family.  
Jesus said, "He that loveth father or  
mother more than me is not worthy of  
me: and he that loveth son or  
daughter more than me is not worthy  
of me." (Matt. 10:37.) When a family  
is divided, it is a grievously tragic  
matter; and when a family is divided  
over religion, the one who causes the  
division had better be sure, by giving  
a "thus saith the Lord," that the  
cleavage is brought about by the  
gospel rather than by the doctrines  
commandments of men.

5. *People who remain faithful in  
time of popular apostasy are on the  
Lord's side.* Among the children of  
Israel the great majority turned away.  
The movement was indeed a popular  
one. Twelve tribes turned to the calf;  
only one, the sons of Levi, gathered  
themselves unto Moses on the Lord's  
side. (Ex. 32:26.) In this event, and  
in other similar episodes in the Bible,  
we see the value of even one truly  
faithful man. Aaron went along with  
the crowd. Moses, a true man of God,  
waxed hot with anger when he saw the  
defection of the people, took the  
golden calf, ground it to powder,  
scattered it upon the water, and made  
the children of Israel drink their false  
god. By this great man Israel was  
saved that day from idolatry and de-  
struction. Today when one has to  
take a stand against popular and yet  
false religious movements, his name  
is to be slandered, his position may be  
misrepresented, friends may be lost;  
but if his cause is right, he will prove  
to be a savior of the people, and,  
above all, will be on the Lord's side.

## Why Be On The Lord's Side?

1. *God has a claim to our alle-  
giance.* He made us. (Gen. 1:26.) He  
sustains us. (Acts 17:28.) To him we  
must look for all the good that we  
have and enjoy in this life, and to him  
we must look for the salvation of our  
souls.

2. *His side is the side of right, and  
honor, and happiness.* His way is  
above ours as the heavens are above  
the earth. When people, by their  
obedience, are on his side, they are  
happy; they are honorable; they are  
heaven-bound.

3. *It is the winning side.* The devil  
is going down. (Rev. 20:10.) "And  
the world passeth away, and the lust  
thereof: but he that doeth the will of  
God abideth forever." (1 John 2:17.)

4. *It is the side we will some day  
wish we had chosen.* "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." (Matt. 7:21.)

Let us then be on the Lord's side by  
doing his will, by serving him faith-  
fully throughout this life, that we may  
hear him say in that great day, "Well  
done...enter thou into the joy of thy  
lord." (Matt. 25:21.)—B.N.

## "ENTIRELY UNIMPORTANT?"

(continued from page 2)

in each case before, we have cited  
Scripture to sustain the truth and to  
deny the opening statement. If you  
now disagree with these Scriptures  
concerning the "one church," what  
right do you have to demand that I  
agree that the blood of Jesus is  
superior to the blood of animals? Why  
insist that Christ, not Buddha, is the  
Savior? After all, if you can deny  
what the Bible teaches about the  
church, why cannot someone else  
deny what it teaches about Christ  
being the Savior? Surely, you see that  
the Bible is right. You see the truth  
about the church—"There is one  
body." Now that you see the truth,  
accept it, believe it, obey it and be  
saved. (1 Pet. 1:22; Heb. 5:8,9.)  
—P. O. Box 327, Russellville, Ala.  
35653.

## HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

(continued from page 6)

there is present in the text or in the  
context some evidence to the con-  
trary. When there is evidence sug-  
gesting that the verse could not mean  
what it says in a literal way, then the  
language is figurative, but just as  
capable of conveying the intended  
truth as if it were literal. In such pas-  
sages as Psalms 119:28, 164; Luke  
13:32; Matt. 26:26-27; and 1 Cor. 1:17  
it is evident that the literal statement  
is untrue; it follows that the state-  
ment must be figurative—that is, the  
writer's purpose is to say something  
besides what the literal statement  
says.

Learning these points and being  
aware of them as we study the Bible  
will help us much as we try to learn of  
God and His will.—1214 Conover  
Road, Richmond, Virginia 23229.

## NO PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

There are no successors to the  
apostles. In order for one to qualify as  
an apostle, it was necessary for him to  
be an eyewitness of the resurrection of  
Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:22.) And no man  
who has lived since the days of the  
apostles can truthfully lay claim to  
such a qualification. Therefore, every  
man who has sat on the papal throne  
of the Vatican from the post-apostol-  
ic, apostate age of the origin of Roman  
Catholicism until the incumbent pope  
must be justly classified as a usurper  
and an impostor. This is true also of  
the so-called Council of the Twelve in  
the Latter Day Saints denomination.

Upon the demise of the last apostle,  
the age of inspiration terminated, and  
from that distant day God has defied  
man to add ought to his word. This  
forever precludes the possibility of  
so-called progressive revelation and  
positively proves every such claim to  
be altogether spurious and without  
foundation in the Bible or out of it.  
From the Isle of Patmos to the pres-  
ent, the New Testament has been the  
only standard of authority by which  
to maintain the faith and sustain the  
church. And such is the only possible  
hope of preserving the faith inviolate  
for future generations and until the  
end of time.—Charles M. Campbell.  
*Contending For The Faith, Franklin  
Road Sermon Series, Vol. II.*

# 9 Attend Church Services

Curtis E. Flatt

I attend church services. I attend these services regularly. Many do not attend regularly. Many do not attend at all. Does this make any difference? Has God left the matter up to us to decide? Is God just as pleased when we do not attend? These are important questions. Since I attend church services and since I feel that I am obligated to attend, I would like to explain why I attend.

## I Do Not Attend For Some Reasons

I do not attend church services in order to please myself. While I am pleased with the services much of the time, that is not why I attend. I do not attend church services to be seen of men. I know that I will be seen and I am concerned about my influence, but I do not attend to be seen of men. People, who have this as their motive for attending, have their reward. (Matt. 6:1-3.) I do not attend church services to visit. While I enjoy being with people who attend, visiting is not my reason for attending. I do not attend church services to be entertained. Is that not the reason some are not happy with church services? They may well have come for the wrong motive to begin with. Is this not the reason for some of the innovations in the services? This is still the best argument I have ever heard for the use of a mechanical instrument in worship. It sounds good. It pleases those who have come to be entertained. I do not attend services to fill my stomach. More and more, I see people who will confess that they attend because of what they call fellowship but which actually is just the eating of a common meal together. We are told to take care of such matters at some other place and time. (1 Cor. 11:21,22,34.) These are not valid reasons for attending church services.

## To Obey Christ

Plainly stated, I attend church services to obey Christ. I strongly believe that I cannot obey Christ in some essentials without attending church services. There are, at least, three commandments which I disobey when I do not attend these services.

When I do not attend these services, I break the commandment to assemble. That is a command: "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:25.) I cannot obey that command without attending church services.

When I do not attend these services, I break the commandment to break bread—to partake of the Lord's supper. Jesus said to do this. (Luke 22:19.) The apostle Paul, in plain language, restated this command. (1 Cor. 11:24,25.) The apostle's example teaches us to do this upon the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7.)

When I do not attend the services of the church, I break the commandment to lay by in store upon the first day of the week. Few commandments are more plainly stated: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. 16:1.) Thus I attend church services to obey Christ.

## To Grow Spiritually

I attend church services in order to grow spiritually. The necessary ingredients for spiritual growth are to be had at these services. The teaching of God's word takes place at these services. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 14:19; Heb. 5:12.) God's word is the food for spiritual growth. (1 Peter 2:2.) If someone says: "I can study God's word without attending church services"; then let it be remembered that absence from the things which take place in these services makes one to be weak, sickly, and asleep. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Cor. 11:30.) If you are interested in being strong and healthy and wide awake spiritually, you will be attending church services, too.

## To Set A Good Example

Furthermore, I attend church services in order that I may set a good example. We all know that attending services does not automatically make

one a good example. But we also know that observers are quick to see that there is not much to our religion if we do not think enough of it to be a part of the gatherings. The poet put it like this:

*Melissa is a Christian,  
Wonder how I know?  
Every time the church bell rings,  
Melissa's got to go.*

This is one of the ways in which Christ's followers show their loyalty to him. He said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) We have heard the statement made by children: "Daddy doesn't go. I don't have to go." I attend church services to set a good example.

## To Contribute To The Functioning Of The Church

I attend church services to contribute to the functioning of the church. Most everyone wants the church to continue. Most people want the church to be functioning in its mission, or at least in that part of its mission which has to do with the betterment of society. But without the members attending the services, the church cannot continue long to function in the work of benevolence which the Lord assigned to it or in the function of saving souls. When the members of the church cease to meet and worship and work together, the church ceases. A coming together is not only necessary for a gathering of the necessary finances and for a planning of work, it is necessary for a maintenance of the work. In the New Testament the church came together to hear of the work. (Acts 14:27.) It is also necessary for the church to come together for disciplinary action. (1 Cor. 5:4.) It is necessary for the church to come together in order to function. I attend church services for that reason.

## How About You?

I have explained why I attend church services. I am persuaded that I have valid reasons to do so. How about you? Can you, from the New Testament, show why it is not important to attend?—1349 45th St., W. Birmingham, Alabama 35208.

# "THE JUDGMENT OF GOD"

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:2-3.)

There may be some things about "the judgment of God" which we will not comprehend until we stand, in that final day, before the Christ to be judged. But there are a number of things about it of which we can be certain. The apostle Paul, in the above passage of Scripture, says, "But *we are sure* that the judgment of God is according to truth...." God's Word of Truth makes a number of things about the judgment very clear.

## There Shall Be A Day Of Judgment

"...*He hath appointed a day*, in the which he shall judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath *given assurance* unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:31.) The Hebrew writer assures us that judgment is just as certain as death. (Hebrews 9:27.)

Although many of us who know what the Bible teaches on this matter may not conduct our lives in a manner indicative of our assurance of such, we are *certain* that there shall come a day of judgment—no doubt about it!

## Every Accountable Soul Shall Be There

"Thinkest thou this, O man...that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Most people apparently think they shall escape the judgment, but they are in for a great surprise! Hear the inspired writers: "So then every one of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ...." (2 Cor. 5:10.) "...It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment...." (Heb. 9:27.) "And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God...and the dead were judged..." (Rev. 20:12.)

Every one of us has an *appointment* at His judgment bar—and we

shall keep that appointment—of this "we are sure"! There is no way we can "escape" it. We can only prepare to keep that appointment.

## The Judge Shall Be Christ

The Son of God, who died in our stead, and who would *now* be our *Savior* shall then be our *judge*. Note again Acts 17:31—God has appointed that we shall be judged "by that man... raised from the dead." The apostle Paul says, as we noted in 2 Corinthians 5:10, that we shall appear before *the judgment seat of Christ*." In Matthew 25:31ff Jesus is pictured "on the throne of his glory..." and with "all nations" gathered before Him, he will "separate them," placing some on his right and some on his left—and from there all shall be ushered into eternity.

How would you feel if after a judge had many times offered you full pardon for crimes committed, you should come before him to be sentenced, having rejected his offers of pardon? Millions shall stand before Jesus Christ, having rejected, and that for many years, His offers for *forgiveness of sins*, and hear Him say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire..."! Of this "we are sure"—the Christ who now offers salvation, will then be our Judge.

## There Shall Be One Standard

One of the most generally accepted philosophies in the religious world is that "it doesn't make any difference" what one believes, "just so long as you are sincere." How often we hear of "the church of your choice" and "the faith of your choice"; referring to different systems of religion. If this were acceptable unto God, then there could be no *standard* for judgment! However, the Word of God teaches us that there shall be one standard, by which all shall be judged—the *Word of God*; *not* the doctrines of men!

Jesus tells us in John 12:48, "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." We

are warned to stay within "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9), and find authority *in the covenant* ("in the name") of Christ for "whatsoever ye do in word or in deed." (Col. 3:17.) It is by *His covenant*, the New Testament, we shall be *measured*! We cannot then appeal to "what my folks have always believed," or to "the doctrines and commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9)—of this we are, or should be, certain!

## Preparation Must Come In This Life

In the abundance of instructions we have concerning "the judgment of God," at which time we will account for our conduct *in this life* (2 Cor. 5:10), we are warned that all preparation for that judgment must come *before the end of this life!*

In Matthew 25:1-13 the five "foolish virgins" simply waited *too late* to make preparation; they should have gotten the extra oil earlier, as did the five "wise virgins." By the time the foolish virgins had gone to obtain extra oil and returned, "the door was shut"! It was too late! Just so it shall be for millions of foolish souls in that day of judgment!

I know many people who "aim to" make preparations who will probably wait too long; death will overtake them, or the Lord will call an end to time, and they will be ushered before Him to be judged—"unprepared to meet (their) God"! Jesus concludes that parable with, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (v. 13.) "*Now* is the accepted time..." (2 Cor. 6:2.) Make preparations *now*. It will be too late when you stand before the Judge—of this we are assured!

## Judgment Shall Be Individual

"So then every one of us shall give account *of himself* to God." (Rom. 14:12.) In the "judgment of God" we cannot hope for someone else to account for our behavior. We shall not be accredited with the obedient lives of others; no more than we shall be

charged with another's disobedience. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. 6:7f.) I shall account for my life, and you shall account for yours. Hear the apostle Paul again in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It is your conduct that you shall account for. It is my conduct that I shall account for. Of this we should be certain!

### Eternity Follows

There is one other thing about "the judgment of God" which God has made clear, and thus of which "we are sure"—a never-ending eternity follows. If we are admitted into heaven, it shall be for eternity—*wonderful!* If we are "cast...into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth"; and that for eternity—*horrible!*

Some would have you believe that the reward of the righteous shall be never-ending, but that the punishment of the wicked will be only for a moment; that when they are cast into hell they will be immediately annihilated. The Word of God does not so teach; but to the contrary, the punishment of the wicked shall be just as long as the reward of the righteous. Several passages make this clear; but one is sufficient to make us "sure"—Matthew 25:46, "And these shall go away into *everlasting* punishment: but the righteous into life *eternal*."

### Conclusion

Hear our introduction text again: "We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth..." The only things concerning the judgment of which we can be sure is that which *the Word of Truth* reveals. Every man who is accountable can be sure of these things. Being assured of these matters, may we all make preparation to "stand before the judgment seat of Christ."—P. O. Box 339, Red Bay, Alabama 35582.

## THE POLLUTION OF SIN

Donald R. Givens

When man is in the devil's territory, doing his bidding, he is wearing a yoke of bondage. In the camp of the devil we are having fellowship with unrighteousness and are yoked with darkness. (See 2 Cor. 6:14-18.) While in this spiritual bondage we are yoked with all filthy and ungodly people. Truly, it is the worst kind of pollution, the pollution of our souls in sin.

While a person is wearing the yoke of bondage to sin, he is controlled by his baser desires, and love of the world is uppermost in his heart. The Holy Spirit through John warns us that those who love the pollutions of this world will perish, but he that does the will of God will abide forever. (1 John 2:15-17.) Those who mind carnal things will perish along with their idols.

If a person will take on the yoke of obedience to Christ, his love and affection will be transferred to spiritual matters and things of everlasting importance. To those who have accepted the yoke of Christ, thus throwing off the pollutions of this age, Paul says: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth." (Col. 3:1,2.)

### Freedom From Bondage

Those who throw off the yoke of Satan and cleanse themselves from the defilements of this world, will find true freedom in Christ. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1.) There is a wonderful freedom awaiting those who take on the yoke of gospel obedience. Jesus declares "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) Obeying gospel truth gives us freedom (Romans 6:16-18), and it purifies our souls from the rotten pollution of sin. (1 Peter 1:22.)

### Freedom From The Mire Of Iniquity

Those under the yoke of slavery to sin are engulfed in the pollutions that mire them. "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollution 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 for them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2 Peter 2:19-22.)

What a terrible tragedy it is for one who has known the cleansing of the word to turn back again to the filthy corruption of the world. The whole catalog of fleshly pollutions, which war against the spirit, is found listed in Galatians, chapter five.

But a beautiful change is effected when we accept the yoke of obedience to King Jesus. Paul describes it in these words: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) This sanctification from all worldly pollutions is made possible by belief in Christ, repentance of one's sin, confessing the Master, and immersion in water for the forgiveness of all one's past transgressions. By gospel obedience, God will separate you from the pollution of sin and you can stand forth as a blood-bought citizen of the kingdom, a member of the royal priesthood and holy nation.

Which will you have? Pollution or cleansing?—2710 21 Ave. S., Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Men in the face of death have been heard to utter regret at having been an atheist, infidel, agnostic, skeptic or sinner; but one has never been heard to say that he regretted being a Christian.



## HOW NOT TO UNDERSTAND THE WORD OF GOD

Last month we listed certain ways not to understand the word of God. Now we call to your attention additional ways that hinder understanding, and how we may avoid these hindrances as we strive to gain a true knowledge of God's will for us.

*A good way not to understand the word of God is to follow haphazard reading practices.* Reading where the Bible happens to fall open will not bring us to a knowledge of God's will. Due to the manner in which the book is bound, it may always fall open at the same places; and under these circumstances we could never learn the complete revelation of God. Sometimes in great haste people read only the shortest chapters, or people read only favorite passages. These practices could not bring us to an understanding of God's word. Then sometimes people may read only from a sense of duty, to count chapters and not to meditate upon, or to digest and implant the word of God in one's memory.

*A good way not to understand the word of God is to read it to justify what we want to do.* Balak, the king of Moab, sent rewards to Balaam to come and curse the children of Israel, but God told Balaam not to go: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." (Num. 22:12.) When Balak sent messengers more honorable, and rewards even greater, Balaam wanted to go. Though God had told him plainly that he was not to go, he said to the messengers, "Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more." (Num. 22:19.) It is evident that he wanted to go and that he wanted to find some word "more" from the Lord that would justify his

going. If we read the Bible with a prejudiced mind to justify what we want to do, it is altogether possible that we will place the wrong interpretation on a passage to make it say what we want it to say. Some, wanting to justify their "social" drinking, refer to Paul's instruction to Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." (1 Tim. 5:23.) Do all the people who use this passage to justify their drinking have stomach trouble, and do they all no longer drink water? Why would this passage be used so often and not the ones which state plainly that the drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of God, or the one which says that those who have woe are those who tarry at the wine? (1 Cor. 6:10; Prov. 23:29,30.)

*A good way not to understand the word of God is to read it to justify what we want to believe.* Suppose one wants to justify instrumental music in worship. He could find reference to various instruments in a number of the Psalms, for example Psalm 98:4-6; but this would no more justify the use of instrumental music in worship under the gospel of Christ than it would the use of burnt offerings, for they also are referred to in the Psalms, for example, Psalm 51:19. One young man thought that he had found scriptural authority for the use of mechanical instruments of music in the New Testament; but it turned out that he had a New Testament, with Psalms, and because of a lack of understanding he thought that the Psalms were a part of the New Testament. Music in worship authorized in the New Testament both by example and command is singing. (Matt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) Since we are living now under the New Testament, we must engage in practices authorized

by it, and not by the testaments or covenants of former times which served their purposes and were taken out of the way. (Col. 2:14.)

*A good way not to understand the word of God is to show greater interest in the speculative and the unknown than in the required and the essential.* God has made the conditions of salvation abundantly clear in the New Testament. Jesus in the days of his ministry on earth taught that men must believe in him or die, that they must repent or perish, that they must be born of water and the Spirit to enter into the kingdom of God. (John 8:24; Luke 13:3,5; John 3:5.) In giving his great commission he set forth the same requirements, that the penitent believer must be baptized in order to be saved. (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46,47; Mark 16:15,16.) The apostles under this commission preached the same conditions of salvation for the alien sinner, as seen in every case of conversion recorded in the book of Acts. (Acts 2; 8; 9; 10; 11; 16; 18.) Though the requirements of salvation are set forth so plainly, too often men show little or no interest in these matters while showing great interest in matters that are speculative and have nothing to do with one's obtaining the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation of his soul. They find great interest in taking prophecies of the Old Testament and applying them to events of the present time, even though these prophecies have long since been fulfilled as God has revealed in his word.

*A good way not to understand the word of God is to fail to apply the proper rules of interpretation.* In studying the word of God one needs always to consider each passage with-

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etc.—and in every case his faith moved him to *obey* the will of God. He was *then* “counted as righteous.” With respect to the specific case alluded to by Paul in our text, hear James in James 2:21-23, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness ....”

Consider the case of those Christians at Rome to whom Paul was writing. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to *obey*, his servants ye are to whom ye *obey*; whether of sin unto death, or of *obedience unto righteousness*? 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 servants of righteousness.” *When* did God “count” those people righteous? They had to have faith. We read in Romans 10:9f, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man *believeth unto righteousness*; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” We see also in this that before they were counted as righteous, they had to confess faith in Jesus as Christ. In the first four verses of Romans six we see that they also repented of sins and were “baptized into Jesus Christ.” In verse four we are told that they were raised to “walk in newness of life.” They were “*then* made free from sin” and “became the servants of righteousness.” (vs. 16-18.)

We can thus determine exactly *when* God counted their faith for righteousness; and any person today who has that same kind of faith will be “counted” by God as “righteous.” How is *your* faith “counted” by Him? If yours is a faith which will lead you to the same kind of *obedience* as was characteristic of Abraham, then your faith shall be “counted unto (you) for righteousness.”—1744 Steiner Ave., S.W., Birmingham, Al. 35211.

## HOW NOT TO UNDERSTAND ...

(continued from page 1)

in the thought of its context—that which precedes and that which follows in the text. Passages that may be difficult or seemingly obscure are to be interpreted in harmony with parallel passages that are clear and unmistakable. One passage must never be arrayed against another, for God does not contradict himself. Other factors of interpretation to be considered are: who is speaking, who is spoken to, who is spoken of, is the language literal, is it figurative, etc.?

*A good way not to understand the word of God is not to divide it rightly.* If one does not have an understanding of the difference between the Old Testament and the New, he would be miserably handicapped in coming to an understanding of God's will for him in this dispensation wherein all live under the last will and testament of Christ. One should realize the divisions within the New Testament: that the first four books were written to establish faith in Christ as the Son of God; that the book of Acts shows the establishment of the church and how the apostles went out and preached under the great commission and what people did in obeying the gospel for the remission of their sins; that the twenty-one epistles were written to show Christians how to conduct themselves and carry on the Lord's work; that the last book, Revelation, the book of prophecy, was written to encourage the people of God to be faithful, even unto death, for in the end evil will go down, righteousness will prevail, and God's people, the faithful, will have the privilege of dwelling with the Father amid the joys of heaven forever and ever.—B.N.

## THE FAITHFUL FEW

Thank you, God, for the faithful few,  
Who do the things they're asked to do,  
Who labor and toil in the work,  
And never criticize or shirk.

Who visit the sick and help the poor,  
And teach God's word from door to door.  
Who when prospered, always give,  
And are concerned with the life they live.

Who never miss, but always attend,  
And will be faithful to the end,  
That they may enjoy that home above,  
Where all is joy and peace and love.

—*The Examiner*, W. Watts, Editor.

## CONTINUING IN THE PERFECT LAW

(continued from page 3)

### Continue To Share It

To really continue in the perfect law of liberty, there is another thing to consider. Christians have the obligation of sharing that word. (2 Tim. 2:2.) If it is good enough for you, it is good enough for others. People who actually continue in the word are people who share it with others as they have ability and opportunity.

Do you want the blessings which are promised of God? They are available to those people who hear and obey his word and then continue in it. —1349 45th St., W., Birmingham, Al. 35208.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

(continued from page 4)

nation to ourselves, not discerning the Lord's body; that is, not viewing the supper as having representative value. Whenever we fail to consider what is represented in the elements, then we fail to discern the body of the Lord.

“For this cause (failing to benefit from such discernment and reflection —BLG) many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” (1 Cor. 11:30.)—Rt. 6, Box 207, Athens, Al. 35611.

## GOSPEL IMPERATIVES

(continued from page 5)

righteousness.” (Acts 17:30,31.)

The realization that we *must* all stand before Christ in judgment should be a powerful incentive to repentance. It is a solemn thought. Remember, we cannot get by with anything. In the courts of men criminals do evade justice. But we cannot in Christ's judgment. “All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. 4:13.) “Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” (1 Cor. 4:5.) This should awaken us all. It should cause sinners to cry, “What *must* we do to be saved?”—Route 3, Box 192, Athens, Al. 35611.

# "THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE"

Charles G. Maples, Sr.

If there is any one reaction to duty common to all men, it must be *excuse making!* This was man's first response to God's instructions. When God confronted Adam with his disobedience, his response was, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Gen. 3:12.) You will note that Adam did not attempt to deny his disobedience, but tried to *excuse* himself of responsibility by blaming his wife. And lo, this attitude has passed on to all of his posterity. Ever since that time men have been "by nature" excuse-makers!

This characteristic was true of many other Bible characters. Aaron tried to *excuse* himself of blame for the idol he had formed, by pleading, "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief." (Ex. 32:22.) Moses tried to *excuse* himself from duty to God with, "I am not eloquent...I am slow of speech." (Ex. 4:10.) This was pretty much the response of Jeremiah to God's assignment for him, "...Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." (Jer. 1:6.) Then consider those fellows in Luke 14:18. "They all with one consent began to make *excuse*." When you consider their *alibis*, you might, as others, respond, "How ridiculous!" But they were no more ridiculous than we are constantly hearing people make today!

But, here is a thought which I would call to your attention about all of those Bible examples. Do you get the impression that the Lord *excused* any of them? No? Then what about our (your) excuses?

The title of our theme is an expression found in Romans 1:20. Those to whom the apostle specifically refers here, as being "without excuse" were those who *had known God*—but glorified Him not. They received His blessings but showed no gratitude toward Him. They professed to be wise, but were as fools. They had changed the glory of God into the image of inglorious man. (Where God had made man in His image; these

men had *made God in the image of man!*) They had changed the Truth of God into lies of men, as in Galatians 1:6-9. Though they had *known* God, they had come to "worship the creature more than the Creator"—they had turned from the true God to idols. "For this cause God gave them up"! And they were *without excuse!*

But I believe that in the light of what we have revealed in the context of this statement, as well as many other Scriptures, *all men* who are now, or shall be, eternally lost are, and shall forever be, "*without excuse!*"

I. **The Grace Of God**—offering salvation "to every one." (v. 16.) The apostle Peter says, "God is not willing that any should perish..." (2 Pet. 3:9.) Those who are lost are so contrary to the wishes of God. The apostle Paul says, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto *all men*..." (Titus 2:11.) Those who "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord..." (2 Thes. 1:7-9) will not be able to blame God—they cannot use as an excuse, "God was against me; He didn't want me to be saved; He didn't provide for my salvation."

II. **The Atoning Death Of Christ.** The basic facts of "the gospel of Christ," to which the apostle refers here, are His *death, burial* and *resurrection*. (1 Cor. 15:1f.) Jesus "gave himself for us, that he might *redeem us* from our iniquities..." (Titus 2:14), and that "while we were yet sinners..." (Rom. 5:8.) He was willing to *pay the price* in the stead of every sinner—"the wages of sin is death"! (Rom. 6:23.)

In so far as most people (Matt. 7:13f) are concerned "Christ died in vain," for, although He died in their stead, they reject His offer of salvation—they will not submit to His will, by which they could be "baptized into his death," and be raised to "walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3f.)

But, will they be *excused?* Jesus pleads, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden..." (Matt.

11:28.) As with "Jerusalem," He invites and pleads, but they "will not"! (Matt. 23:37.) They are *without excuse!*

III. **The Revelation**—complete and clear—of what the Lord requires of them to be saved. No accountable creature will be able to plead ignorance as an excuse. If they *do not* know, it is not Heaven's fault. They *can* know, for in "the gospel...the power of God unto salvation" is *revealed* both the *wrath* of God and the *righteousness* of God. The Psalmist declares, "...all thy *commandments* are righteousness." (Ps. 119:172.) In the gospel is revealed all the requirements of the alien: (1) That he must have *faith* in Jesus as the Christ (John 8:24); (2) he must *repent* of his sins (Acts 2:38); (3) he is to *confess* his faith in Christ before men (Rom. 10:9f; Matt. 10:32f); (4) he must be *baptized* unto the remission of his sins. (Acts 2:38.) In the gospel is also revealed His complete guide for the child of God for worship, work and daily living. (2 Tim. 3:16f.) No one will be excused on the basis of *ignorance*. God has made known His will, and we are charged to "read" (Eph. 3:3f), "study" (2 Tim. 2:15), that we "be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. 5:17.)

IV. **God's Warnings** — revealed in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:18), will leave "without excuse" those who wind up in "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." (Rev. 21:8.) They will not be *excused* because they were not sufficiently warned! Hear Him: "...depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23); "cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30); "...these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46); "...the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus (continued on page 7)

# ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE TRUTH?

Tom Moody

In 22 we read of a wicked armed Ahab. Ahab, king of decided that he wanted the Ramoth in Gilead. This would more conquest to add to his side. Ahab called King Jehoshaphat of Judah, and asked him to go with him to take Ramoth in Gilead. Jehoshaphat had more respect for the Lord than did King Ahab; he said that before they went to battle they should first see what the Lord's will was. To humor Jehoshaphat, King Ahab gathered four of his own prophets and told them about going into battle. These prophets, they told him it would be the Lord's will that they should go. (v. 6.) Jehoshaphat knew these prophets were "yes men," that they would say what Ahab wanted to hear; he wanted to hear another prophet.

When Jehoshaphat said, Is there a prophet of the Lord besides, he might enquire of him? "And the Lord said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we may know the will of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good unto me, but evil." (1 Kings

19:22) Ahab's answer. He did not believe in the prophet of God because he was afraid of him! Does that sound familiar? Do you know someone who is afraid of the preacher "preaches the truth"? Have you ever gotten a little nervous when the preacher "preached the truth"? Did you ever stop to think that if you would stop sinning that the preacher would then stop preaching at you? If old Ahab had listened to do God's will, Micaiah would have had good things to prophesy to him; but Ahab did not want to hear the Lord's will; he wanted to sin.

When the story Micaiah told Ahab of the Lord's will, he said that before they went to battle they should first see what the Lord's will was. To humor Jehoshaphat, King Ahab gathered four of his own prophets and told them about going into battle. These prophets, they told him it would be the Lord's will that they should go. (v. 6.) Jehoshaphat knew these prophets were "yes men," that they would say what Ahab wanted to hear; he wanted to hear another prophet.

## Good Preachers Want To Help

Ahab did not realize that Micaiah was trying to help him. Many today do not realize that preachers and other faithful Christians are trying to help them. Preachers are not winning any popularity contests by confronting people with their sins. Good preachers are not trying to win any popularity contests, but are simply trying to help people get to heaven. Sadly, Micaiah was not able to help Ahab, because Ahab was so afraid of truth that he would not even talk to Micaiah about it.

There are those today who do not want to talk with their best friends or members of their families when it comes to a religious subject. Why?? Is it because they, like Felix of Acts 24:24-25, are so afraid of truth that they tremble when they hear it? Why should anyone be afraid of examining his religious beliefs by the word of God? If you have the truth, you have nothing to fear by examination. If you are wrong, you have everything to gain by learning of your error and correcting it.

Do not have the attitude of old King Ahab who hated the man who "preached at him" or of Felix who was so terrified at truth that he could not stand to hear it; but have the attitude expressed by Isaiah as he wrote by inspiration, "Come now, 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.)—Box 21, Brilliant, Alabama 35548.

## HOW DOES THE BIBLE...?

(continued from page 5)

upon churches to finance them. The church itself should do all the work God designed it for. Neither should the church devise methods for doing things that do not belong to her mission; for instance, athletics, social meals, entertainment, halloween parties, etc. There is no scriptural method for doing something the scriptures do not authorize—something not in the divine pattern.—Route 3, Box 175-A, Athens, Alabama 35611.

## "THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE"

(continued from page 4)

Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thes. 1:7-9.) Indeed, if we heed not these warnings, we shall be "without excuse"!

V. God's Longsuffering will leave every lost soul "without excuse." They will not be excused with "I didn't have time." The apostle Peter states in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Dear reader, the fact that you are still alive, able to read this, is an expression of God's longsuffering—wanting you to prepare for eternity! He says, "...now is the accepted time: behold now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.) And, through James (4:13) He warns, "...whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh'! (Matt. 25:13.)

If you or I should be condemned when we stand before the great Judge, who now offers salvation, we will indeed be without excuse—we shall be "speechless"!! (Matt. 22:12.)—P. O. Box 339, Red Bay, Alabama 35582.

"This book (Acts) is, therefore, a witness of apostolic doctrine and primitive Christianity; a rule and guide for the government, discipline, and the order of the Church; an army which furnishes the Church with weapons in its conflict with antichrist; a repository that offers a remedy for every soul-destroying disease engendered by errors in the faith and offences in the life and conduct of men; a storehouse which abundantly nourishes faith, patience and hope; a mirror and a stimulus, promoting love and its appropriate works; a treasury abounding in learning and sound doctrine."—Starke, quoted in Lange's Acts, int., p. 2.