

# THE ANATOMY OF SIN

## and other Sermons

*by*

**JOHN WADDEY**

**Minister of the Karns Church of Christ  
Instructor in The East Tennessee  
School of Preaching and Missions  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37921**

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*The Great Commission and You* (Lessons on all phases of world evangelism, suitable for class study)

*Sermons on Saints and Sinners* (outline studies of Bible characters)

*Growing in Grace and Knowledge* (outline studies in Christian living and doctrine for new converts and others)

## DEDICATION

*To Wayman L. Baker, a friend of a life-time, my brother in the Lord, and a faithful proclaimer of the gospel; a man whose desire to preach Jesus has led him to conquer mountains of obstacles. His godly example has inspired the author and many others to greater things for the Master.*

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5. To those wise men living and dead who wrote their thoughts down in books so the author could feast at their table of knowledge and thus be able to teach others.
6. To a loving heavenly Father who in distributing the talents, gave the author something to use in His kingdom.



# CONTENTS

<i>Article</i>	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION .....	8
PREFACE .....	9
THE PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT .....	11
THE ANATOMY OF SIN .....	13
SIX EVILS AND THEIR CURES .....	16
FAITH, THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION .....	21
RECEIVING JESUS .....	29
BLOOD AND SALVATION .....	32
ARE YOU LIVING UNDER A CURSE? .....	35
A LIFE WORTH LIVING .....	39
THE PEACE OF GOD .....	43
SEALED OF GOD .....	47
SOMEBODY LOVES YOU .....	50
A CHILD OF THE KING .....	54
THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD .....	57
TO RESTORE ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY .....	60
THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY .....	65
A CREED THAT NEEDS NO REVISION .....	70
THE CHRISTIAN AND THE OLD TESTAMENT .....	74
JESUS AND JEHOVAH .....	78
THE END OF THE WORLD AND MATTHEW 24 .....	81

<i>Article</i>	<i>Page</i>
ESTABLISHING NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORITY .....	84
THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE .....	90
WHAT MY GIFT TO GOD DOES .....	95
SHALL WE DRINK? .....	99
KEEP THYSELF PURE .....	104
THE CASE FOR MORAL CHASTITY .....	107
A BIBLE BASIS FOR MARRIAGE .....	112
LETTER TO AN UNWED MOTHER .....	115
RESPECT FOR LIFE .....	119
PERVERSION RIGHT OR WRONG? .....	130
A LOOK INSIDE SODOM .....	132
EXTERMINATION OF THE CANAANITES AND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JEHOVAH .....	137
THE DOCTRINE OF DEMONS .....	142
ASTROLOGY: RIGHT OR WRONG? .....	157
THE ANATOMY OF AN ANTI .....	159

## INTRODUCTION

Three and a half years have passed since I first made acquaintance with John Waddey. I realized then that he was an extremely blest man. He is now in his eighth year as the resident evangelist for the Karns Church of Christ. His life portrays the character of one who tirelessly labors in God's Kingdom. He is blessed with vision to see beyond the immediate moment and the faith to accept challenges to advance God's Kingdom throughout the world.

I was privileged to sit at his feet as a student of the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions for two years. His classes exemplified much study and preparation on his part to responsibly instruct others to proclaim the gospel. Challenging his students to further study and provoking them to investigate the Word of God for the truth was the prevailing atmosphere. Experience as a preacher, patience as a Christian and empathy for others made it possible for one to come to him for advice concerning varied issues arising in life.

These same qualities are portrayed in his preaching and in his writing. John stands as a defender of God's Word, a student of God's Word and a proclaimer of God's Word. I therefore as a former student under his instruction, consider it an honor to commend his writing to those seeking a challenge to study and a motivation to stand as men and women for God upon His Word.

—*Ronald Edlin*

Oak Ridge, Tennessee  
April, 1975

## PREFACE

A sermon is the end product of a preacher's study, research and reflection. Sermons tell a lot about a gospel preacher. They tell how much he reads and studies, both in men's books and in the holy text. They speak of prayer and communion with God. They show how much in touch the minister is with the modern world and current events.

Sermons can glorify God or they can glorify man. They can enlighten, challenge, motivate, and correct the lives of their hearers; or they can lull an audience to sleep or even lead them away from God and into error. It was God's good pleasure to save the world by the preaching of the gospel, I Cor. 1:21; yet Satan has succeeded in using preaching as a chief means of propagating error.

The world does not need just more preachers and preaching; what is needed is more *gospel preaching* by faithful men of God. We need Biblical sermons filled with scriptures that present the will of God on whatever topic is being discussed.

The following lessons were delivered first to the congregation of the Karns Church of Christ of Knoxville, Tennessee. Since that time, they have been used widely as the author spoke to other churches. Most of them were first delivered extemporaneously with notes and then written down for publication. All of them have appeared in some brotherhood journal.

It was at the encouragement of my good friend and fellow preacher Mike Mitchell that I prepared them for book form. Also, Bro. J. C. Choate, who has published my

earlier books, encouraged me to make them available for publication.

I send them forth with the prayer and desire that they will prove beneficial to those who read and study them. I am confident that the points made and conclusions drawn will not please everyone. But I am sure that I honestly believe them to be faithful to the Scriptures. Several topics have been dealt with that are not the usual fare for books of sermons, but they are lessons I have personally presented and they deal with subjects that need discussing in the light of holy Scripture. May the Lord bless this volume so that it might prove a useful tool to those who use it and to Him be the honor and glory.

—*John Waddey*

April 5, 1975

## THE PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

The author continues to write me about the possibility of sending another manuscript for publication. My reply is to the point: keep them coming. This makes the sixth one that has been sent and there is no end in sight. After you read this volume you will see why I am publishing John Waddey's books.

John Waddey is one of the more prolific writers in the brotherhood today. His articles are regularly featured in most of our Christian journals. This within itself tells us a great deal about him, the kind of work that he enjoys doing, the respect that brethren have for him, and the need for his writings.

As with his other materials, you'll find these sermons researched, scriptural, timely, and enjoyable reading. They represent a great amount of work and are intended to teach, convert, and to edify.

Indeed, it is my pleasure to publish this book of sermons with the prayer that they will meet the needs of our day.

—*J. C. Choate*  
Winona, Mississippi  
April 22, 1975

## The Anatomy of Sin

Like a deadly plague, sin spreads its poisonous breath over every intelligent creature on the earth; defiling, separating and killing all who fall under its influence. None escape, for all sin, Rom. 3:23.

### THE ORIGIN OF SIN

All things were created by God through Christ, Col. 1:16. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.*" Gen. 1:31.

Two classes of God's creation were granted the power of moral and spiritual volition: angels and men. Some of the angels rebelled against God and were cast down from their exalted station, II Pet. 2:4. Pride was a factor, I Tim. 3:6. Rev. 12:1-9 perhaps uses this as an example. The chief of these fallen angels, Satan, tempted the first human pair to disobey God and thus lead them to sin, Gen. 3:1-6. Adam's sin opened the floodgate for all the sins of subsequent generations to flow through, Rom. 5:12. Satan is the father of lies, and all other sin and a murderer from the beginning, John 8:44.

### THE NATURE OF SIN

A number of terms and metaphors are used to describe sin. For example, "I acknowledge my *sin* unto thee, and mine *iniquity* did I not hide: I said, I will confess my *transgressions* unto Jehovah and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Ps. 32:5. Analysis of the many faces of sin helps us to understand and avoid its influence.

Sin is *missing the mark*, Rom. 3:23. God set the mark or goal before us. When we fall short or go beyond that, we sin.

Sin is *transgression of God's law*, I John 3:4. Duty is represented in the Scripture as a path along which we should walk. To sin is to go out of the way of God's commandments into a forbidden land.

Sin is presented as *rebellion*. God is the creator and ruler of the universe. To sin is to rebel against his paternal rule. It is to put oneself in the place of God. Some *refuse* to have God in their knowledge, Rom. 1:28. The men of Judah rebelled against God. Ezek. 20:21.

To sin against God implies a *distrust* of Him and willingness to *deceive* Him and *act treacherously* toward Him. Eve did not trust God's warning to them. She desired to be her own god. Israel's attitude at Kadesh concerning taking the promised land was described thusly: "How long will this people despise me? and how long will they not believe in me . . . ?" Num. 14:11. Why do men hide their evil deeds in darkness and practice hypocrisy unless they think they can deceive God?

Sin is *iniquity*. Sin is a *perversion or distortion*. It is a wrong: a wrench or twist to our nature. It destroys the balance of our faculties and leaves us unbalanced, morally and spiritually. Man is like a top spinning and thrown off its center. He is unable to recover himself. Sinners are workers of iniquity, Matt. 7:23. They do that which when measured by God's straight line appears twisted and crooked. Lev. 18:22-23 speaks of vile sins as *confusion*.

Sin is a *state of unrest*. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea; for it cannot rest, and its waters cast up



mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God, to the wicked." Is. 57:20-21; also Jude 12-13.

Sin is *toil and travail*. Wickedness is weariness. It is work without profit; painful, sorrowful, vanity. "The way of the transgressor is hard." Prov. 13:15. "Mine iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Ps. 38:4. In salvation, Christ gives rest from the burden of sin, Matt. 11:28.

Sin is *ruin*. It is a breaking in pieces, adversity, calamity, distress, misery and trouble. "Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; on a sudden shall he be broken, and that without remedy." Prov. 6:15.

Sin is *vanity*. The Hebrew word *aven* suggests not so much breach of law or injury done to another, as a course of conduct which in the end proves *unprofitable* to the doer. It represents the evil devices of man in the false, hollow, unreal aspect. It puts a stamp of nothingness or unreality upon every departure from God's law. "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity." Prov. 22:8, K.J.V.

Sin is *abnormal and unnatural*. God made man for virtue and goodness, purity, love, faith and loyalty to God. Sin reverses all of this.

Sin comes in many varieties: sins of commission and omission, secret sins, presumptuous sins, sins of ignorance. All are deadly. Sin separates man from God, Is. 59:1,2. The wages of all sin is death, Rom. 6:23. Only the shedding of blood can remit sin, Heb. 9:22. Specifically, "the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin." I John, 1:7.

## Six Evils and Their Cures

The family of man needs Salvation from sin. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Rom. 3:23. Since salvation is only in Christ, Acts 4:11-12, all of those responsible persons not in Christ are lost. The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men, Tit. 2:11. Yet to benefit from God's gracious offer, we must lay hold on the forgiveness He offers.

### SIX EVILS

To escape the bondage of sin and enjoy salvation in Christ, we must recognize six existing evils and their heavenly cures.

- A. The Love of Sin. Sinners love their sin, else would they cease to practice it. This love for the evil pleasures of sin must be overcome if we would know pardon. John warns us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," I John 2:15. Of course he means the sinful things of the world, for he specifies the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Moses rejoiced the pleasures of sin, Heb. 10:24-25. Jesus told Nicodemus that men loved darkness rather than light for their works were evil, John 3:19. Every person has been faced with the problem of a favorite habit or pastime that brings much pleasure, which has been found to be wrong. How hard it is to conquer this love of sin.
- B. The Practice of Sin. Because we love sin, we practice it. A man does not continue to practice that which

he despises. Being free moral agents, we make our own choices about practicing sin. Paul writes, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body," Rom. 6:12. Again he says, "That they who *practice* such things (the catalogue of sins just enunciated) are worthy of death . . .", Rom. 1:32. We must stop the practice of sin!

- C. The State of Sin. In the spiritual realm there are only two realms: The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. These are presented under various figures in the scripture. God delivers us out of the power of darkness and translates us into the kingdom of His dear Son, Col. 1:13. John says, that Christians are of God, and "the whole world lieth in the evil one," I John 5:19. Paul describes the sinner's state as *death!* Eph. 2:1. We must escape the state of sin.
- D. The Guilt of Sin. When we violate God's law, we are judged guilty. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all," Jas. 2:10. In the 51st Psalm, we see a vivid picture of a man under the guilt of sin. "Have ~~mercy~~ on me O God . . . blot out my transgressions . . . cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me." vss. 1-3. In Rom. 7:14-25, Paul describes his struggle with sin and its ensuing guilt prior to his salvation in Christ. His anguished cry in verse 24 had been experienced by every convicted sinner. "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" There must be deliverance from the guilt of sin.
- E. The Power of Sin. Observation tells us that sin has great power over its subjects. Witness the alcoholic, the drug addict, the tobacco user, the gambler, the

sensualist. See them struggle against the power of sin in their lives, and see how often they succumb to its deadly force. Satan, the father of all sin, is like a roaring lion, stalking his prey until they are his, I Pet. 5:8. The devil has a myriad of tricks and devices to ensnare us and keep us in his power. Sin, like a cruel tyrant, reigns in the flesh of sinners, Rom. 6:12-14. We must break this awesome power of sin.

- F. The Eternal Consequences of Sin. "The wages of sin is death," Rom. 6:23. This is not just physical death, but the awful second death of Rev. 20:10, 15. It is the lake of fire and brimstone where the wicked will spend their eternity, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. What can save us from these perilous consequences of sin?

## THE CURES

God has graciously provided an adequate cure for each of these problems related to sin. We must know the cure and apply it to our lives if we would live.

- A. Faith cures the love of sin. It changes your love from sinful things to God. Peter affirmed that God cleanses our hearts by faith, Acts 15:9. Paul reminded the Christians in Rome that in becoming saints, they had died to sin, i.e., to the love of sin, Rom. 6:2. In the words of John, "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." I John 5:4. Faith in God crowds out the love of sin and thus frees us from its grasp.
- B. Repentance cures the practice of sin. The very meaning of the word "repent" is to turn away from. As Paul stated, "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein . . . ?" Rom. 6:2. We are crucified

with Christ in our salvation, and are thus separated from the old sinful ways, Gal. 2:20. Formerly we walked in the darkness of sin; having repented, we now walk in the light of God's truth," I John 1:6-7. The man who believes in Christ and truly repents, hates and despises the sin that once marred his life. One does not practice what he thus abhors.

- C. Baptism cures the state of sin. Since all alien sinners live in the state of sin and death, there must be a way to escape into the kingdom of the saved, God's kingdom. The Lord has ordained the escape route and it is set forth plainly in His word. God himself translates us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of His Son, Col. 1:13. This is accomplished in our baptism into Christ. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ," Gal. 3:27. Notice that baptism is into Christ. Salvation is *in* Christ, II Tim. 2:10. But we are baptized into Christ, Gal. 3:27. Therefore we must be baptized to be saved. This helps us to see the important role that God has given the ordinance of baptism in the scheme of redemption. No man, understanding this, would refuse to submit to immersion in the name of Jesus.
- D. Forgiveness cures the guilt of sin. One of the great problems plaguing modern man is *guilt*. Many are under physicians' care or even hospitalized because they can't get rid of their guilt and it is destroying their mental health. Thank God that Christians are free from the guilt of sin. We have *remission of sins*, Acts 2:38. Our sins have been washed away, Acts 22:16. We have the answer of a good conscience, I Pet. 3:21. Our emancipation proclamation is set forth in Rom. 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

- E. The Gift of the Holy Spirit cures the power of sin. Forgiveness does not make us immune from the power of sin, but God does give us strength to meet and overcome all of sin's temptations. Paul prayed that God would strengthen the Ephesians with power through His Spirit in the inward man, Eph. 3:16. Again he writes, "But if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, he shall live," Rom. 8:13. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able . . .," I Cor. 10:13. When Jesus was tempted, he appealed to the Holy Scriptures to drive Satan away, Matt. 4:1-11. So will the faithful Christian use the sword of the Spirit, Eph. 6:17.
- F. Everlasting Life provides escape from the eternal consequences of sin. Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life," John 5:24. In Rev. 20:6, John writes, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power . . ." We experienced that first resurrection when we were buried with Christ in baptism and *raised* to walk in newness of life, Rom. 6:3-5. Over the faithful Christian that awful second death in the lake of fire hath no power. Thank God that Christ appeared, bringing salvation to all men, Tit. 2:11-12. May we all lay hold on it and claim it for ourselves.

## Faith, The Christian Foundation

"For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God."

(I John 5:4-5.)

"and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."

(Heb. 11:6.)

### INTRODUCTION:

The foundation of all relationships with God is *faith*. It is the most basic and fundamental ingredient of Christianity. Faith underlies all hope and is the link that binds the saved to the Savior.

Without doubt, the most commonly used religious term in the Western world is faith; yet it is also the most misunderstood term in the public's vocabulary. We will be seeking for Biblical light on the meaning and application of faith.

### I. WHAT FAITH IS NOT.

Many themes can best be understood by considering them from the negative point of view. By thus eliminating all the false notions, we arrive at the true.

Faith is *not blind, thoughtless gullibility*. There is a kind of religionist that believes that the highest degree of faith is the one that asks no questions; and never thinks or tries to understand. It is closely akin to superstition.

However the Scriptures present a much different view of faith. Paul states, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing of the word of Christ." (Rom. 10:17.) Faith is based on testimony from God. John *wrote his gospel* that we might believe. (John 20:30-31.) God commends those who search the Scriptures to see if the preacher is teaching God's word faithfully. (Acts 17:11.) Really, faith is the opposite of gullibility.

Faith is *not emotionalism*. In many Protestant churches, faith is equated with a spiritual thrill, a light feeling in the chest cavity and head. Many people have seen a man slap his hand over his heart and declare that he would not exchange what he felt for all the Bibles in the world. To another, faith is the excitement of a "Pentecostal" type of service with shouting, dancing, clapping of hands and emotions raised to a fever pitch. Yet this is totally foreign to the faith described in the Bible. Bible faith is always based on facts and knowledge. (Romans 10:17.) It appeals to the rational mind as well as the heart or emotional nature. Paul said, "I *know* him whom I have believed." (II Tim. 1:12.) He asked the Galatians, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the *hearing of faith*." (Gal. 3:2.) Faith is always based upon testimony.

Faith is *not foolishness*. In recent months we have read of people who died after drinking poison and being bitten by deadly snakes as they proved their faith. Never does the Bible present faith in this light. Always, believers are described as sane, selfcontrolled, reasonable people. Jesus refused to leap off the pinnacle of the temple to prove himself. (Matt. 4:5-7.) It is strange how the bizzare and senseless, appeals so strongly to a certain type of mind. But whatever its attraction, it is not of God.



Faith is *not rationalism*. By rationalism we mean the attitude that I will not believe a thing unless I can understand it thoroughly and explain it. God has not said that we were to understand everything we encounter in the Scriptures, but we are to believe. "...we walk by faith, not by sight." (II Cor. 5:7.) If God says a thing, faith believes it to be true whether it is understood or not.

## II. WHAT FAITH IS.

Having cleared away some misconceptions, we shall now note what God declares faith to be. Usually people attempt to define faith in a single sentence. Some offer, "Faith is trusting God," others quote Heb. 11:1, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." This attempt to describe so broad a concept in so few words has contributed to our misunderstanding of the word. The following verses will help us to see that faith is like a cut diamond with a multitude of facets.

Faith is the belief of testimony given by God in his word, "so belief cometh of hearing and hearing of the word of Christ." (Rom. 10:17.) The quantity and quality of your faith will be in direct proportion to your study and understanding of God's word.

Faith is trusting God and his Son; laying our all in his great hands for safekeeping. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11:8.) The apostle was confident that God would keep that which he had committed unto him. (II Tim. 1:12.) So faith trusts God ultimately whether in life or death.

Faith is believing God's threats and promises and acting accordingly. Sarah believed God's promise that she

would have a son, even though she had been childless, near 90 years old, and long past the age of child-bearing. She had Isaac. (Heb. 11:11.) So we must believe the wonderful promises of God if we are to receive them. Noah believed God's threat to destroy the world with water. He built the ark by faith and preserved himself and his family. (Heb. 11:7.) Never had there been such a universal flood, never such an act of judgment, but Noah believed God. What a task to undertake to build the immense ark. What faith it took. What a contrast when we see many today who do not have enough faith to believe the record of Noah's experience to be true fact!

Faith is doing what God has said, just as he said to do it. Faith that works through love is the kind of faith God demands. (Gal. 5:6.) Abel illustrates the fact that careful attention to do exactly what God has ordered is expected. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous." (Heb. 11:4.) Since faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17), Abel must have heard God specify an animal sacrifice. Cain was willing to sacrifice, but he did not offer the kind of sacrifice God ordered. He may have reasoned that his was as costly; as sincerely and properly offered as Abel's, yet God rejected it. It was not of faith. He was willing to do *what* God said as long as he could do it his way. Faith does things God's way whether in worship, service or salvation.

Faith is doing God's will even when it is extremely distasteful and dangerous. "By faith Abraham being tried, offered up Isaac . . ." (Heb. 11:17.) Imagine how *distasteful* this must have been to that aged father. Think of the anguish and torment he underwent. It was his only son. It was the one link through whom God was

going to fulfill his many promises to Abraham. What chance was there that he and Sarah could ever have a second son? Yet Abraham did what God commanded. So must we. It is doubtful that we will ever face such a test as that patriarch did, how much more then must we be faithful in the small matters that seem distasteful to us.

Sometimes faith leads us down dangerous trails. Consider Israel as, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up." (Heb. 11:29.) In contemplating the great miracle of the dividing of the sea we sometimes overlook the situation when God commanded them to step into the canyon between the walls of water. Their wives and children, their cattle and earthly possessions were laid on the line. What faith it took to risk such an escape. Ours is not a day of persecution. But should we live to see it, we must have faith to face whatever trials Satan thrusts upon us.

"Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1.) The saint cannot see heaven, but faith enables him to firmly be convinced of its reality. So it is with a hundred other unseen things. Faith accepts them as reality, because God said it.

Faith is doing God's will, even though you do not fully comprehend all that is involved. "We walk by faith and not by sight." (II Cor. 5:7.) We might never fully understand why Christ had to die, but faith accepts it. Just why baptism is essential may never be completely fathomed, but faith believes it. I may never grasp all that is involved in grace or the resurrection of the body, but I believe it because God has declared himself on these matters.

Faith trusts God and not self for salvation. Scripture declares what all men know; that man cannot direct his

own steps. (Jer. 10:23.) "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory." (Eph. 2:8-9.) One of man's major problems has been the mistaken notion that he could save himself. This has led him to ignore God's will and seek to establish a righteousness of his own. (Rom. 10:1-3.) Genuine faith recognizes one's *inability* to save self and drives the sinner to cast himself on the loving mercy of God, being willing to do whatever God says.

Saving faith accepts Christ as Lord and Savior of its life. "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10:9.) The true believer surrenders all his rights and prerogatives to King Jesus. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20.) Whatever Christ says, I gladly do, if I truly believe.

Faith is an active, energetic response of the human heart to God. (Gal. 5:6.) Faith without works is dead in itself. (Jas. 2:26.) The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. The entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews aptly illustrates this. Faith is more than understanding, or accepting as true, or feeling inclined unto a person or thing. Faith is humble submission and obedience to God's will.

Faith is a growing thing. Do not despair because you have not the faith of Abraham. You can grow unto it. Some of Jesus' disciples had "little faith." (Matt. 6:30.) Barnabas was full of faith. (Acts 11:24.) Since faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17), we can watch our faith grow as we feed upon His holy word and daily prove his promises.

Faith protects against sin and temptation. It is a shield

(Eph. 6:16) to block the attacks of seduction, ridicule, and provocation. It blunts false doctrines and attempts to destroy our faith. Faith is a *breastplate* to turn away the arrows of destruction Satan constantly hurls at us.

Christ is "the author and perfecter of our faith." (Heb. 12:2.) Faith begins in Christ as the trembling sinner seeks pardon and mercy from his offended Lord. Faith ends when this life ends. In eternity faith will give place to sight. The redeemed will be resurrected to spend their eternity in heavenly joy in the very presence of the Sacred Three. (Rev. 22:1-5.) Only in Jesus can our faith reach those earthly proportions that God intended it to have.

To the soul that truly believes in Jesus, a shower of manifold blessings comes. "Being, therefore, *justified* by faith, we have peace with God." (Rom. 5:1.) We are made *righteous* by faith. (Rom. 3:21-25.) Again, "the righteous shall *live* by faith." (Gal. 3:11.)

Christians are "*sons of God*, through faith . . ." (Gal. 3:26.) We are *saved* by grace through faith. (Eph. 2:8.) Christ *dwells in our hearts* through faith. (Eph. 3:16.) We are *sanctified* by faith. (Acts 26:18.) Our hearts are *purified* by faith. (Acts 15:9.) We are made to *stand* by faith. (II Cor. 1:24.) There is *joy* in faith. (Phil. 1:25.) And the saint enjoys *bloodness* and *access in confidence* through faith. (Eph. 3:12.) But not by faith only. (Jas. 2:24.)

Without faith, prayer would be a meaningless ritual. Without faith, no man could be faithful unto death. How could we ever attain that holiness that God desires without trusting faith? Satan would swamp us in temptations and trials were it not for faith in God's delivering providence. Who can face death like the believing Christian who knows the God who holds eternity and the fates of men in his hands.

## FAITH

*What if I say —*

*“The Bible is God’s Holy Word,  
Complete, inspired, without a flaw” —  
But let its pages stay  
Unread from day to day,  
And fail to learn therefrom God’s law;  
What if I go not there to seek  
The truth of which I glibly speak,  
For guidance on this earthly way —  
Does it matter what I say?*

*What if I say —*

*That Jesus Christ is Lord divine;  
Yet fellow-pilgrims can behold  
Naught of the Master’s love in me,  
No grace of kindly sympathy?  
If I am of the Shepherd’s fold,  
Then shall I know the Shepherd’s voice  
And gladly make his way my choice.  
We are saved by faith, yet faith is one  
With life, like daylight and the sun.  
Unless they flower in our deeds,  
Dead, empty husks are all the creeds.  
To call Christ, Lord, but strive not to obey,  
Belies the homage that with words I pay.*

## Receiving Jesus

Jesus "came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:11-12.

Everyone must make a decision about Jesus: to receive or reject him. Too long we have left these passages in the hands of sectarians who abused their meaning, as we fought against their interpretation. Christians should boldly use the concept of "receiving Jesus," showing men its true import.

I. We must receive Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Matt. 16:18. He is the Messiah promised to mankind from the Garden of Eden. He fulfilled more than 300 prophecies relating to Messiah in the old law. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. 19:10. Being the Son of the Living God, Jesus is divine, yea he is deity. He is the *Word* which was God, John 1:1. He is the "I AM," John 8:58. He is our great God and Saviour, Tit. 2:13. No man truly receives Jesus unless he believes these truths about him.

II. We must receive him as *Lord* of our lives. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:9. If Jesus is the Lord of our lives, then we are but slaves. The apostles commonly referred to themselves as bond-servants of Jesus, Rom. 1:1. As slaves of Jesus we have no "rights." They have all been surrendered unto our Lord. His will is our law.

We must continually deny ourselves, Matt. 16:24. Many have confessed that they believe Jesus to be God's Son while never acknowledging him as the Lord of their being.

III. Christ must be received according to truth. Only God's truth can make us free from sin, error and damnation, John 8:32. All acceptable worship must be in spirit and truth, John 4:24. God's word is that exclusive source of heavenly truth, John 17:17. To receive Jesus in any way other than the Bible way is of no value. Inspired men taught sinners to receive Jesus by faith, repentance and baptism, Acts 16:31, 2:38. So today this is the only way to receive Jesus.

IV. Sinners must receive Jesus in Love. We must love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Mk. 12:29. Surely we must love His only Son as much. "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him." John 5:23. This love must be more than pious words and public pronouncements. It is demonstrated by faithful obedience. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." John 14:15. This speaks not just of great and obvious precepts but even of the small and seemingly unimportant teachings. Love for Jesus is seen in faithful obedience.

V. We must receive him by obedience. Since this point has been thoroughly discussed above, we only add this thought: Jesus "became unto all them that obey him, the author of eternal salvation." Heb. 5:9. The denominational concept that "receiving Jesus" is to merely "open the heart" and say "I receive Jesus" is completely foreign to the revelation of God. No man receives Jesus by faith alone, Jas. 2:20-26. It is a false delusion if men think they have received him unto salvation in that way.



VI. He must be received for a lifetime. We must be faithful unto death to receive the crown of life, Rev. 2:10. Part time discipleship is not accepted. There is no retirement age. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Mk. 13:13. A short-term reception of Christ is worse than no reception at all. II Pet. 2:20-22. For once a man has tasted the good word of God and the blessings of salvation and then rejects it, there is nothing left to pierce his calloused heart and bring him to repentance. Heb. 6:4-6. When you receive Jesus as Lord, never look back to the old life. Lk. 9:62. Those who do so are not fit for the kingdom of God.

Having seen what it means to receive Jesus, the only remaining question is: Have you so received him?

## Blood and Salvation

It has always been true that apart from shedding the blood there is no remission of sin, Heb. 9:22.

### PATRIARCHAL AND MOSAIC AGES

From the earliest times, sinful man has had to approach God with blood for his transgressions. Abel brought a slain lamb before God, Gen. 4:4-5. This he did by faith, Heb. 11:4. Since faith comes by hearing, the word of God, he must have been so instructed. Cain did not bring blood and was rejected. Under Moses, God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," Ex. 12:13. The first covenant itself was dedicated with blood, Heb. 9:18-20. Each year on a date near our October 1, the high priest came before God with the blood of atonement for himself and the whole congregation, Lev. 16:14. God explained to them, "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life," Lev. 17:11. Yet in all of these, it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins, Heb. 10:4.

Why then did they offer these sacrifices all those years? First, they constantly reminded them of their sins and need for pardon. It was God's ordained plan for them that He might save them by grace through faith when Christ, the true and acceptable sacrifice died, Heb. 9:15; Rom. 3:25. All of these innocent victims were perpetual reminders of the coming Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world, Heb. 10:10-14.

## THE NEW COVENANT

Zechariah the prophet predicted a day when a fountain would be open to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness, 13:1. The blood of animals could never take away sins, but the offering of Christ himself did suffice, Heb. 10:1-4. "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified," Heb. 10:14. Christ was that Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world, John 1:29.

Four major benefits are the immediate results of his shed blood:

1. His blood dedicated and sealed the *New Covenant*. The Hebrew writer states, "Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood," 9:18. His inferred conclusion is that the second covenant also was dedicated with the blood of a better sacrifice, Christ himself, 9:19-27. So Jesus said in instituting his memorial supper, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," Lk. 22:20.

2. He paid the price for the *world's sins* with his blood. "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses . . .," Eph. 1:7.

3. The *Church of Christ* was purchased with his blood, Acts 20:28.

4. The *doors of heaven* were opened to fallen man by the blood of Jesus. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh," Heb. 10:19-20.

Really there could be no Christianity without the blood of Christ. Pity the liberal church-man who wants to keep Christianity but rejects the doctrine of the atoning blood of Christ. Without the blood he has nothing but a yoke of empty ritual about his neck.

## **APPROPRIATING THE BLESSINGS**

In order to benefit from the blood that was freely given for every man (Tit. 2:11), we must appropriate to ourselves its blessings by faithful obedience, Heb. 5:8-9.

We must study the blood sealed new covenant, II Tim. 2:15.

We must become a member of the blood-bought church to benefit from the purchase price, Acts 20:28.

We must be baptized that the blood may wash away our sins. The blood of Christ cleans our conscience, Heb. 9:14. But our conscience is cleansed when we are baptized, I Pet. 3:21. Therefore we must be baptized that our conscience may be cleansed by Christ's blood.

We must commune weekly in memory of the blood shed for our sins, Matt. 26:28, Acts 20:7.

We must live in daily contact with his blood by walking in the light and confessing and forsaking our sins, I John 1:7.

## **CONCLUSION**

The heavenly guests had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. 7:14. May we be privileged to stand with that blood-washed throng and sing the song of salvation unto God and the Lamb, Rev. 7:13.

## Are You Living Under A Curse?

To be under a curse is a fearful thing. To be under a curse from God is a thousandfold more so. The word "curse" means "to be under God's disfavor; to devote to destruction; to be damned." Surely all rational people would take all necessary precautions to avoid the curses of God.

The following nine points are areas wherein we can incur the curses of God. Let each of us examine his heart to see how we stand relative to them.

I. Do you truly love God? Paul says, "If a man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema." I Cor. 16:22. To be anathema is to be cursed. This love must be of the superlative degree: all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, Mk. 12:20. It is not enough just to proclaim our love, we must prove the sincerity of it, II Cor. 8:8. The true test of anyone's love for God is his faithful obedience to the commands of God, John 14:15. Remember, the man who loveth not the Lord is cursed.

II. Do you seek to obey God in all things? Moses challenged the children of Israel with these thoughts: "Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: The blessing if ye harken unto the commandment . . . and the curse if ye shall not harken unto the commandments of Jehovah . . ." Deut. 11:26. We have no privilege to select our choice of commands to obey. Even the smallest and seemingly insignificant ones are to be honored, Matt. 5:19. That this directly affects our salvation is seen in John 3:36. There, Jesus said, "He that obeyeth *not* the Son shall not *see* life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The Christian seeks to obey God in all things because he loves his Lord, but also to avoid falling under a curse.

III. Are you trying to live under the law of Moses? Gal. 3:10 warns, "For as many as are under the works of the law are under a curse." Again he says, "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law, ye are fallen away from grace," Gal. 5:4. It is tragic to see so many people in the Seventh Day Adventist and other denominations subjecting themselves to a curse, by seeking to live by the old law in part or in whole. Let us be happy to live by the new covenant of Jesus which offers grace and pardon. While we honor and revere the old covenant as God's revelation, we do not look at it for salvation, worship or a guide for life.

IV. Do you put your trust and confidence in men and their words, rather than God? It is amazing how many folks will reject some plain statement of gospel truth from the Bible because it does not agree with the teachings of their pastor or holy father or even their parents. Jeremiah warned, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in men, whose heart departeth from Jehovah." Never trust your soul salvation to the hands of religious teachers. It is God's heaven and He alone can save. To enter in we must please Him. Be like the noblemen of Berea, who received Paul's preaching with all readiness of mind, but then searched the scriptures to see if his words were so, Acts 17:11. Do not abuse even the good teacher God has blessed you with. Never believe a thing because a man said it, but because you can read it in your own Bible.

V. Are you failing to give God your best gifts and to put Him first in your life? Multitudes are willing to be Christians if it can be on their terms. They are more than willing to give God the second choice, if they can

have the first and best for themselves. Malachi dealt with the same attitude in his day, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye rob me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are *cursed* with a curse: for ye rob me, even this whole nation." Mal. 3:8-9. Remember that one can bring a curse upon himself if he does not give back unto God according as God has instructed.

V. Do you give God the honor and glory for all that you are and all that you have? Again Malachi wrote, "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not give glory to my name saith Jehovah of hosts, *then will I send the curse upon you*. And I will curse your blessings; yea I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart." Mal. 2:2. The age old sin of pride prompts men to claim the honor and glory of their success for themselves. On the contrary, Paul and Barnabas rehearsed all things God had done with them, Acts 14:27. We plant and water, but God gives the increase, I Cor. 3:6. Even at our best we are unprofitable servants, Lk. 17:10. The church today is not free from this problem. Many a problem in congregations, schools, papers and other good works stems from the unholy desire for honor and glory. Little do these aspiring brethren realize that they are subjecting themselves to a curse.

VII. Do you teach any other doctrine than that the apostles taught? This solemn warning comes from the inspired pen of Paul, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preach unto you, *let him be anathema*." Gal. 1:8. So serious was this practice that he again repeats the warning in the next verse. In a world of 300 denominations, with as many different doctrines that often vary from the scriptures, surely a great part of the world of Christendom stands accursed. No wonder James said,

"Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." 3:1. John says that the teacher who abides not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God, II John 9-11.

VIII. Are you negligent in doing God's work? Jeremiah said, "*Cursed* be he that doeth the work of Jehovah negligently." Every saint should ask himself, how am I doing my Lord's work? Teachers: How careful and thorough are you in your work? Elders: How diligently are you in leading the church of the Saviour? Deacons: Are you serving the Master with zeal and loyalty? Dare we do God's work in anything less than the best possible way?

IX. Are you helpful to your fellow-man? In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew we are given a vivid scene of the Judgment day. For those whose hearts were hard and untouched at the plight of suffering humanity, Jesus will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in, naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." Matt. 25:41-43. In our busy world, we often seem to have no time for such small matters as helping the kind of people Jesus describes. Often, we in the middle and upper stratas are so insulted from the suffering of the masses that we feel no need to seek them out to minister to their needs. But in failing to care for those who desperately need our help we bring God's curse upon us.

I would like to close this doleful lesson of dire warnings with a cheerful note. For the saved who are faithful unto death, we are told that in heaven, "*there shall be no curse any more.*" Rev. 22:3. May we so live and die that we may enjoy that blessed peace throughout eternity.



## A Life Worth Living

Philosophers and young intellectuals debate whether life is worth living. Many lives are ended because no worthwhile end is seen. In our great land of freedom, opportunity and abundance, we have one of the highest suicide rates in the world. Thousands more are living dead men, addicted to liquor or drugs or a degenerate life because they had nothing better to live for. What is the explanation of this enigma?

Part of this problem of despondency and futility is because of a false notion of what a successful life consists of. Most Americans judge the success of one's life by job position, things possessed, social status, and the worldly pleasure one finds. Herein is the worm that kills the plant of a happy, meaningful life. Jesus asks, "Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" Matt. 6:25. The answer is an obvious yes. Even animals enjoy eating, sleeping, reproduction and being the leader of the herd. But God intended for the jewel of His creation to find more than that in life.

Christ Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly, John 10:10. In Christianity, one finds something to live for, something to hope for and something to die for.

I. Christians have something to live for that makes their lives exciting and meaningful. They have personal happiness with self, with others and with God. Faithful disciples know "the peace of God, which passes all understanding." Phil. 4:7. They have found the secret of con-

tentment in whatever stream of life they be cast, Phil. 4:11-12. Christ has taught them to love others even as they love themselves, Matt. 22:39. With his help they can reach this difficult goal, Phil. 4:13. "When a man's ways please Jehovah, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. 16:7. Jesus told the apostles, "Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you: Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John 14:27. Sinful man is alienated from God, Is. 59:1-2. His separated condition weighs heavy on his conscience, making him insecure and fearful. When we die to sin and self and let Christ rule our lives, we know the joy of reconciliation with our Creator. This brings us a happiness undescribable, Gal. 2:20.

The child of God experiences a sense of worth and self-value that the sinner never knows. We are not under condemnation, for in Christ we have been freed from the law of sin and death, Rom. 8:1-2. We do not have to hang our heads in shame when we face our fellow men, for our guilt is blotted out by Jesus' blood. We are the princes and princesses of the King of Kings. Our life is worth living. Every minute of every day is a rich, rewarding experience.

As disciples of Jesus, we are personally involved in the Greatest Cause in the world. One reason for frustration and loss of purpose in life is that men have no noble cause to be a part of, to fight for. Not so the Christian. We are charged with reaching every man and woman on earth with the gospel message, Mk. 16 15. Not only this, but we are fighting a war of liberation to free the victims of Satan's oppression, II Cor. 10:3-5. Our work for the Lord will benefit humanity. It brings blessings to the lowest peon. It refines and purifies society, making the world a decent place in which to live. Ours is a great and

magnanimous program and we are all needed so that the Lord's cause will abound and prosper, I Cor. 15:58. Every saint is needed. None are so poor or unskilled as to be passed by. As every member of my physical body is needed to fill its necessary function, so every brother and sister has a vital role to fill in the Kingdom. I Cor. 12:20-21. This makes life worth living.

II. Christians have something to hope for. No matter how hard and disagreeable this present life may be, there is a glorious hope of heaven awaiting us, Rom. 8:18. Christ brought life and immortality to light through his gospel, II Tim. 1:10. We will be raised from the bondage of death with a glorious, incorruptible, immortal body, I Cor. 15:42-43, 52-54. We look forward to spending our eternity with the great God and His adorable Son, Rev. 7:15-17; Phil. 1:23. We will rejoice with loved ones and friends who likewise followed Jesus in this life. David looked forward to seeing his deceased son in eternity (II Sam. 12:23) and so do we live in hope of that glorious reunion with our beloved ones. There is great comfort in these words, I Thess. 4:13-18. Another fond hope of the saved is that Jesus will be with them in death. David of old sang, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me." Ps. 23:4. The martyred Stephen, looked up and saw Jesus standing, anxiously watching over him in death, Acts 7:55-58. So we have great hope that the world does not know.

III. Christians have something to die for. We read histories and novels and admire those valiant souls who were willing to offer their lives as sacrifices for a noble cause. Today the western world has so degenerated that few feel any cause is worth sacrificing for, much less dying for. This has adversely affected the lives of those who so think. We have a cause worth fighting and dying

for. Paul did not blush to encourage young Timothy to suffer hardship as he did the work of an evangelist. The reason being, Paul was at that very moment on death row, awaiting execution at the hands of the Romans. His only crime being that he had been a good soldier of Jesus, II Tim. 4:5-8.

Ours is such a cause that if I die for it, I will actually be much better off. That same Paul wrote the Philippians that to depart and be with Christ was far better, Phil. 1:23. John the Apostle wrote, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," Rev. 14:13. The most brilliant mind could never fathom the glories reserved for the righteous until we have personally experienced them. We have a leader who loved us so much that he died for us, Rom. 5:8. He now calls upon us to live and die for him as we follow his example, Heb. 12:1-3.

The Christian has a new attitude and outlook towards death that removes the fear of it and brings a proper understanding of this universal malady. Jesus partook of flesh and blood and in death brought to naught Satan who held the power of death, Heb. 2:14-15. We know that in the great resurrection morn, death will be destroyed once and for all, I Cor. 15:54-55. For the servant of Jesus, death is simply a veil that stands between this temporal life and the unending life to come. We must pass through the veil to enjoy the blessings of eternity. No wonder then that saints can pray, "even so come Lord Jesus," I Cor. 15:22.

Have you ever pondered the question: Is life worth living? The Christian life is worth living, without any doubts or reservations. It alone promises man something to live for, hope for, and die for. Do you enjoy this wonderful life?

## **The Peace of God**

The world yearns for peace. Men continually talk of peace, yet there is never a day when the clashing of war is not heard somewhere. Major war still stands as an immediate threat. Nothing has plagued our planet like wars. They have brought untimely death and untold suffering to millions. Lands are ravaged and civilization is retarded by wars.

### **OUR ONLY HOPE**

Christ is the only hope for peace in this world. Force of arms can hold the peace for a while. The United Nations might forestall war temporarily. But as J. M. Pierce said:

“An effective organization for world peace will be established, not through political diplomats around a peace table, but through Christian teachers in all cities, teaching citizens in Sunday School and public school the sacredness of human life.”

Another has said: “Five great enemies of peace inhabit with us — avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride; if these were banished all should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.” Each of these sinful attitudes fall mortally wounded before the power of the gospel. James tells us that wars rise from the *lusts* of men’s hearts, Jas. 4:1.

### **PROPHECIES OF PEACE**

Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be the “Prince of Peace and of the increase of his government and of

peace there shall be no end . . .” 9:7. Micah said, “This man shall be our peace.” 5:5.

The Messianic kingdom would be a kingdom of peace. Isaiah foresaw the day when Jehovah’s house would be established in Jerusalem and all nations would flow unto it. From all the nations of the earth would come its citizens. And when they entered this kingdom they would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nations would not lift up sword against nation, neither would they learn war any more, 2:2-4. But note that this was true only of those within the peaceable kingdom. He does not say that all the sinners of the world would become men of peace. Haggai also saw the future of the Lord’s temple at Jerusalem and wrote, “The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former . . . and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah . . .” 2:9.

Christ would bring a *Covenant of Peace*. Jeremiah predicted that God would give a “new covenant,” 31:31. But through Ezekiel God promised, “I will make with them a covenant of peace.” 34:25.

## THE PEACE CHRIST BRINGS

Jesus came to reconcile lost humanity unto God, II Cor. 5:20. When we are reconciled, we have *peace with God*. David wrote, “The Lord will bless his people with peace.” Ps. 29:1. Isaiah declared, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” 26:6.

Peace with God, because of salvation, brings peace within one’s heart. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” John 14:27. Paul exhorts, “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Col. 3:15. Again

he tells us of "the peace of God which passes all understanding." Phil. 4:7. So great is the inner peace which God supplies the saint that we could never fathom or exhaust it.

## **CHRISTIANS LIVE PEACEABLE LIVES**

Through Christ, the world has enjoyed more peace than at any other time in history. The angels announced his birth with these joyous words: "On earth peace, good will toward men." Lk. 2:14. All Christians are to "follow after peace with all men . . ." Heb. 12:14. They must also pray "for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life." I Tim. 2:2. God promises that if "a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Rev. 16:7. If it is possible, Christians are to "be at peace with all men." Rom. 12:18. The blessings of heaven are showered upon the peacemakers, Matt. 5:9, and "to the counsellors of peace is joy." Prov. 12:20.

## **THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR**

Because of the peaceable nature of the kingdom of Christ and its citizens, it seems unreasonable that the sons of God should be destroyers of men. We are to love our enemies and pray for them, Matt. 5:43-45. We are to do good unto them and return good for their evil, Rom. 12:20-21. We are told to avenge not ourselves but to give place unto the wrath of God, Rom. 12:19. Those who take the sword as Peter did will perish by the sword, Matt. 26:52. Because Christ's kingdom is not of this world we cannot fight for it, John 18:36. We should be grateful that our government recognizes that Christians cannot conscientiously participate in war and thus grants them opportunity to serve in some other capacity. Remember that after all

wars are fought, men praise the peacemakers. This is the full-time work of all God's children. Remember:

"The God of Peace," Rom. 15:33.

"Hath called us to peace," I Cor. 7:15.

"With the gospel of peace," Rom. 10:15.

Into "the kingdom of God which is joy and peace,"  
Rom. 14:17.

Let us "follow after things which make for peace,"  
Rom. 14:19.

For "Blessed are the peacemakers," Matt. 5:9.



## Sealed of God

Ezekiel in the ninth chapter of his book records an awful vision of judgment upon the men of Jerusalem. However, the true and faithful disciples were preserved because they were marked with the seal of God, 9:1-6. So in the Revelation, God's faithful ones are sealed upon their foreheads so as to be identified and protected in the judgment that was to come upon men, 7:1-4. The idea of a divine seal placed upon God's children runs throughout the new covenant. Surely all men would desire to know and understand what this seal is; what it means, and how to receive it.

I. What is the seal of God placed upon Christians? It is important to remember that we are thinking of an analogy. God does not literally write upon our foreheads with ink or mark us with a brand. But He does something like that when we become His children. This act of God marks us as belonging to Him. Paul answers our question in Eph. 1:13-14. Those who hear the word of the gospel and believe are "*sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*"

II. Who gives us the seal? II Cor. 1:21-22 answers this question. "... God ... also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." No man can give us the heavenly mark of identification.

III. *Who* receives this seal? John tells us it is given to "the servants of God." Rev. 7:3. In Eph. 1:13-14, we are told that it is given to those who are *heirs* of eternal life. The seal being the Holy Spirit, we know from Acts 5:32, it is given only to those that *obey* him. And Gal.

4:6 says, "because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts . . ." So then this seal is impressed upon all who become Christians.

IV. *When* then are we sealed? Peter responded to the urgent question of the Jews on Pentecost whose hearts had been pricked by his sermon, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38. At salvation we receive the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, Tit. 3:5. Again in Eph. 1:13, we are sealed *in Christ*. But we get into Christ by baptism, Gal. 3:26-27. So then, we are sealed when we obey Christ in baptism.

V. What does the seal mean to me? First, it marks me as the possession of God. Christians are a "people for God's own possession." I Pet. 2:9. It identifies us as kings and priests of God, Rev. 1:6. It is also our earnest or downpayment of heaven, Eph. 1:14. It is God's sacred pledge that what He began in us will be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit with which we are filled, also sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts, Rom. 5:5. It guarantees our bodily resurrection from the dead, Rom. 8:11. The Spirit in our lives brings liberty and transforms us into the image of Christ, II Cor. 3:17-18. We are strengthened with power by his Spirit in our inward man, Eph. 3:16. We experience righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, Rom. 14:17. These blessings are ours if we have been sealed by God with His Holy Spirit.

VI. What our seal means to the unsaved. The seal upon each Christian is a constant reminder to the lost of their undone condition. Although no visible, literal mark is evident, there is the intangible mark, obvious to all, in the Christian's life. It is seen in the love, joy, peace,

long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control, the fruit of the Spirit of God in the life of all saved men, Gal. 5:22.

VII. The indelibility of the seal. According to Paul, we are sealed unto the day of redemption, Eph. 4:30. Jesus promises, "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more, and I will write upon him the name of my God . . .", Rev. 3:12. Such words describe that permanency of our salvation and relationship to God. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 8:38-39.

The only thing that could rob us of the heavenly seal is our own sin. When caught in the web of his own sin, David prayed, "Take not the Holy Spirit from me." Ps. 51:11. We can grieve the Spirit, Eph. 4:30; quench the Spirit, I Thess. 5:19; and even despise the Spirit, Heb. 10:29, by our continuance in sin. When we do thus, we cannot expect to retain our standing as the "sealed of God."

Having considered these precious thoughts from the Book Divine, we ask, Have you the seal of God upon you?

## **Somebody Loves You**

To the non-Christian, the interest Christians show in his spiritual welfare is a mystery. It is hard to understand why a total stranger would go to extremes of expense and personal bother to give someone that in which he presently is not interested. All this investment of time, energy and money on the part of Christians without expectation of personal gain or financial reward just does not make sense.

### **LOVE IS THE ANSWER**

The whole thing could best be summed up in one word, LOVE. Not romantic love, rather a love that manifests a generous, kindly concern for another.

When I became a Christian, I accepted Christ's standard to love my neighbor as myself (Matthew 22:39). In daily life it means, "Do for others what you want them to do for you" (Matthew 7:12). Were I lost in a trackless forest, I would want you to help find me and bring me to safety. If I were trapped in a burning house, I would want you to rescue me. Should I be lost in sin with certain punishment before me I would want you to help me be saved. Just as I would want you to help me, I must seek to assist you in the same manner.

### **WHAT PROMPTS SUCH LOVE?**

Perhaps you wonder, from whence comes this unusual love for others? What motivates it? The answer is simple: "We love because he (God) first loved us. And this commandment have we from him that he who loveth

God love his brother also (I John 4:19-21). Also, "the love of Christ constrains us" (II Corinthians 5:14).

As a Christian, I want to be like Jesus. It is obvious he loved all men, even his enemies. So must I. I love you, I care for you, because my heavenly Father and His Son care for you.

### TO PLEASE GOD

God loved you so much that He gave His only begotten Son so that you would not have to perish, but that you might have everlasting life (John 3:16). God is not willing that you perish, rather He wants you to come to repentance (I Timothy 2:4). Therefore He has commissioned Christians to tell this good news to every creature . . . including you (Mark 16:15-16). Because it is God's wish that you know of the wonderful gift of salvation He has for you, we actively seek to get the message to you. You see, we want to win you for Christ, so that we can please our Master, and that you can also please him.

### I MUST TELL YOU

Have you ever had an experience so wonderful that you wanted to tell everyone about it? A true love; a new child in the family; a great discovery? If you can recall that eagerness to tell the whole world, then you know how I feel about my salvation in Christ. I want to shout it from the housetop. Everyone must know! I simply must share the joy I have found. Like Paul the apostle, I want all men to share my treasure I have found in being a Christian (Acts 26:29).

### COMPASSION

In every sensitive heart there is a twinge of sorrow when a fellow human being is deprived of some rightful privilege or right. Sympathy and compassion is stirred when

one witnesses suffering, hunger and death. Even so, we Christians have a deep feeling of sympathy when we see a fellow traveler smitten down with the plague of sin. Our compassions are roused to help you escape the dread disease of the soul that would surely lead to death and punishment (Romans 6:23).

### **WE SEEK YOU**

Please do not be offended when we try to help. Try to understand that there are sincere people in the world who are truly philanthropic, i.e., lovers of their fellow man. We seek not your riches, or possessions, we seek only your improvement and happiness (II Corinthians 12:14). Jesus died and left you a fortune (Ephesians 1:3). We just want to tell you about it so that you may claim the inheritance that is rightfully yours.

### **STEPS TO CHRIST**

Faith in Christ can be yours by studying the gospel records of his life (John 20:20-31; Romans 10:17). Knowledge that you have been traveling the wrong direction will help you to make a decision to turn from your sins in repentance (II Corinthians 7:10). The most vital moment of your life will come when you confess with your own lips that Jesus, God's Son, is your Lord and Master (Romans 10:9-10), and are then buried with Him in the baptismal water. You will be united with Him in the likeness of His death and raised to walk a new life . . . the Christian life (Romans 6:3-5).

### **WHEN YOU ARE SAVED**

May I hazard a speculation? I think when you become a true disciple of our Lord, you will have the same love for your fellow man we have discussed. There will be those who just cannot understand. Some will poke fun

and ridicule. Some may even be rude and ugly, but that will not discourage you. Jesus loves even those who do not appreciate it. His people try to follow his example.

The words of this beautiful hymn, written by S. O. Cuff, convey in a most appropriate way all I have sought to say. Please read it as a message from me to you.

### I AM PRAYING FOR YOU

*I have a Savior, He's pleading in glory,  
A dear loving Savior, tho' earth-friends be few,  
And now He is watching in tenderness o'er me,  
But O that my Savior were your Savior too!*  
*I have a Savior, to me He has given  
A hope for eternity, blessed and true;  
And soon He will call me to meet Him in heaven;  
But O that He'll let me bring you with me too!*  
*I have a robe: 'tis resplendent in whiteness.  
A-waiting in glory my wondering view;  
And when I receive it all shining in brightness,  
I pray I may see you receiving one too!*  
*For you I am praying, For you I am praying,  
For you I am praying, I'm praying for you.*

No matter who you are, what your station is in life, or how far you may have fallen; you are not alone. God loves you. Jesus loves you. Every faithful child of God is vitally interested in your welfare. We are as close as your telephone or your mailbox. If you so desire, contact us. Let us help. Remember, we love you.

## A Child of The King

"For ye are all *sons of God* through faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3:26. How thrilling it is to realize that we who are disciples of Jesus are children of the King of heaven and earth. Most people would be proud just to find some drop of royal blood in their genealogy from the ancient past. As Christians we can be sons and daughters of the greatest monarch of all. God has no grandchildren! As children of the King we have many blessings bestowed upon us, but there are also many responsibilities that come with this honored position.

### ROYAL GARMENTS

Children of the King wear princely robes. It would be inappropriate for them to dress otherwise. "And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous attire of the saints." Rev. 19:8. We can hear the father saying, "Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet." Lk. 15:22. With the privilege of royal garments comes the responsibility to keep them undefiled if we would walk with Christ. Rev. 3:4.

### A ROYAL NAME

The King's children wear the family name, *Christian*, proudly. Acts 11:26. It is an honorable name. Jas. 2:7. We must never be ashamed of that name, no matter what comes our way. Peter writes, "If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." I Pet. 4:16.



## ROYAL PALACE

As children of the King, we are privileged to live in the King's house. The house of God is the church of the living God. I Tim. 3:15. The child born to a man lives in the father's house and eats at his table, unless something is wrong; perhaps death, infidelity, quarreling. The same is true in the church. The difference is, if the child is not residing in the father's house and eating regularly at his table, the fault is in us, not in the father. Christ appointed for us a kingdom that we might eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. Lk. 22:20-30. Every faithful child of the King will be at the father's table each Lord's day to break the bread and commune with the father. Acts 20:7.

## ROYAL CONDUCT

Being children of the King, we must conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of our royal estate. We must walk worthily of the calling wherewith we are called, with lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering . . . giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Eph. 4:1-3. All must be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Phil. 2:14-16. We should be examples of good works, uncorruptness and gravity. Tit. 2:7-8. Whatsoever we do must be to the glory of God. I Cor. 10:31.

## FAMILY PRIDE

The King's children should be proud of the royal heritage. Heads should always be held high. Never should we be ashamed of our relationship to the great King. Paul was never ashamed of his position, neither should we be. II Tim. 1:12. Let us always be thankful for such a privileged position in life. Col. 1:12-14.

## **BLESSINGS AND WEALTH**

Sons and daughters of the King enjoy the blessings and wealth of the Sovereign. "For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephus, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours . . ." I Cor. 3:21-22. Although he showers us with every good and perfect gift of a material nature, the great gifts are spiritual ones! Forgiveness of our trespasses, Eph. 1:7. Freedom from guilt, shame and condemnation, Rom. 8:1. The privilege to talk with the King in prayer, knowing he will hear and answer our petitions, John 14:13. "How much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." Matt. 7:7-11.

## **HEIRS OF THE KING**

The children of God are heirs of the royal estate, joint heirs with Christ, Rom. 8:16-17. We will inherit the home, the authority, the wealth, the respect of the King. "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne . . ." Rev. 3:21.

## **ROYAL BIRTH**

Only those born into the royal family can be children of the King. Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:3-5. We are begotten again . . . through the word of God. I Pet. 1:23. Scripture amply shows that one is born into God's royal family when with faith and repentance he is baptized in the name of Jesus for remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38.

Do you want to be a child of the King?

## The True Israel of God\*

The bulk of the Protestant world has been deceived into thinking that the Jews are still God's special people, that they will be restored to Palestine as a nation and the ancient Hebrew ritual resumed. All of this is supposed to happen when Christ comes back to reign on earth for a thousand years, as they erroneously suppose. What is commonly overlooked is the fact that all of those prophecies and promises that were spoken of *Israel*, to be realized in the messianic age, were not spoken of *fleshly Israel*, but of *spiritual Israel*, Christ's church. The five points that follow will prove this point conclusively.

I. Christians are now *Abraham's Seed*. Paul declares this in Gal. 3:29. "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise." Again in Romans he reasons that Abraham is "father of all them that believe," 4:11. Although we are not literally fleshly descendents of Abraham, we are his descendents spiritually for we have the same faith he had. Today, God does not reckon sonship by the flesh, rather it is by the spirit.

II. In the Christian age, Christians are the True Israel of God. "For neither is circumcision (being a Jew) anything, nor uncircumcision (being a Gentile), but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Gal. 6:15-16. Thus the Hebrews are no longer God's special people. Today, God's people are reckoned by grace,

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\*I am indebted to James Bales for the main points of this lesson. See his book, *The New Testament Interpretation of Old Testament Prophecies*.

not by race. Again Paul stresses this point in Rom. 9:8, "It is not the children of the flesh that are Children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed." In 4:16 of Romans he concludes that Abraham "is the father of us all."

III. The Church of Christ is the Commonwealth of Israel today. As Gentiles we were once alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel, but now in Christ we are made nigh by his blood. "So that ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets . . ." Eph. 2:12-13, 19-20. God cast off the fleshly Jewish nation, Rom. 11:15. Yet He continues to save all who believe in Jesus, irrespective of nationality, adding them to Christ's church, Acts 2:47.

IV. The church is the heavenly Jerusalem. The writer to the Hebrews said, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven . . ." Heb. 12:22-23. So we see that it is not ancient Jerusalem in Palestine, but the Lord's Church that is the heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem and Mount Zion. Those many promises of old concerning Zion in Messiah's day, find their fulfillment in the Church and not in Palestinian Jerusalem.

V. Christians are the true "circumcision" of God in this age. Thus Paul reminds the saints at Philippi, "For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." 3:3. He also tells the Colossians that in Christ "ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with

him in baptism . . ." Col. 2:11-12. No literal fleshly circumcision is required today. But there is a likeness to circumcision in baptism. For as in the actual circumcision, the flesh was removed that kept a man from being identified with the covenant people, so in baptism the old life of sin is cut off and removed that the recipient might be numbered with God's people. Again Paul declares, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love." Gal. 5:6.

When the Jewish nation rejected Christ and murdered him, they forever forfeited their role as His special people. They cried, "His blood be upon us and our children," Matt. 27:25. They made their choice. Not only the Palestinian Jews, but the Dispersion as well generally thrust the gospel from themselves and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, Acts 13:46. Because of this rejection, God turned His attention to we Gentiles, Acts 28:28.

We stress again that it was national Israel that rejected the Saviour and national Israel was rejected by God. "By their unbelief they were broken off." Rom. 11:20. Today each individual Jew stands before God on precisely the same footing as we Gentiles. They are either saved or lost, solely on the basis of their belief or disbelief in Christ. "And they (Jews) also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again." Rom. 11:23. Today as always there are a few of Abraham's fleshly descendents who believe in Jesus. They are saved and a part of the true Israel of God, not because of the blood in their veins, but because of the faith in their hearts. What a great privilege it is to be Gentile Christians to be joint partakers in the commonwealth of spiritual Israel and to share the rich blessings which God promises to all of Abraham's seed according to the promise. Col. 3:29.

## **To Restore Original Christianity**

When caught in a flood, one looks for a high place of safety. In times of confusion, we search for surety and confidence. In today's religious climate, the sensitive believer is anxious to find a way toward fellowship with God that is safe, solid and secure.

The old established denominations and Catholicism are groaning with the pangs of decay. Many strange voices are being heard on the religious horizon. But these only lead further away from the truth of the gospel.

Christ did build his church! It flourished in a simple purity in the first and second centuries. Then was pure Christianity, unadulterated by man's hand. Have you ever pondered the possibility of drinking from the clear springs of original Christianity today?

### **THE NEED FOR RESTORATION**

Someone may ask, is it necessary to restore the Church? The careful student of scripture and church history knows that many serious changes have been forced upon the Christian religion since its beginning.

The form of church government has been changed drastically.

Names by which the church is known have been changed.

The recipient of baptism has been changed by many groups.

The form of baptism has also been changed.

The creed of the church has been displaced. Human creeds have overshadowed the will of Christ.

The form of worship has been altered with various additions and/or subtractions.<sup>1</sup>

The plan of salvation has been obscured.

The unity of the church has suffered because of denominationalism. These many changes have robbed believers of a clear vision of what their religion was really like in the beginning. The problem is magnified when we remember that an infallible, all-wise God founded the church and that sinful, fallible men have presumed to change it. Can man ever hope to improve on God's work?

### IS IT POSSIBLE?

Is it possible to restore first century Christianity today? Jesus founded an everlasting kingdom. (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 16:18). Surely the God who gave us the church is able to preserve it through the ages. To realize the goal of restoration, we must recognize the following points:

Christ is the supreme authority in all matters of religion. His New Testament is the only authoritative rule of faith and practice for Christians.

We must make a proper distinction between the Old and New Testaments.

We must be content to worship and serve God exactly as the first Christians did, as set forth in the New Testament.

The autonomy of each local congregation must be respected.

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas, L. G., Restoration Handbook, p. 63-64.

Every effort must be made to achieve and maintain the unity of all Christians upon the basis of obedience to Christ and His Word.

If we have no book but the Bible, no creed but Christ, and no name but the divine name, surely we can achieve this goal. When reached, we can maintain it if, in matters of faith, we will stand united; in matters of opinion and methods we will grant liberty and toleration and in all things practice love for our brethren.<sup>2</sup>

### A UNIVERSAL APPEAL

The idea of restoring New Testament Christianity has a universal appeal to men of all nations.

It looks to that one *universal church* that Jesus founded and is savior of, Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23.

A *universal book* (the Bible) is set forth as the only rule of faith and practice, the only authoritative and complete repository of all that is necessary to serving God and preparing for eternity.

Its *confession of faith* is universal; that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, Matt. 16:16.

Universally accepted *scriptural names* are used: i.e., Christian, disciples, brethren, saints, church of Christ, etc.

Its *teaching* on baptism and the Lord's Supper are *universally appealing* for they would be observed precisely as when instituted by Christ.

It advocates a *universal life* of Christian purity and service as exemplified by the Lord, that goes beyond racial and national boundaries.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 71-72.



It has a *universal aim* which is to exalt and spread the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.<sup>3</sup>

Could any honest soul object to such spiritual principles as:

Wearing the name of Christ to the exclusion of all human names . . .

Faith in the living, reigning, interceding Christ being the only creed of the church . . .

The New Testament of Christ being the only book of discipline accepted by the church . . .

The complete authority of Christ over his church being recognized and restored . . .

Christ's one church being exalted above all man-made institutions and organizations . . .

All the commands of Christ being obeyed by his people . . .

The ideals of Christ being exemplified in the lives of all who wear his name . . .

Unity in Christ by faith, repentance and baptism into him superseding all denominationalism to the end that there should be one body of which Christ is both Head and Foundation?<sup>4</sup>

### THIS PLEA IS NOT NEW

The concept of "Restoration" is *not new*. It is an ancient and constant need in religion. Twenty-five hundred years ago God said to the men of Judah, "Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls . . ." Jeremiah 6:16. The student of church history will find many voices who pled the same message. It is

<sup>3</sup>Crawford, C. C., *The Restoration Plea*, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

not a local movement. All across the earth independent movements have sprung up with the announced goal of going back to the Bible, restoring primitive Christianity. This common faith and goal cannot but bring these movements together in Christ, if sincerely followed.

It is not an institutional or governmental movement. Rather, God-fearing *individuals* are making their way out of the foggy mist of religious confusion into the pure light of God's word. Like the merchant seeking goodly pearls, when they find it, they gladly give up whatever is necessary to lay hold on it. Perhaps you are interested.

## **The Woman Taken in Adultery**

His enemies accused Jesus of being the friend of publicans and sinners. Matt. 11:19. Many of the stories of his life that God chose to record for us involve these very people. The narrative in John 8:1-11 is one of the best known events of Jesus' ministry.

### **THE SETTING**

Jesus had come to the temple court early in the morning and was busily engaged in teaching a great crowd of eager listeners, 8:2. Suddenly the class was interrupted by a noisy throng pushing through the crowd. No one had to guess who the principles were, their dress identified them as scribes and Pharisees. Caught in the swirl of their current was a dishevelled woman, pushed and shoved along roughly as a sheep driven to the slaughter. The observers fall back and the haughty leaders stop before the Savior, demanding his attention.

### **THE CHARACTERS**

Who were these prosecutors? They were the spiritual teachers and leaders of the Jewish community; Men of high office; Men whose claim to righteousness was so great that all others, even fellow Jews, were scorned and despised as sinners. Jesus showed only contempt for these religious characters, charging them openly with hypocrisy, Matt. 23:13. The Pharisees were so exclusive that their number was scarcely more than five or six thousand. They dominated the synagogues of that day, but the Temple was in the hands of their arch-rivals, the Sadducees. Scribes

were most often in the Pharaisic party, men who devoted their lives to the study of, transcribing, and teaching of the Law and the traditions of the fathers.

These men were "legalists." They cared more about rules than people. They loved to multiply rules and bind them upon others. They had no pity or compassion for those caught in sin's mesh, only disdain. They were quick to inflict the judgments of the law on the commonfolk, but always seemed able to find a comfortable loophole to excuse their transgressions. Here we see or hear no sign of pity, mercy or compassion. In fact, they were quite willing to sacrifice a person to win their theological point. While pretending to be defenders of the moral and spiritual values of the nation, they were its real enemies.

We see the Master in this episode. Jesus *was* the friend of publicans and harlots, he never denied this. He repeatedly involved himself with those of this social state who showed an inclination to hear heaven's message. He was a minister of grace, mercy and forgiveness. He was the only sinless one in the gathering; the Pharisees only pretended to be so. He alone was the teacher of true religion and morality. Christ was the fairest judge of all. Moreover, he was the exposé of hypocrisy. What a glaring contrast between the Lord and the prosecutors.

The accused was guilty of immorality. Of that there was no question. She was charged with adultery, having been taken in the very act, 8:4. Probably she was a young engaged woman, since that was the only case wherein the law *specified stoning* as the manner of death, Deut. 22:23-24. It is very possible that she was the victim of a devious plot; it being unlikely that they would have caught her in the act unless there had been a "set-up." Certainly the student of the Pharisees knows that such

a plot was not beneath their dignity. Then, too, the fact that the man who must obviously have been also caught in the act was freed, would cast a suspicion on the accusers. To the Jewish leaders, she was only a tool to use against Christ to their advantage. In Christ's sight, she was a precious soul, made in the image of God. Though tarnished, she was a prospect for salvation.

### THE PLOT, A DILEMMA

The strategy of the enemy was simple, find grounds for condemning the Nazarene. Get him to take a position contrary to either Jewish or Roman law. If he said "condemn her," charge him before the Roman governor who reserved the right of the death penalty to himself, John 18:31. Should he say, "do not condemn her," they would have immediately charged him with setting aside Moses' law. Either way, they would attempt to poison the public mind against him as either for or against sinners. The Greek tells us that "they kept on asking him." They were confident that this "young upstart" from Galilee would surely be impaled on the horns of their dilemma.

### THE DILEMMA DEHORNED

Messiah quietly, deliberately, stooped and wrote in the dust on the ground. How our curiosity clamors to know that mysterious message. Such deletions are surely a mark of divine inspiration for no human author could resist dropping that attention-getting information for his readers. Some have suggested that he wrote a list of the Pharisees' sins. Certainly he could know such intimate things about men, John 2:25. The word *wrote*, *katagraph-ein* in the Greek, was used when speaking of or writing accusations or charges. He may have written the words of Lev. 20:10, which said that *both parties* of adultery

should be stoned to death. Whatever the words, so powerful were they, that the opposition was thoroughly intimidated.

As the accusers stood apprehensively, Jesus hurled the *moral challenge* into their bosom. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." 8:7. The words reflect Deut. 17:6-7. If they were *innocent* then they should initiate the execution. But they knew they had violated Moses' Law by not bringing the man. Perhaps they were guilty of adultery themselves and they felt that somehow Jesus knew about it. In mute silence, they made a hasty retreat.

### JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH THE WOMAN

"Woman, where are they, did no man condemn thee?" 8:10. His use of the term *woman* does not convey any degree of disrespect. It is the same word he used to address his mother in John 2:4. The Jews had desired to condemn her but were not qualified to do so. Jesus was qualified, but had no desire to condemn her. Rather, he challenged her with the charge, "Go thy way; from henceforth sin no more." 8:11.

The contrast between Jesus and the Jews was glaring. They brought her as a captive, He treated her as a free woman. To them, she was a tool for them to use; Jesus respected her as a human being. They considered only her sin; Jesus had confidence in her future. They wanted to stone her; Jesus was anxious to save her. We see his delicacy, modesty and compassion. This separated him from the accusers and her former partners in sin. She had in Jesus a friend she could talk to and receive consideration and help from. Her case was dismissed for lack of executioners.

## LESSONS TO REMEMBER

1. We are all like that woman in that we all are guilty of sin and deserve the penalty of death, Rom. 3:23. Satan, the accuser, is pressing God for our execution. Rev. 12:10.

2. The Lord in mercy will forgive us even as he did this woman.

3. We must "sin no more" if we would be pardoned.

4. We see the heartlessness of legalistic religion.

5. This reminds us of the cruelty of man towards his fellowman.

6. Christ shows us how to deal with those who fall into sin. They are to be saved, not destroyed. John 12:47.

7. Only he that is without sin should cast the stone of condemnation.

8. Like David, we can say, "Let us fall now into the hands of Jehovah; for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of men." II Sam. 24:14.

May we never forget the beautiful lessons of this event from our Lord's work among men.

## A Creed That Needs No Revision\*

Several major denominations have revised, even rewritten their creeds in recent years. Other groups are considering the same. The most notable of these projects has involved the revision of the historic *Westminster Confession of Faith* of the Presbyterian Church. The original document, being thoroughly Calvinistic and conservative, has grown distasteful to the modern leaders of that church. We who are New Testament Christians should thank God that we have a creed that needs no revision. It is just as relevant and truthful today as it was when issued by the Holy apostles and prophets in the first century. Of course, I speak of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, which is the final and complete revelation from God to Man, and the only rule of faith and practice for the church of Christ.

### OUR CREED CAN NEVER BE REVISED

I. Our creed was written by an all-wise God. He, only, was able to produce a document that would be suited for every man in every generation. Since its author is God, no man, nor group of men, is qualified to lift the pen to change a single point of its teaching. No spiritual question can arise that this heavenly document does not speak to. Hear Paul: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the Man of God may be complete, furnished completely, unto every

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\* We do not speak of a revision as from 17th Century English to 20th Century English, but rather of remaking the teaching of the creed.



good work." II Tim. 3:16-17. It was not the genius of the scripture writer that made one creed so excellent. Rather, David said, "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue." II Sam. 23:2.

II. Our creed was "once for all delivered unto the saints," Jude 3. That is, it was final and complete. Mormons, Adventists and others believe in a continuing revelation, but true followers of Jesus accept their New Testament as God's last word to man, that will stand unto Judgment Day. Some might argue that this leaves us disadvantaged, but the writers of our creed were guided into "*all the truth*" by the Holy Spirit of God, John 16:13. If we have in their writings all of the truth, what else could be given us by some so-called modern-day "revelation."

III. Our creed was sealed and dedicated by the blood of Jesus. When the Saviour instituted the Communion Supper, "he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the covenant . . .", Matt. 26:27. He likely alludes to that time in the past when Moses sprinkled the book of the law with the blood of calves and goats, water, scarlet wool and hyssop saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward." Heb. 9:19-20. So Jesus' blood, which flowed from his wounds on Calvary, sealed our creed. Can this be said of any other religious document in Christendom, however ancient or honored? No one would dare make such a claim for their creed, discipline or manual.

IV. Our creed will stand forever. After giving his great prophecy of judgment of Jerusalem, the Lord sealed it with this solemn declaration: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matt. 24:35. Not only is this true of that one prophecy, but of

every word Jesus wrote and commissioned his apostles to write. Such a creed stands no revision.

V. Our creed is truth. It is totally truthful, i.e., it admits of no error or shortcoming. Also, it is the sum total of spiritual truth. Jesus in his prayer to the Father said, "Thy word is truth," John 17:17. It is true because it honors God and the Son as they should be honored. It gives a true picture of man; made in the image of God, but a convicted sinner, Rom. 3:23. It gives us the true way of salvation through faithful obedience to Christ, Gal. 3:26-27. All the creeds of men make it a special point of emphasis to deny baptism and its proper role in salvation. Our creed says, "baptism doth also now save us," I Pet. 3:21. The world must learn that only truth can make us free, John 8:32.

VI. Our creed is universal. It is suitable for all men in every society. There is but one faith, Eph. 4:5. Jesus charged his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature in all the world, Mk. 16:15. The needs of the aborigine in Australia and the sophisticated Bostonian are all fully met in the will of Jesus. With all the progress of technology, the needs of man are still the same as when the scriptures were written.

VII. Our creed alone is mutually acceptable to every believer. Members of any denomination on earth can and will accept the scriptures as a standard of authority. But this cannot be said about any other creed ever written.

VIII. Our creed would bring the "ecumenical" unity men are seeking, if they would lay aside all others and follow this creed exclusively. We know that this was the prayer of Jesus, John 17:20-21. The great mystery is why religious men have failed to see this. Or have they refused to accept it, preferring their own schemes and

plans? Can you visualize a great gathering of religious leaders from the many different denominations. The agenda calls for a forum to find an acceptable basis for unity. The Methodist would rise and suggest that his *Discipline* would surely be a fine basis for a united stance. But immediately the Baptist would object. Would not his *Manual* be better? Besides, there are points in the Methodist creed that are at variance with the scripture. On and on it would go, for no sectarian will give up his creed for the creed of another sect. All feel that theirs is best. But could not a Christian stand and plead with all to accept his creed, the New Testament of Jesus? Who could object to it? Upon what grounds would he object? Already it is held in honor by all representatives. Why have men not recognized and followed this simple, workable course? Ashly Johnson presents a fine illustration of this lesson in his book, *The Great Controversy*.

IX. Our creed is a living message. It never grows obsolete. Hebrews 4:12 says, "The word of God is living and active . . ." Any book that man writes is dated. It will soon be outdated. Not so our creed. If any of today's intelligencia thinks that scriptures to be out of touch with modern man, then let him write a better book that does as fine a job in meeting our needs.

This creed is the sole standard by which we will be judged, John 12:48. It is God's message of salvation to lost men, Jas. 1:4. To reject the creed of Christ is to reject the author and the Father that sent him, John 13:20.

Do we truly appreciate our creed which needs no revision? Are we telling the world of its virtues and blessings?

## **The Christian and The Old Testament**

Somehow a terrible misconception has been "leaked" in many areas concerning the attitude of the church of Christ toward the Old Testament. Some have concluded that we do not believe in that part of God's word. Nothing could be further from the truth. We accept every word of that Testament and make constant use of it in our teaching. There are great benefits to be derived from a careful study of the old covenant.

### **IT IS GOD'S INSPIRED WORD**

When Paul said that "Every scripture is inspired of God." (II Tim. 3:16), he obviously included the holy scriptures that the Jews possessed. When Jesus affirmed that "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), only the Old Testament was in existence. The Lord even went so far as to say that if we believe not Moses' writings we cannot believe in Christ himself (John 5:47). In Luke 24:44-45, Jesus explained that the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms were "the scriptures" or God's holy writings. This we believe and teach.

### **IT ANSWERS MANY QUESTIONS**

The old covenant provides solid answers to life's most serious and perplexing questions. We would have no sure knowledge of the origin of the cosmos did we not have Genesis and other Old Testament verses that tell us God spoke these things into existence. (Ps. 33:6).

We would have no strong reply to the wild speculations of the evolutionist if God's Word did not give us the story

of man's creation in Genesis one and two. Likewise, man's relation to God would be a mystery were it not for the creation record.

We could only guess as to the reason for sin and the curse being upon man and creation, were it not for Genesis three.

Such questions as to the origins of the various nations and languages are answered only in the Genesis account. So also the riddle of the vast fossil record inscribed across the face of the whole earth is explained by the record of the flood in Noah's day. A hundred other questions are similarly answered in this book.

## **A FOUNDATION**

The Old Testament is the foundation upon which the new covenant was erected. "So that the law is become our tutor to bring us into Christ . . .", (Gal. 3:24). The law was the shadow of good things to come, (Heb. 10:1). It foreshadowed the coming Christian age. Christ fulfilled all of those prophecies written in the old scriptures concerning him. (Lk. 24:44-45). The New Testament takes up just where the old leaves off. It has well been said, "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; the New Testament is the Old revealed."

## **A HISTORY**

The Old Testament is a rich source of spiritual food for Christians. It provides multitudes of faith building lessons. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning . . .", (Rom. 15:4). Young Timothy had been taught those sacred writings from childhood and they had made him wise unto salvation. (II Tim. 3:15).

## **EXPLAINS NEW TESTAMENT TERMS**

When one opens the New Testament he is immediately confronted with scores of institutions, persons and events that would forever be a mystery were it not for the Old Testament. What would we know of Melchizedek or Aaron, Moses or David without the Old Testament? What would we do with the hundreds of quotations from the Old Testament, without the context in which they came from? Would we understand the allusion to sacrifices and the temple had we only our New Testament?

## **PROFIT FROM ITS CHARACTER STUDIES**

In Hebrews eleven, the writer draws numerous lessons from the lives of Old Testament saints. So can we profit from all of its characters. We learn lessons both of things to observe and things to shun. "Now these were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted," (I Cor. 10:6).

## **EVIDENCE OF ITS PROPHECIES**

Jesus said that the Jew's scriptures bore witness to him. (John 5:39). The angel declared that Jesus was the spirit of prophecy. (Rev. 19:10). Peter told Cornelius that all the prophets bore witness of Christ, (Acts 10:43). The 300 plus, prophetic details of Christ's life and ministry provided an overwhelming basis for belief in Him as God's Son. The same is true of prophecies relating to the church.

Truly, we should be grateful to God for the Old Testament and read and study it thoroughly. However, it must be stated:

## **IT IS NOT OUR RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE**

As Christians we are under Jesus and His New Covenant. Hear Paul, "But now we have been discharged

from the law," (Rom. 7:6). Again, he states that the old law "passeth away" and the new remains, (II Cor. 3:6-11). Christ "abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances," (Eph. 2:15). He took the Old Covenant out of the way, nailing it to his cross, (Col. 2:14, 16-17). We have a better covenant, enacted upon better promises than the old. It is a *new* covenant, not like the one made on Sinai. That old covenant is becoming aged and is nigh unto vanishing away, (Heb. 8:6-13). When Peter would have equally honored Moses, the law giver, Elijah the prophet, and Christ, God spoke from His throne saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17:3-5).

While we thank God for preserving for us the Old Testament, we look to the New for answers to such questions as:

How to be saved?; How to Worship God Acceptably?;  
How to live for Christ?

## Jesus and Jehovah

The foundation of the Christian religion is the deity of Jesus. This great doctrine has been a battle ground in every generation from the beginning of the movement. The Jews in Jesus' day rejected his claim to be equal with God, John 5:18. They cited his claim as alleged evidence proving him worthy of death, Matt. 26:63-66. The Arians of the fourth century rejected this doctrine. Today we have a modern counterpart of those early heretics. They style themselves *Jehovah's Witnesses*. They boldly deny that Jesus is deity and relegate him to the role of a created being. *Make Sure of All Things*, p. 207.

The Witnesses claim that only the Father is Jehovah and that the name *Jehovah* is exclusively His. *Ibid.*, p. 188. While teaching Isaiah in the East Tennessee School of Preaching, the author was impressed with the following truths that serve as deadly missiles to the false claim of *Jehovah's Witnesses*.

I. Is. 40:3-5, "The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah . . . and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed." Note this argument:

1. John the Baptist was to prepare the way of Jehovah, Is. 40:3-5.
2. But John the Baptist prepared the way of *Jesus*, Mk. 1:1-3.
3. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah.

II. Is. 44:24, "I am Jehovah that maketh all things." Is. 42:5, "... God Jehovah, he that created the heavens ..."



1. Jehovah is the creator of all things, Is. 44:24, 42:5.
2. But all things were created in Jesus, Col. 1:16, John 1:3.
3. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah, the creator of all things.

III. Is. 43:11, "I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour." Tit. 2:13, "Looking for the... appearing of the glory of the great God and our saviour, Jesus Christ."

1. There is *no* saviour but Jehovah, Is. 43:11.
2. But Jesus is saviour, Tit. 2:13.
3. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah.

IV. Is. 43:14, "Thus saith Jehovah, your Redeemer..." Tit. 2:13-14, "...Jesus Christ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us..."

1. Jehovah is redeemer.
2. But Jesus is redeemer, Tit. 2:13-14.
3. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah.

V. Is. 44:6, "Thus saith Jehovah . . . I am the first and I am the last and besides me there is no God." In Rev. 1:17 and 2:8, Jesus said to John, "I am the first and the last."

1. Jehovah is the first and the last, Is. 44:6.
2. But Jesus is the first and the last, Rev. 1:17, 2:8.
3. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah.

VI. Is. 45:5, "I am Jehovah, and there is none else, besides me there is no God." John 1:1, "...the Word was God." "And the Word became flesh..." John 1:14.

1. There is no God but Jehovah, Is. 45:5.
2. But Jesus is God, John 1:1, 14; Tit. 2:13.
3. Therefore, Jesus is Jehovah.

In addition to these passages from Isaiah many others affirm the deity or God-head of Jesus. We will cite only two.

VII. Rev. 1:8, "I am the Alpha and the Omega saith the Lord God, who is, who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Rev. 22:13-16 says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you..."

1. The Lord God is the Alpha and the Omega, Rev. 1:8.
2. But Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, Rev. 22:13, 16.
3. Therefore, Jesus is the Lord God.

VIII. Ex. 3:14, "I AM THAT I AM" is God's name and memorial unto all generations. In John 8:58, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was born, *I am*."

1. God is the I AM, Ex. 3:14.
2. But Jesus is the I AM, John 8:58.
3. Therefore, Jesus is God.

In these points we have proven two things:

1. Jesus is deity, that is, of the nature of God. His eternal nature is of the same substance as the Father and he has the same characteristics as He.
2. That the sacred name *Jehovah* is applied to Jesus as well as to the Father.

From these we can conclude that the *Jehovah's Witnesses* are wrong in their contentions about the name Jehovah, and about the nature of Christ.

For the record, the author would stress that he believes the Scriptures to teach that there are three divine beings, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus is divine and shares God-hood with the Father and the Spirit. All are worthy of our honor, worship, and devotion.

## **The End of the World and Matthew 24**

Man has always been concerned with "the end of the world." The obsession has never been greater than now. The passage most often cited for lessons on "the end" is Matthew 24. Does this passage give signs of the end of the world?

In vss. 1 and 2, Jesus declared that the temple would be destroyed. The disciples then asked

### **THREE QUESTIONS:**

1. When shall these things be?
2. What shall be the sign of thy coming?
3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world? vs. 3.

In discussing these, the first 25 verses speak of things which were to befall the contemporaries of Jesus. Verses 35-51 and chapter 25 speak of events that will occur when Jesus returns again.

### **THE FALL OF JERUSALEM**

The Lord answered their first two questions and predicted the destruction of Jerusalem with its attendant signs and horror in vss. 4-35. He sets forth a number of misleading signs in vss. 4-13. These included false Christs, wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. But said he, "the end is not yet . . . all these are the beginning of travail." vs. 6, 8. Definite and true signs of the end of the Jewish state were then set forth. The gospel would be preached in the whole world, vs. 14; the abomination of

desolation will then stand in the holy place. This of course would be the great tribulation associated with the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Christ warns them that no personal coming of himself will occur during the siege even through false Christs and false prophets would arise, vss. 23-26b. The signs in the sun, moon and stars describe the violent overthrow and dismantling of the Jewish state by the Romans as in Acts 2:17-21. The 28th-31st verses are confessedly difficult but they must be interpreted in the light of vs. 34. "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished." This verse could be called the "key to the chapter." Everything discussed in 24:1-34 was accomplished during the life time of those Jesus spoke to. Either this is true or Jesus was wrong in his declaration. Therefore these verses must have some relationship to the judgment on the Jews and the evangelization of the disciples.

## CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

Beginning with Matt. 24:36 - 25:46, Jesus discusses his second coming, the judgment and the end of the age. Notice he speaks of "*that day* and hour." Earlier he had spoken of *days*, plural, vss. 22, 29. This would indicate that different periods are under consideration. "That day" is the final day. Concerning the time of that day, he notes:

1. That no man knows the day or hour, not even himself;
2. It will be as in the days of Noah: "normal times", no sign but the preaching of Noah. Then judgment, vss. 37-39.
3. It will be totally unexpected: People working as usual; like a thief in the night, vss. 40-44.

### THREE PARABLES

He then gives three parables illustrating the nature of his second coming.

1. The parable of the servants stresses the fact that the Lord may delay his coming a long time and then come unexpectedly. vss. 45-51.

2. The parable of the virgins shows the need for preparation at all times since no warning signs will be given of his arrival, just the announcement. 25:1-13.

3. The parable of the talents describes the Master traveling into a far country and returning after a long time to reckon with his servants. 24:14-30.

He then closes the section with the grand and sobering picture of the judgment.

The careful reader is impressed with the contrasts between Matt. 24:1-35 and 24:36 - 25:46. Clearly these two sections have different though related subjects under consideration. Also the verses generally relied upon for signs of the end really show that there will be no signs of the end of the world, rather that the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief in the night. May all of God's children ever be ready for that day.

## **Establishing New Testament Authority**

**“and whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . .” Col. 3:17**

- I. As founder and head of the Christian religion, Jesus, has all authority.**
  - A. Matt. 16:18: “I will build my church.”**  
**Eph. 1:22: God “gave him to be head over all things to the church.”**
  - B. Matt. 28:18: “All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth.”**
- II. Christ delegated his authority to his apostles.**
  - A. Acts 1:8: “But ye (apostles) shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be my witness . . .”**
  - C. John 20:22-23: Upon receiving the Holy Spirit they could forgive or retain sins.**
  - D. Matt. 16:19: Being given authority, they could loose or bind in the name of Christ.**
  - E. Acts 2:42: The Jerusalem church continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching.**
  - F. Gal. 1:6-9: Not even an angel from heaven could change their inspired message.**
- III. The apostles and the inspired men were guided and directed by the Holy Spirit to record the will of Jesus in the inspired books of the New Testament.**
  - A. II Tim. 3:16-17: “Every scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for**

correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

- B. I Cor. 14:37: "The things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord."
- C. John 12:48: "The word that I (Jesus) spake, the same shall judge him in the last day."
- D. Rev. 20:12: We will be judged by the things written in the books of God.

#### IV. How the New Testament authority of Christ is established.

- A. The New Testament is the exclusive authority in Christianity.
  - 1. Although we love and respect the Old Testament as God's word, it is clearly no longer the rule for faith, worship and work under Christ.
    - a. Col. 2:14-17: The Law was nailed to the cross, let no one judge you thereby.
    - b. Rom. 7:1-6: We are dead to the Law.
    - c. II Cor. 3:4-11: The old covenant is passing away, the new remains.
    - d. Heb. 8:6-13: We have a new covenant, the old is nigh unto vanishing away.
    - e. Matt. 17:1-5: We are to hear Christ, not Moses and Elijah.
- B. We must have biblical authority for everything we do in religion, Col. 3:17.
  - 1. That which is not done by Bible authority must of necessity be done by human authority, Matt. 21:23-27.

C. Authority is found in the Scriptures in three ways:

1. Direct statements authorize.

- a. Declarative statements, Mark 16:16.
- b. Imperative statements (commands), Acts 2:38, Acts 10:48.
- c. Interrogative statements, I Cor. 12:29-30.
- d. Mortatory statements, Romans 6:2.
- e. NOTE: There are two kinds of commands.

1. Specific

2. Generic

- (1) Specific commands specify: A command must give one or more specifications or it is not a specific command. We must always do what is specified in a command, e.g., Gen. 6:14-16, build an ark of gopher wood, etc.
- (2) Generic commands are general in their nature. "A generic command authorizes things not mentioned, by leaving one or more ways, methods or means to human judgment, and by a necessary inference leaves something to human opinion, choice or option. In all such commands we must leave such items in the realm of human liberty, where God left them . . ." Gus Nichols
  - (a) "*Go preach* the gospel," Mark 16:15.
  - (b) "Visit the fatherless and the widows." Jas. 1:27.



2. The Bible authorizes by *implication* or *necessary inference*. Acts 22:16 implies Saul still had sins before baptism.

Acts 8:38-39

I Tim. 3:2: "husband of one wife, rule his family," etc., implies that elders were men, not women.

3. The Bible authorizes by *approved examples*.

- a. Actions which were condemned as sinful for men living then, Acts 8:18-24: Simon's attempt to buy the gift of God.

- b. Action which was obligatory for some men, but not for all (such as use of spiritual gifts) but is not obligatory for us today since we do not have the gift.

- c. Actions which were acceptable in fulfilling some generic command but not exclusive, Acts 20:6-14 - upper room.

- d. Actions that are the fulfillment of a specific command Acts 8:4 everyone preaching, a fulfillment of Matt. 28:18-20.

4. NOTE: Approved examples are binding on us only if there is an underlying specific command making that the exclusive way to obey God in that particular. Otherwise, their example only reflects their choice of expedients to fulfill a general command.

*Examples Not Binding:*

1. Acts 2:44-46; 4:34-37: Disciples selling possessions and giving to the poor. See also Acts 5:4.

2. Acts 11:29-30: Selling financial help by the hands of men.
3. Acts 14:23: Fasting with appointment of elders.
4. Acts 16:1-4: Paul circumcised Timothy.
5. Acts 20:1-13: Lord's Supper observed at night in an upper room.

V. The Law of Silence. It is a unique point in establishing New Testament authority that when God specifies something to be done, all other alternatives are thereby excluded. If God does not make a thing as acceptable by one of the above-mentioned means of authorization, he thereby forbids it. God does not have to say "thou shalt not" to forbid a thing.

- A. Lev. 10:1-4: Nadab and Abihu sinned against the Law of silence by offering strange fire God had not commanded.
- B. I Chron. 13:6-13; 15:1-2, 11-15; I Sam. 6:1-11: Uzzah was killed because they did not comply with the law. The ark of the covenant was to be carried on the priests' shoulders.
- C. Gen. 6:14-16: Noah obeyed this rule. God authorized gopher wood, he did not need to forbid oak, etc.
- D. Heb. 7:11-14: Christ could not be a priest on earth for he was of Judah, of "which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests." Specifying Levites to be priests forbade all others even without mentioning them.
- E. I Cor. 4:6, A.S.V.: "That in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which were written."

F. II John 9-11: We must abide *IN* the teaching of Christ to have God's blessings. To go on-ward and abide not in his teaching is to be without God and Christ.

We can abide in the teaching of Christ only by doing those things approved by Christ in his word. Anything done without human authority leaves one without Christ.

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|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Instrumental music | 4. Infant baptism |
| 2. Incense            | 5. Etc.           |
| 3. Sprinkling         |                   |

## VI. Expedients:

"For anything to be expedient according to Bible teaching, it must (1) give advantage in doing what God would have man to do, and (2) be authorized by His word. Even though man may feel that a particular thing would give certain advantages in carrying out God's instructions, if that thing is not authorized by the Bible, then that thing is not expedient. For a thing to be expedient, it must first be lawful.

"When God tells man *what* to do without telling him how to do it, man is free to do that which in his judgment is most expedient.

"When God tells man *what* to do and also *how* to do it, then the *how* is as binding as the *what* in the doing of whatever it is that is to be done."

—Thomas Warren.

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The author is indebted to:

Thomas B. Warren, *Liberalism and the Use of Instrumental Music in the Worship of God*.

Gus Nichols, *How to Establish Bible Authority*, as published in the Freed-Hardeman College Lectures of 1970, entitled, *The Church Faces Liberalism*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville.

## The Christian's Prayer Life

TEXT: James 1:5-7, 4:1-4, 13:15

To James, prayer is vital to the Christian's life. It is food for his soul. Without prayer he will surely die spiritually.

1. "If any of you lacketh . . . let him ask of God," 1:5.

Verse 5 connects in thought with vs. 2-4 where James had pointed out that temptations were intended to prove one's faith and develop patience. One might wonder, "How can I have the wisdom to understand and deal with such temptations? I am not that wise." To whom James responds, "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God." To further encourage the Christian to ask God for this, as well as all other needs in life, he hurriedly adds, that God gives "generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty," J. B. Phillips.

Experience in dealing with our fellow man has taught us that many gifts are made undesirable by the way they are given. "There is a kind of giver who gives only with a view to getting more that he has given, who gives only to gratify his vanity and his sense of power by putting the recipient under an obligation which he will never be allowed to forget; who gives and who then continuously casts up the gift that he has given. But God gives with generosity." Wm. Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, pp. 53-54. All would agree that the Christian is free to ask for all things he lacks and not just wisdom, if they are pleasing to God, I John 5:14. The principle would apply to all such things.

Something of the character of God is seen in vs. 5b, "let him ask of God who giveth." Literally from the Greek it reads, "*The giving God.*" This declares the fact that such is a characteristic of our God. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, James 1:17.

Verse 5 teaches: 1) We are to look to God and ask Him for our needs both spiritual and material; 2) giving is a trait of God's personality; 3) He gives to all His children, regardless of their station in life; 4) He gives generously; 5) He gives without reproaching or making us feel foolish or guilty.

## 2. "Ask in faith, nothing doubting." 1:6.

Thomas Manton writes, "We must put up no prayer but what we can put up in faith; . . . and faith must not wander out of the limits of the word. If you have a promise, you may be confident that your requests will be heard, though in God's season. You cannot put up a carnal desire in faith . . . where we have a certain promise, we must no way doubt of His will; for the doubt must either proceed from suspicion that this is not the word, or will of God, and that is atheism; or from a jealousy that God will not make good His word, and that is blasphemy; or a fear that He is not able to accomplish His will and that is down-right distrust and unbelief. Therefore, where we have a clear sight of His will in the promise, we may have a confidence towards Him." I John 5:14. *Commentary on James*, p. 48. Again, Manton says, "...all doubts are but disputes against a promise . . ."

Verse 6 teaches us that God gives rich blessings to those who: 1) ask in prayer; 2) ask of God; 3) pray in faith and confidence; and 4) do not doubt that God can and will answer according to His holy will.

### 3. "Asking amiss."

In 4:1-4, "James is . . . setting before his people a basic question . . . whether is your aim in life, is to submit to the will of God or to gratify your own desires for the pleasures of this world? And his warning is that, if pleasure is the policy of life, then nothing but strife and hatred and division can possibly follow." "To obey the will of God is to be essentially selfless."

### 4. "Ye lust and have not."

"The craving for pleasure in the end shuts the door of prayer. If a man's prayers are simply for the things which will gratify his desires, then his prayers are essentially selfish and therefore, it is not possible for God to answer them, for to answer them would be to do nothing other than to provide the man with ways of sinning. The true end of prayer is to say to God, Thy will be done. The prayer of the man who is pleasure dominated is: My desires be satisfied . . ." Barclay, op. cit, 118.

Some people fail to reach their desires and goals in life, because they ignore God and proudly try to succeed alone. Others fail because they have sinful goals and God forbids. Still others fall short because they pray wrongfully. James stresses the failure of all selfish prayer.

### 5. There are several other impediments to effectual prayer:

- A. God will not do wrong in answer to prayer. We need not ask it.
- B. Neither will He change His revealed will to please man.
- C. He cannot be expected to violate the laws of nature He has long since established.
- D. Doubts in the pray-er's heart impedes the prayer, James 1:6.

- E. To neglect to work for the fulfillment of your needs will disappoint your prayers. God has ordained that man first do his best before Heaven supplies the rest, Phil. 2:12, II Thess. 3:10.
- F. Lack of persistence robs many of heaven's blessings. Jesus says we "ought always to pray and faint not," Lk. 18:1-8.
- G. Wrong doing limits our prayers. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." Prov. 28:9.
- H. Mistreatment of one's family causes prayers to be hindered, I Pet. 3:7.
- I. Selfishness blocks God from supplying our requests, James 4:13.
- J. Self-righteousness left a religious man with an unanswered prayer, Lk. 18:9-12.
- K. Insincerity neutralizes prayers. Jesus rebuked the prayer practice of the hypocritical Pharisees, Matt. 6:5-7.
- L. Failure to forgive a brother forces God to deny our petitions for forgiveness, Matt. 6:12-15.
- M. Factiousness hinders our prayers before God, Matt. 5:23-24.
- N. "If the Lord will," 4:13-15.

This section deals with the sin of presumption, i.e., acting without taking God into account. "...Note that James does not say there is anything wrong about making plans for the future, nor does he denounce business or merchants or even the desire to make money. What He does reprove is such absorption in worldly affairs that one leaves God out." "... They live as if time were absolutely theirs, as if destiny were in their hands. Yet James underscores

the truth that man proposes but God disposes." H. P. Colson, *The Practical Message of James*, p. 72.

The Christian's entire life with all its intentions and activities is to be under the guiding principle, "If the Lord wills," how much the more so, his prayer request. The saintly apostle John writes, "This is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us." I John 5:14. The will of God is made known to man today through the inspired writings of our Bible, I Cor. 14:37. We are not to seek God's will in the fantasies of emotionalism, mysticism or seances, such as those who falsely claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. Like the Bereans, we still need to search the scriptures daily to see if these things ARE so, Acts 17:11. "We should never make plans and then ask God to bless them. What we should do is to consult God before making our plans and thus let Him in on the planning. If we allow Him to guide us, we may with confidence ask His blessing on our actions." Colson, p. 73.

In every prayer there are three parts: 1) the wish, a desire for something; 2) the word, the wish expressed in prayer; 3) the work, which helps to bring the desired results.

God's children should pray without ceasing, I Thess. 5:17. "Daily prayers are the daily visits which change belief that God exists, into belief in God as a loved and trusted friend." D. J. Campbell. "Prayer is not merely an occassional impulse to which we respond when we are in trouble; prayer is a life attitude." W. A. Bueller, *The Ency. of Religious Quotations*, p. 344.



## What My Gift To God Does

Often we become so materialistic in our thinking that we fail to see the real beauties and values of life. This is also true of our worshipping God with our offerings. To some brethren, giving is not an act of worship. Rather, it is "paying the preacher for his performance." To others, it is paying their dues for membership and privileges just as in a civic club or fraternal organization. To many, it is a donation made to a nebulous "they" who direct the congregation, to be used in providing a local program. The "they" is, of course, the eldership and preacher to these givers. The man with this attitude feels no personal obligation to the program; he made his donation. He does not share in it as his work. He generally is frequent and vocal in his criticisms of what "they" do. Needless to say, those who give with such attitudes are not worshipping and seldom do they reach the plain of generous giving.

### GIVING IS WORSHIP

The act of laying by in store on the first day of the week is worship unto Jehovah. I realize that I need not labor this obvious point with preachers, but we preachers need to teach it to our brethren, many of whom have not yet realized this.

Jesus said, "If therefore thou art offering thy gift before the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5:23-24. When the disciples of Jesus gives his money to God, he is bring-

ing his gift to the altar, very much like the Hebrew brought his sacrificial gifts to God's altar. Today we need no sprinkling of blood since Jesus died for us, but we still need to express our love and thanksgiving to God by offering Him our gifts that we have sacrificed other things for.

To Paul, giving was certainly an act of spiritual worship. He commended the Macedonian Christians who first gave their own selves to the Lord and then their funds, II Cor. 8:3-5. He repeatedly refers to giving as a "grace," II Cor. 8:7. Our giving reflects the "sincerity of our love," I Cor. 8:8. Our example in giving was Jesus who gave up his life for us, II Cor. 8:9. It is an action that must be purposed in the heart and cheerfully done, II Cor. 9:7. Our giving abounds through many thanksgivings unto God and causes others to glorify God, II Cor. 9:13. Our giving reveals our obedience to our confession unto the gospel of Christ, II Cor. 9:13. Could such a religious act be anything less than worship?

In addition to glorifying God, my gift does many other things that benefit my fellow man and me.

### SOME THINGS MY GIFT DOES

My gift makes possible the *saving of souls* by preaching the Word. It may have been my neighbor, my relative or my child who was taught the gospel by a faithful preacher. He was able to devote his time to their needs because my gift helped provide his support. Because I gave, the church can provide gospel tracts, Bible correspondence study courses, radio, T.V., and newspaper lessons. Each year across the land, thousands are saved by these tools.

My gift sends *missionaries* to distant lands to those perishing in the darkness and ignorance of paganism. Many

souls in the bondage of sin have prayed for light; have pleaded for someone to come over and help them; have searched diligently for the truth that can make them free. With my gift, they are enabled to find the pearl of great price.

My offering provides the needs of a *neglected or orphaned child*. It provides care for an aged person that has no one to care for them. It feeds hungry people that cannot provide for themselves. It pays a doctor bill for someone who is sick or perhaps it buys his medicine. It provides clothes for those who are cold and ragged. It buys fuel for a needy family in the cold winter. It sends flowers to a bereaved family telling them that we care.

My contribution provides me and my family *a place to worship*, protected from the elements. It provides a place and materials to educate my children in the Christian way of life. It furnishes lights that we might meet at night, heat for the cold of winter and cooling for the hot summer. It provides a suitable place to have the last rites for my loved ones; also a place for my children to be married.

When I lay by in store, it provides song books with which to sing and the supplies and utensils with which to commune.

Men are trained to preach the unsearchable riches of God's truth and be effective workers in the kingdom, because I give.

My gift makes possible a clean place to worship and study. Also it insures our investment of God's money (in our meeting house) against natural disasters such as fire and storm, etc.

I am provided with opportunities to be taught and trained by capable men for better and more rewarding service to

God because I give. Did we not give, we would be limited in having preachers to work with us in having special meetings and training workshops and I would suffer for it.

Giving to God in worship is my investment in a better community and nation. Because of the things the church stands for, the teaching it does and the work it does with people, young and old, certainly it is the preservation that will make the difference in survival or destruction. If the world is so bad in spite of the influence of Christianity, what would it be without it?

Upon the first day of the week let us lay by in store as God has prospered us, not grudgingly or of necessity, but cheerfully. Let it be an act of worship to Jehovah God, in spirit and in truth.

## Shall We Drink?

In a world of fleshly indulgence and gratification, the Christian is daily tempted to conform to the world's habits and standards. The apostle stands in the gap between us and the temptation with the ringing charge, "Be not conformed to this world." (Rom. 12:2.)

A prevalent temptation of today's saint is *social drinking*. The liquor industry has convinced the American public that an occasional drink is wholesome exercise. It is the same addictive drug, the same corrupting, crippling killer it has always been.

It is tragic to hear worldly Christians and compromising preachers trying to justify social drinking as harmless. Some college professors and preachers stoutly deny that they encourage social drinking, yet all the while they teach that the Bible does not really condemn such. It is not unusual to find their disciples social drinking, since the teaching paves the way for it. These drinking disciples will usually try to justify their practice by distorted appeals to scripture.

**THE CURSE:** Beveraged alcohol is one of our greatest enemies. By its evil influence, many other problems come. Some 5,000,000 Americans are alcoholics; another 5,000,000 are problem drinkers. Over fifty percent of all fatal auto accidents are caused by alcohol; some 25,000 deaths annually. Thousands are injured and maimed in the 5,000,000 plus auto accidents each year, caused by drinking drivers. Over 12 *billion* dollars is spent annually on this harmful drink. Another 120 million dollars are lost in property

damages due to drinking. "The cost of alcoholism to industry and business through absenteeism, faulty workmanship and labor turnover is conservatively estimated at more than one *billion* dollars a year in this country." Charles Frazier. Public supported hospitals and institutions spent well beyond 25 million dollars to care for alcoholics. The F. B. I. states that 59.47 percent of all crime can be charged to liquor. That is a ten *billion* dollar crime bill that the liquor industry can claim. In major cities some 50 percent of all arrests are for drunkenness. More than 25 percent of all divorce cases involve abusive use of alcohol. Sordid as this picture is, it does not begin to relate the whole picture: ruined lives, derelicts, broken homes, broken hearts, bad debts, hungry children, physically abused wives and children, lost production, lost souls, and on and on. How could any right thinking person try to justify this malevolent blight?

GOD SPEAKS: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (Prov. 20:1.) "Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening till wine inflames them." (Is. 5:11-12.) Drunkards cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. (Gal. 5:21.)

SOME DEDUCTIONS: Drinking alcoholic beverages causes much evil. But Christians are to abstain from the appearance of evil. (I Thess. 5:22.) Therefore, Christians abstain completely from alcoholic drink.

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. If we destroy the temple of God (our body) God will destroy us. (I Cor. 3:16-17.) Beverage alcohol destroys our body (even the moderate drinker's life span is shorter than abstainers.) Therefore, God will punish the person who indulges in liquor.

Our influence on others prohibits our drinking. "It is good not to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." (Rom. 14:21.) The man who boasts that he can handle his drink, may lead a weak soul into alcoholism.

Christians are to abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. (I Pet. 2:11.) Beverage alcohol wars against the soul by destroying our inhibitions to sin and leading us into the company of worldly companions who will turn our hearts away from God. Consider what alcohol does to the brain: "... 0.005-0.1% of alcohol in the blood causes removal of inhibitions, loss of self-control, weakening of will-power, impaired judgment, dulling of attention, loquaciousness. 0.1%-0.3% causes dulled or distorted sensibilities, unsteadiness of movement, inability to write, speech disturbances, loss of technical skills. Also it causes loss of color preception, distortion, double vision, loss of distance perception." *Effects of Alcohol on People*, Temperance Education Series, State of Alabama, Dept. of Ed., 1968, p. 13. For the advocate of social drinking, the important question is, at what stage of the above conditions has the drinker broken God's laws relative to drunkenness?

"The higher qualities of the mind are the very first to be rubbed out by alcohol. The delicate capacities of intellectual decision and choice and discretion and will power are those faculties which are first dulled and then wiped out by alcohol because they are the least capable of withstanding its toxic effects." *The Problem: Alcoholics — Narcotics*, Texas Alcohol Narcotics Ed., Inc., Dallas, p. 14. To the honest investigator, there is no question about social drinking. It is detrimental and demoralizing.

NOTABLE QUOTES: Dr. Richard E. Strain, M.D.; "As a brain surgeon I have yet to meet a moderate drink-

ing colleague who would like to have me operate on his son after I've had a few . . . No one does his best after drinking. He may think he does, but his judgment is defective. . . . moderation is a terrible fallacy."

Dr. Karl Menninger, of Menninger Clinic: "Alcohol constitutes the country's greatest mental health problem." It accounts for about 25 percent of the patients in mental hospitals.

Dr. Parran, former Surgeon General of the United States: "Alcohol is the major cause of insanity and poisoning from it causes more deaths than from all of most infectious diseases."

**EXCEPTIONS ANSWERED:** Some would justify their social drinking by Jesus' turning the water to wine at Cana. They assume it was alcoholic wine. This they cannot prove. The greek term for wine is *oinos* which refers to the juice of the grape, whether fermented or not. Barnes says, "The common wine drunk in Palestine was that which was the simple juice of the grape . . ." *Notes on the N.T.*, Luke and John, p. 194. The matter can be solved rather simply with these thoughts: Jesus did no sin. (I Pet. 2:22.) To give one's neighbor strong drink was sinful. (Hab. 2:15.) Therefore, Jesus did not give his neighbor strong drink. How could any God-fearing man ever think that Jesus gave men hard wine?

Others appeal to Paul's prescription to Timothy: "Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." (I Tim. 5:23.) To find any satisfaction from this passage, they would have to have a legitimate *medical* need for wine. Today, we have medicines and drugs that will do much better than wine.



Alcohol is an evil that destroys internally, externally, and eternally. These lines well represent its true nature:

*"A bar to heaven, a door to hell,  
Whoever named it named it well;  
A bar to manliness and wealth,  
A door to want and broken health.  
A bar to honor, respect and fame,  
A door to want and grief and shame,  
A bar to joys that home imparts,  
A door to tears and aching hearts.  
A bar to heaven, a door to hell,  
Whoever named it, named it well.*

May all of God's children abstain from every form of evil.

## **Keep Thyself Pure**

Young Christians face an increasingly immoral world. Each week seems to announce a new low for the nation's moral standards. Movie producers vie with each other to see who can have the most risque films. Magazine stands offer slick pornography for all ages to view, if not to purchase. T.V. brings burlesque and intimate bedroom scenes into the nation's homes. Society's general acceptance of this new morality is obvious on every hand. How can the young person keep himself pure in this hostile environment?

### **SIX SUGGESTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU KEEP YOURSELF MORALLY PURE**

The following thoughts are gleaned from N. V. Peale's book, *Sin, Sex and Self-Control*.

I. Recognize the power of sex. Do not assume that you can handle it or control it. It is like nitroglycerin.

II. Look ahead. The long term disadvantages of immorality outweigh what seem like desirous reasons of the moment. Think of your whole life when you are tempted to indulge in unlawful sex.

III. Be honest with yourself. Are you living up to the standards you have been taught? Just what kind of person are you? Are you looking for an excuse to indulge? Are you proud of the kind of person you are? Some immoral people have convinced themselves that they are really very moral.

IV. Make a commitment to yourself and to God that you are going to live a virtuous life. Give your body as a living sacrifice unto God. Rom. 12:1-2.

V. Make that commitment ahead of time. Do not wait until you are confronted with the choice; by then passion will likely have disabled your will power. Talk about your commitment, pray and think about it.

VI. Respect the established moral code. For the Christian that is the Bible. These moral guidelines are time tested. The race of mankind has tried and tested them and many others throughout history and always come back to the Divine standard. Remember the same God who created us and gave us our sexuality gave us the Bible for a code of conduct. He knew what would bring us the greatest happiness.

Remember that one of the best reasons for morality is that immorality does not work. It does not pay off. It does not lighten the burden of living, rather it increases it. There will be times when the way of righteousness will seem the loneliest place in the world. Be prepared for it. In those times remember the words of the 23rd Psalm. "Demand the highest ethical performance of yourself. God did not intend for us to be mere robots. He gave us the power to make our own decisions. He had faith in you that you would make the right choice. Do not let Him down." Peale

### **OTHER SUGGESTIONS THAT WILL STRENGTHEN US MORALLY**

To the above thoughts I would add the following.

Be a regular reader of God's word. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." Ps. 119-11.

Be in constant contact with God through prayer. Pray without ceasing, I Thess. 5:17. It is hard to do wrong when you are in communication with God.

Worship God faithfully with the church, Heb. 10:25. Great spiritual strength is to be found in assembling with the saints. It helps us keep our spiritual and moral strength high.

Associate with Christians at every opportunity. As evil companions corrupt good morals, holy companions strengthen our morals. Try to choose Christians for your dating partners. You will have eliminated much of your temptation to immorality by so doing.

Only go to social and recreational places and events that you could invite the Lord himself to attend with you. The atmosphere of a place or event can influence us for weal or woe.

Learn to say no to those friends or dates who invite you to questionable places or to do doubtful things. It is the most powerful medicine against immorality. Never be ashamed to refuse any invitation to sin. The Lord will be proud of you. Be proud of yourself.

Remember, no one ever regretted being decent but thousands have eschewed the day they fell into immorality. "Keep thyself pure." I Tim. 5:22.

## **The Case For Moral Chastity**

A great number of people in today's society have rejected the God-established rules of sexual purity. Through the news media, the classroom and the halls of Congress, spokesmen for the New Morality are seeking to destroy all guidelines for moral conduct except the individual's desires and passions. Rejecting the concept of man being specially created in God's image, they view him only as a sexually motivated animal. They call for unlimited expression of man's physical desires with no restraint.

Christians cannot allow themselves to be squeezed into the world's moral mode. Hear Paul, "For this is the will of God:

1. Even your sanctification;
2. that ye abstain from fornication;
3. That each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor;
  - a. Not in the passion of lust, even as Gentiles who know not God;
4. that no man transgress and wrong his brother in the matter;
  - a. because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we forewarned you and testified.
5. For God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who gives his Holy Spirit unto you." I Thess. 4:3-8.

The child of God sees numerous reasons for living a moral pure life. Consider the following points:

- I. Respect for God's law demands purity. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," Rom. 13:9. One cannot honor God and dishonor His divine law.
- II. Respect for God's claim on our bodies calls for moral uprightness. "...he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. Flee fornication . . . or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body." I Cor. 6:17-20.  
When one considers the awful price paid on Calvary to redeem us, he knows that he must honor and glorify God in his whole being.
- III. The Christian abstains from illicit sex out of respect for the Holy Spirit, whose temple we are. He trembles at the very thought of defiling the temple in which the Spirit of God dwells, I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19. Fornication defiles and God will not hold one guiltless who defiles His dwelling place.
- IV. Because of our respect for Jesus who died for us and is our Savior and Lord, we live above the base passions of lust. He . . . "bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness . . .", I Pet. 2:24. Loving him, we keep his commandments, John 14:15.
- V. Out of respect for our own selves, we abstain from moral uncleanness. Like Job, the child of God affirms, "Till I die, I will not put away mine integrity from me," Job 27:5. Any act of immorality robs one of his integrity. The Christian loves God first, then his neighbor, but then himself, Matt. 22:39. We must think of the consequences of sexual sin to our lives.

Our *soul* is affected, for fornication is always sin, I Thess. 4:6-8.

Our *conscience* is affected, for it always brings guilt and condemnation.

Our *happiness* is affected, for we worry about the outcome and we fear detection.

Our *reputation* is affected, for even sinners know it is wrong. And our sins are sure to find us out, Num. 32:23. Remember a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, Prov. 22:1. It takes years to repair a damaged reputation.

Our *physical health* may be affected, for those who are indulging in forbidden pleasures often contract venereal diseases that can ruin their minds and bodies and even be passed on to their lawful mates or future children.

Our *emotional health* is affected by such sin. Guilt and anxiety may cause immediate problems and even surface in the distant future to hound and plague our steps.

Our *future* can be ruined by ignoring God's moral standards. An unwanted child may well be the result of our immorality. An unwanted marriage may be forced upon a young couple, yoking them to someone they do not really love.

Our *chances for a happy marriage* can be spoiled by foolish acts of immorality. Because of personal guilt, some mates suffer from frigidity and impotence, being unable to express their love to the legitimate partner. If your past mistakes become known to your partner, it could arouse suspicion

and jealousy even years later. Some marriages fail because of problems related to past sins of immorality.

- VI. Respect for our parents keeps a young adult from sexual misconduct. Children should honor their parents and their guidance, Eph. 6:1-2. The shame of immorality dishonors them and wounds them grievously.
- VII. If we truly respect the person with whom we are tempted to sin, we would refuse to submit. It is a foregone conclusion that they will pay a price for the few moments of carnal pleasure enjoyed. If we love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39), we would never subject them to the problems that accompany sin.
- VIII. If we think of a child that might be conceived as a result of our foolish conduct, we would cease from sin. Few people are penalized so severely for a sin they had nothing to do with as a child born out of wedlock. The golden rule applies here, too, Matt. 7:12.
- IX. Respect for our nation calls for proper moral behavior. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people," Prov. 14:34. God will eject a people from their land whose moral standards are like those of the Canaanites, Lev. 18:24-25. It is estimated that more than 10 million Americans have been born out of wedlock, at this present time.

Venereal disease is epidemic in the land. Homes are decaying, and marriages are disintegrating at a frightening pace. Personal integrity is rapidly



disappearing across our land. A decent remnant, living soberly, righteously and godly in the evil world, abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, is the best insurance our nation can have. That is worth more than an arsenal of nuclear warheads or a treasury full of gold.

May all of the King's children reject the alluring voices of worldly pleasure and adorn themselves in the pure garments of righteousness.

## A Bible Basis For Marriage

Jesus set forth the platform for Christian marriage in Matt. 19:3-9. His was based on the plan God gave in Eden: One man and one woman, each leaving his old family and becoming one flesh with his partner. Being joined together by God, no man is to put them asunder. Divorce and remarriage is allowed only to the innocent party who divorces his mate because of fornication.

Couples entering marriage need adequate preparation if they are to have a happy and successful home. There are five areas where preparation is needed:

- A. Physical preparation. Physically immature people are not ready for marriage. Ideally, we should enter marriage with good physical health. Of course, there are thousands who had physical infirmities and yet made wonderful mates. But health is an asset. We should avoid those things in our youth that would needlessly endanger our health. I Cor. 6:18-19.
- B. Moral Preparation. There is no substitute for moral purity in marriage. "Keep thyself pure" was written for both boys and girls, I Tim. 5:22. Premarital sexual experimentation generally proves detrimental to happiness in marriage. To Christians it is an obligation to abstain from fornication. I Thess. 4:3.
- C. Intellectual Preparation. We need time to complete our education before accepting the responsibilities of marriage. Joe Schubert points out, "The higher the educational level, the greater the chance for success in marriage." Again he notes, "One sociologist reports

that the divorce rate for those who marry in their teens is six times as high as that in any other group." *Marriage, Divorce, and Purity.*

- D. Emotional Preparation. One of the chief causes of failure in marriage is emotional immaturity on the part of one of the partners or both of them.
- E. Spiritual Preparation. "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Ps. 127:1. With knowledge of the Biblical guidelines for marriage and allegiance to them a couple will be a long way towards a successful marriage. The Christian should marry a Christian, II Cor. 6:14; I Cor. 7:39. A major problem in marriage adjustment is encountered when the partners have a "built in" conflict of religion.

There are some essential characteristics that every Christian should look for in a marriage partner:

No other marital ties. Matt. 5:31-32.

A believer, i.e., a Christian. II Cor. 6:14, I Cor. 7:29.

Free from crippling characteristics such as drug addiction, alcoholism, temper fits, mental illness or sexual deviation.

The woman must respect the man enough to obey him. Col. 3:18.

The man must love his wife enough to lay down his life for her. Col. 3:19.

The man must be able to provide for his family economically. I Tim. 5:18.

Both partners must be mature enough to "leave their father and mother" and cleave to their marriage partner. Matt. 19:5.

Also, they must be mature enough to accept the responsibilities of parenthood.

Each partner must be mature enough and willing to make a lifetime committment to the marriage. Matt. 19:6.

The Christian's mate must be willing to help assume responsibilities to the aged parents of both. I Tim. 5:3-8.

Your mate should know beforehand and be willing to abide by God's law on divorce and remarriage.

Our world desperately needs to see the example of Christian marriages. Our children need the security of stable parents and home life. The church needs strong families. May all young Christians give serious thought to their preparation for successful marriage.

## Letter To An Unwed Mother

This letter was written to a young Christian girl who was expecting a child out of wedlock. Perhaps the thoughts and admonitions will be helpful to someone else. All personal notes have been deleted. —The author.

Dear —:

Your Mom wrote in her recent letter about the troubles and heartaches that have fallen upon you. As a friend, Christian brother and your spiritual father who baptized you, I feel I must write a few words that perhaps will be of some help to you.

I well remember that Sunday 8 years ago when it was my privilege to unite you with Christ in baptism. We have enjoyed many hours and occasions of Christian fellowship and joy since then. I have seen you grow up from a young girl to a grown lady. Life is always tough in those teen years. Satan works constantly to destroy God's children, and especially does he seek to allure the young and inexperienced through the youthful passions to forbidden sexual indulgence. All of us have been tempted as you were.

Looking back, you can now see your mistake. The question is, will you let that mistake ruin the rest of your life, or will it be a turning point that is the beginning of a new life for God?

Once again, the boy who promised to stand by the girl and marry her if she would give him all her love, has backed out and run away. Though there is no consolation

in it, remember you are not the first, and surely you will not be the last that has been so deceived. But look at it this way, it might not be the worst thing after all. Marriages that are forced upon young people because of unwanted pregnancies seldom work well. They are usually a burden that eventually is despised. They nearly always fail and usually involve both parties in the worst kinds of hard feelings, strife and sorrow. It is far better for life to find out now that he does not really love you, than to first be married and then find out. That would probably mean a divorce and unless you were able to put him away for adultery, it would mean a life of singleness.

As it is, after you have had time for the wounds to heal, and to grow a little older and wiser, you can find a good man who will truly love you and make you a good husband and home. God will forgive the act of fornication if you repent of it and sincerely ask Him to.

You have to decide what to do with your baby. That no one else can do for you. There are pros and cons. On the one hand some mothers resent after a while, a baby born under these circumstances. It will pose some problems to eventually finding a husband. There is sometimes a resentment in a husband towards someone else's child. Also you will have the big problem of providing for the two of you, and caring for the baby while you work.

The baby has a big stake in your decision. He will be born without a legal father and in our society, there is still a social stigma in being "illegitimate". People can sometimes be very cruel. If kept, he may never enjoy the full privileges of a normal home with a father. Some children of unwed mothers resent the burden their parents placed on them in life. You must think of this side of the question.

If given for adoption into a Christian home, he would have a normal home, a father and a father's name. He would not face the social problems mentioned above. He likely would never have to worry about resentment because of the circumstances of his birth.

Also there are points for keeping the baby. He is part of you. He is the fruit of a love that you cherished very much. He is all you have left of a romance that fell apart. You have learned to love him already as you have carried him in your body.

The main thing to consider in whether or not to keep the baby is, what is best for the baby? Do not let only your personal interests dictate your decision, for both of you must live with the decision the rest of your lives.

I have tried to point out all the considerations for you, not to decide for you, or even to recommend a course. I shall be praying for you and I hope you will let God help you. Two lives are at stake and a lot of interested people who love you dearly, have a real concern for your welfare and happiness.

Remember Jesus loves you. God, a loving heavenly Father is willing to forgive any and all sins you have committed. He will help you overcome these present problems and give you a victorious and happy life in Christ.

Dear sister, you have a whole life before you, do not let these heart breaks and disappointments ruin it for you. Look to the future, forget the past. Learn by your mistakes. Do not make them over again. Devote your life to serving Jesus and your fellowman. Perhaps you can be of help to some other young girl who has similar problems.

We love you very much and want to do anything we can to help you. Please take this letter as the sincere words of someone who cares. We remember you often in our prayers. I hope that one day we will see each other in heaven. If you want to talk any of these things over, please write or call. We would be glad to have you come and visit us if that would help.

Yours in Jesus,

—*John Waddey*



## Respect For Life

Ours is a world of changing values. Protests and demonstrations are mounted to stop the killing of baby seals, endangered species of birds, exotic beasts and reptiles. The same newspaper that tells of these protests for the preservation of creatures, tells of liberalized abortion laws and of states with over 100,000 abortions annually. Protests are launched for the further liberalization of laws protecting the innocent lives of the unborn.

When contemplating this problem or the kindred problems of suicide, or euthanasia (i.e., so-called mercy killing) we need first to think about life itself. Life is a gift from God, Acts 17:25. "He giveth life and breath to *all things*." Human life alone is "in the image of God", Gen. 1:26. Man has always been forbidden by God to destroy another human life on the basis that in the image of God, man was created. The penalty for destroying a life made in the image of God was death. The man slayer had to forfeit his life, Gen. 9:6.

Christianity was born into a world that had little respect for human life. It was evidenced in the enslavement of some 60 million people in the Roman Empire. Slaves had no rights, even their lives were subject to the whim of their masters. Women enjoyed only a little better role. Torture and atrocities were regularly performed for public entertainment in the gladiatorial games and contests. Slaves, prisoners of war, criminals and persecuted minorities were slaughtered in the most vicious manners. These lives were considered only of economic value. One of the most gruesome practices was infanticide.

“Throughout all the former history of Rome and its provinces, any infant unwelcomed to its father had been either smothered or exposed; that is, thrown out to die. Some people made a business of gathering abandoned infants, bringing them up, and selling them as slaves.” J. L. Hurlbut, *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 77. In addition to this was the wide-spread and common practice of abortion.

## **CHRIST'S REVOLUTIONARY TEACHING ABOUT THE VALUE OF LIFE**

Jesus' teaching introduced a new attitude towards life. All life was held to be sacred. The three parables of Luke 15 teach the value of the individual. Matt. 19:14 reveals his concern for little children. John 3:16 and Mark 16:15 reflect God's concern to save *all men*, regardless of their position or status in society. Acts 10:34 states that God is no respecter of persons. These and kindred passages declared a new evaluation of life. All human life is sacred. It was so created. It alone is in the image of God. Jesus died for the saving of all human beings. In the Christian society there would be equity for all since all were one man in Christ, Gal. 3:27-28.

## **TODAY'S CHALLENGE: ABORTION**

Almost daily the news media reports some news about abortion; most often the legalization and growing practice of it. What is abortion? Abortion is the intentional interference with a live human fetus intending to bring about its destruction. Why is such a lesson needed? Until recently our society generally regarded abortion as an evil crime. It was illegal and those found securing or producing abortions were prosecuted as criminals. Exceptions were made where in the doctor's judgment the continuation of the pregnancy was a direct threat to the

mother's life and in some states for cases of rape or suspected deformity of the child. Times have changed. The U.S. Supreme Court recently voided all state laws on abortion; and for all practical purposes opened the door for abortion on demand for any reason the mother offered.

We are affected by the society in which we live. Tomorrow's Christians will tend to accept this new philosophy unless clear and strong teaching is done now to educate us in the rightness and wrongness of the matter. Our children are hearing in the public schools and through the news media that such action is acceptable and moral. They must be taught the truth about abortion.

The seriousness of this problem demands that we raise our voices. In New York state last year, 115,000 abortions were performed. Other states have equally permissive laws and now the court ruling destroys all state legal restraints.

1. Most serious is the moral question involved in abortion. It being the planned destruction of innocent human life, it is nothing short of the most heinous evil.
2. The ensuing consequences are forbidding. When mankind can harden its conscience to annually slaughter hundreds of thousands of unborn babies, it will be but a short step until they choose to legalize the destruction of the terminally ill, those too old to care for themselves, the mentally and physically defective and other undesirables. The civilized world stood aghast at Hitler's extermination of undesirables and Jews, but noddingly approves of the mass destruction of unborn babies. The governors of two states have both publically stated their desire to see legislation passed permitting a regulated euthanasia. This pagan philosophy

about the value of life is a diabolical monster that will not easily be contained once loosed.

Romania legalized abortion in 1951, they now have a strict law against it. In 1961 over half of the women in Bucharest admitted they had undergone four or more abortions.

3. The consequences to the women who undergo abortions are often disastrous. The mental anguish and guilt feelings are a veritable torture chamber. They are not easily escaped. There is no way the deed can be undone. The emotional trauma can be far worse than any or all other considerations that prompted the abortion decision.
4. We cannot ignore the spiritual consequences. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Gen. 9:6. Unforgiven, such sins will surely rob man of the soul's reward. Alienation from God in this life because of sin is superceded by separation from Jehovah in eternity, II Thess. 1:7-9.

### ABORTION: SOME DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

That the question of abortion is complicated, no one would deny. These hard questions have left many mouths and pens mute, when the author really believed abortion to be sin.

1. When does the fetus become a living soul? Jewish theology says at birth. Catholics say at conception. Protestants generally have no certain position on the question. The Bible does not give a specific declaration on the subject. However it does incidentally give circumstantial evidence to the effect that *life begins at conception*.

The Psalmist writes:

“For thou didst form my inward parts;  
Thou didst cover me in my mother’s womb.  
I will give thanks unto thee;  
for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:  
Wonderful are thy works;  
And that my soul knoweth right well.  
My frame was not hidden from thee,  
When I was made in secret,  
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts  
of the earth.  
Thine eyes did see my unformed substance:  
And in thy book they were written.  
Even the days that were ordained for me  
When as yet there was none of them.”

Ps. 139:13-16.

In these verses we see David recognized as a person by God before his birth, even when he was being “curiously wrought” (literally embroidered) in his mother’s womb, vs. 15. Also when God saw David’s “unformed substance” He ordained David’s days of life, vs. 16.

Isaiah gives Jehovah credit for having made man and formed him “from the womb”, 44:2. God spoke to Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in the belly I know thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee,” 1:5. Unborn John the Baptist leaped in his mother’s womb when his mother greeted Mary the expecting mother of Messiah, Lk. 1:41. Surely he was a person with identity and being at that time.

2. The next critical question is “Is there ever a time when the life of the unborn can be sacrificed?” For example, if the life of the mother is endangered? Traditionally Protestant Western society has said yes to

this question. We might add to this abortions because of rape, incest or possible deformity. Catholics have adamantly maintained no abortion on any grounds. Here again the Bible does not speak directly. The problem that presents itself to this author is how can we claim God's approval for these exceptions in absence of a clear message from God? Although I do not judge those who have to make these choices, I personally feel a great question mark in my conscience about it.

While these serious questions are posed as the need for liberalizing abortion laws, it is interesting to note that: "The total of all abortions when the mother's life, rape, incest, and deformed babies are involved is less than ten percent." S. I. McMillen, M. D., *Abortion, Is it Murder*, Christian Life, Sept. 1967, p. 52. Also we need to think very seriously about destruction of those endangered by deformity. Eighty-five percent of the children whose mother had German measles during pregnancy are born normal. Fifteen percent are affected in some way. Is it logical to destroy eighty-five percent for the fifteen percent who will have some degree of handicap? Recently the author heard of a prominent gynecologist pose this problem. If the father was syphilitic and the mother tubercular; if three previous children had suffered serious congenital defects, what would you recommend? Abortion? You just ordered the death of Beethoven.

Are we not playing God when we decide only on the basis of *possible* problems that that child should not be allowed to live? There are thousands of happy people that were born with physical handicaps, that are glad they were given opportunity for birth. With the present day concern about overpopulation, many would justify abortion as an expedient to keep the earth from overpopulation. While we share their concern about this prob-

lem, we reject the destruction of unwanted babies as a solution. There is a basic difference between pre-conception birth control and the destruction of conceived, existing life. It is an undeniable fact that many mothers just do not want to be burdened with unwanted children. Much of the reasoning used to justify it is a cover up for their desire to be free from parental responsibility.

## **A STRANGE CONTRAST**

Our generation is probably the most literate and most highly educated of all generations, yet it reflects some extremely infantile reasoning. Some geniuses would solve the problem of illegal abortions by legalizing abortion. We could also eliminate all crimes of murder by legalizing murder. There is more concern for the ecology, vegetable life, than for human life. We see great amounts of money and effort expended, often with great zeal and emotion, to save animal life. Then the same element might picket for abortion on demand; the wanton destruction of human life. We have Humane Societies for pets and laws protecting animals from cruelty. Yet in the same city are death clinics for helpless, unborn human beings. Capital punishment is ruled cruel and inhumane treatment of murderers, rapists and kidnappers. Yet precious souls who have never known right from wrong are systematically wiped out in the name of freedom, liberty, women's rights, and progress. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil," Is. 5:20. This well fits our highest courts.

## **SOME BIBLE PRINCIPLES THAT TOUCH THE ABORTION QUESTION**

1. God's law declares "Thou shalt not kill," Rom. 13:9, literally, Thou shalt do no murder. Murder is the delib-

erate taking of human life without provocation. Abortion on demand violates this sacred code.

2. Jesus said, "all things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them," Matt. 7:12. Every mother considering abortion, every doctor, parent or friend recommending it, should first ask himself, would I want my life terminated without trial or opportunity to defend my rights? Apply this golden rule and the abortion clinics would be closed for lack of business.

3. Phil. 2:4 charges, "not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you to the things of others." Selfishness and personal interest is the underlying motive in the overwhelming majority of abortion cases. Mothers are thinking of their own convenience and careers. Some are demanding liberty to control their own bodies; thus abortion on demand. What is this but selfishness? This is a basic cause of unwed mothers choosing abortion rather than bearing the shame of their sin.

4. Rom. 1:31 says that the Gentiles were "without natural affection" and stood condemned for it. This term, *astorgos*, "denotes the want of affectionate regard toward their children. He doubtless refers here to the practice of common among heathens . . . of exposing their children, or putting them to death," A. Barnes. Surely when a mother can deliberately kill the child in her womb she is lacking that normal, natural, motherly affection God expects of us.

### SOME MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

1. To plan and carry through an abortion is "playing God." God gives life. Only He has the right to take it. Who are we to infringe upon His perogatives?



2. Abortion is not a matter of "the mother's rights." Rather the question is, *Is it right before God?*

3. The time to exercise one's rights is before intercourse. It is a fact that where no sex is engaged in no unwanted babies appear!

4. The concept of a woman's right to control her body is faulty. First God gave her her life and body. She is His by right of creation, Acts 17:25. If she is a Christian, her body is His again by the new birth. She was bought with a price, she is not her own, I Cor. 6:19-20. If she is married, she "hath not power over her own body, but the husband . . .", I Cor. 7:4. True, she has certain rights, but not unlimited. Those rights are subject to the higher will of God.

5. If abortion is accepted, upon what grounds would we oppose so called "mercy killings" of the defective, elderly, insane and depraved.

6. Is this practice really any different than the ancient Roman practice of infanticide? What is the difference in killing a child at 90 days or 276 days after conception?

7. If New York's 150,000 abortion deaths is accepted as amoral, what was so bad about Herod killing a few dozen babies at Bethlehem? Or Pharoah's command to drown all newborn Hebrew boys? Wherein lies the fundamental difference? Death certificates are issued for each abortion in New York.

8. The difference between an unborn child and a new born child is only a matter of time, not essence. The unborn has all the potential of the day old child. The only real difference in a day old baby and a pre-natal child is the way he feeds and obtains oxygen.

9. Abortion trends reflect the non-Christian evolutionary concept that man is only a highly evolved animal. It is

part of a dehumanization of mankind. One reason why people can accept this new attitude about abortion is that the present generation has been educated to think of its self as an extension of the animal realm.

10. The Supreme Court has obviously decided for paganism and against Christianity in this matter. The court observed, "ancient religion" did not bar abortion. This clearly refers to paganism since Judaism and Christianity did protest abortion.

11. A second century Christian writer said, "To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. That is a man which is going to be one . . . ." *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.

12. The noble Hippocratic oath that all medical doctors used to take, states, "so far as power and discernment shall be mine, I will carry out regiment for the benefit of the sick and will keep them from harm and wrong. To none will I give a deadly drug, even if solicited . . . I will not aid a woman to procure an abortion." How ironical that this ancient pagan physician had a more exalted estimate of life than his modern counterpart . . . many of whom profess to be Christians.

### SOME ALTERNATIVES TO ABORTION

1. First, above all else, we recommend moral chastity and purity. No virgin ever faced this decision. Nor did she regret her continence.

2. The poor and those with health problems can practice birth control to prevent conception. This is not wrong.

3. The irresponsible could be sterilized rather than to destroy their ill-conceived offspring.

4. Unwed mothers should bear their children with the aid and help of the church and society. If they choose not to keep them, then offer them for adoption to the thousands of couples anxiously desiring to find children to grace their homes.

This is not a question of "public health" or of women's civil rights. It is a question of how a society looks upon human life in whatever form it appears. Man is the image bearer of the living God and the unborn child at the very least must be viewed as a potential image bearer of God.

"A society that refuses to insist that abortion is a crime against humanity aborts its own future." J. C. Nederhood.

Legal right to abortion on demand does not grant *moral right*. The Christian is challenged to exercise his moral judgment and conscience more than ever before. Now we must refuse to take this alternative, not because it is illegal by man's law, but because we honor God's law and man, made in Jehovah's image. We Christians must cry out against this wickedness and boldly demonstrate the Christian reverence for life.

I am not God nor judge. I have set forth what I understand the Scriptures to teach. When someone is faced with the decision about a child conceived through rape, or incest, or with great threat of deformity or danger to the mother's life, may they consider these points well. They will have to make that decision before a righteous God with much fear and trembling.

May God help every Christian and our national leaders to reverence the life made in the image of God.

## Perversion Right or Wrong?

The last few years have seen a marked change of attitudes toward sexual perversion in human behavior. Churches and religious leaders formerly were the vanguard of those opposing perversion as a violation of God's law of morality.

It is strange indeed to read of churchmen and their conferences excusing the pervert. Worse still, we even see some "men of the cloth" justifying the practice and classing it as a normal, "sub-culture" of man. Some are even feverishly working to win acceptance for this "sub-culture" in society and the churches. Has the message of the Bible changed? Hear God's word:

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins. Their most notable being sodomy, homosexuality, Gen. 19:47.

Jude notes that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah gave themselves over to fornication and went after strange flesh and are *set forth as an example* suffering the punishment of *external fire*. vs. 7.

God gave up the Gentile world "unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another." Rom. 1:26-27. He concluded by saying those who practice such things are worthy of death, Rom. 1:32.

Paul declares in I Cor. 6:9-10 that "effeminate and abusers of themselves with men" shall not inherit the

kingdom of God! Our just God would not consign to hell a poor helpless pervert who could not keep himself from indulging because of a diseased mind. Moral perverts will be judged for consciously and willfully breaking God's law, thus sinning, I John 3:4.

There is good news for the morally perverted sinner. He can be washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus and in the Spirit of God, I Cor. 6:11. With God's help he can rise above that degraded life of sin to a life of virtue, Phil. 4:13.

## A Look Inside Sodom

The name of Sodom has become one of the most common proverbs of our world. When we would describe the worst kind of wickedness or when we think of Divine judgment, we use Sodom to illustrate it. Seemingly, most people are only aware of their sins of sexual immorality and perversion. However, a careful study, especially in the prophets, reveals a number of other sins that made Sodom the object of God's wrath. Acquaintance with these underlying problems puts Sodom and her sister cities in much clearer focus for modern-day Christians.

Sodom was located in the lush Jordan valley probably just above the northern end of the Dead Sea. The Plain of Jordan was well watered everywhere, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, Gen. 13:10. This fertile plan supported not only Sodom and Gomorrah but three other satellite cities, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar, Deut. 29:23. These smaller cities fell into the same pattern of sin as their neighbors and were destroyed with them, Jer. 49:18.

In a stinging rebuke to a degenerate generation of Israelites, Ezekiel the prophet declared they were greater sinners than the men of Sodom. Then he relates the catalogue of Sodom's sins.

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fullness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed

abomination before; therefore I took them away as I saw good." Ezek. 16:49-50.

*Pride* went before their fall. It has well been said that pride lays at the root of every sin man commits. Pride is one of the most respectable sins. It can be found in practically every situation of life. It often flourishes in congregations, pews and pulpit alike. Commonly it is catered to and pampered. Yet to God it is an abomination, Prov. 6:16-17, I John 2:15.

*Fullness of Bread and Prosperous Ease* were in Sodom. A modern term for this situation is affluence. Few generations since Noah have known the meaning of these words as well as we of America today. Rather than being sin, this is the incubator of sin. It provides a perfect environment for sin to spawn and flourish in. The KJV renders the second phrase, "abundance of idleness." It is strange that God's blessing of a fruitful land was twisted to promote greed, pride, idleness and voluptuousness. No greater danger confronts our nation and the church today than fullness of bread and prosperous ease. Every civilization that survived long enough to reach this affluent state has fallen victim to its decaying influence. Persecution has never destroyed the church, but prosperity and ease have wrecked her time and again.

*She did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.* Selfishly indulging herself, Sodom neglected the poor. God did not overlook this heartless act. Despising self discipline and catering to the fleshly appetites tends only to make them more insatiable. The poor have always been with us and always will, perhaps they are God's test to our character, Mk. 14:7.

The people of Sodom were *haughty*. This is defined, "Disdainfully or contemptuously proud." It best describes

the kind of action and conduct that grows out of a proud heart.

The *abominations* they committed are not specified by Ezekiel, but appearing in a catalogue such as this, it would likely refer to some special sin, especially hateful or detestable or to idolatry (see Is. 44:19 and 66:3). In view of the fact that no other verse mentions Sodom being guilty of idolatry, and in the light of the repeated mention of their gross sexual aberrations, we would conclude that is what "abomination" here refers to. If the foregoing conclusion be correct, then it is a striking fact that another of Sodom's ills was the lack of religion, even of a pagan sort. Even the most corrupt form of worship usually has some restraining power on at least some social evils and sins. Sodom shows no sign of restraining whatever.

Turning to Jeremiah 23:14, we discover yet three more sins of Sodom cited. Charging the false prophets of Jerusalem with having become like the men of Sodom, he gives three examples.

"In the prophets of Jerusalem also I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies and they strengthen the hands of evil-doers, so that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them become unto me as Sodom . . ."

Before they degenerated to the vilest forms of perverse immorality, they had given themselves over to *adultery*. Those who set out on the paths of fleshly lust seldom stop until they have plunged to the depths of degradation. An old Arab proverb says, "Passion is a tyrant which slays those whom it governs." It is like fire, which once kindled can scarcely be quenched.

They *walked in lies*. Not an occasional lie in a moment of temptation, but a way of life, marked by lying.



*They strengthened the hand of evil-doers* so that none did turn from his wickedness. In God's sight, not only is the overt sinner guilty, but he who encourages his evil is held as an accessory to the fact. "He that justifieth the wicked and he that condemneth the righteous, both of them alike are an obomination unto Jehovah." Prov. 17:15.

Isaiah cried out against the sinners of his day, "The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not." 3:9. Sodom's citizens were brazen sinners. They had no shame. Their moral consciousness no longer felt pain when abominations were committed or when others knew about it.

We could not close the record of her indictment without mentioning her awful sin of homosexuality. This is the import of the disgusting event in Gen. 19:4-5: "The men of Sodom . . . both young and old, all the people from every quarter . . . called unto Lot, and said unto him, where are the men that come in to thee . . . bring them out unto us, that we may know them." As Jude states, they gave themselves over to fornication and went after "strange flesh", vs. 7.

Space does not allow the citing of present day parallels to those we have seen inside Sodom. Really it is not needed, since anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear can see the similarities on every hand. The daily newspaper, the evening T.V. news, plus numerous entertainment shows, the rash of X-rated movies, filthy books and magazines, ad infinitum ad nauseum.

The tragedy of this sordid community was that a handful of righteous people could have turned away the wrath of judgment from them, but ten righteous souls could not be found, Gen. 18:32. So long as there is a righteous remnant in our land, the justice of God will spare it. Woe

be unto a sinful land if He does not find the ten righteous souls! We do not know what the minimum percentage of faithful people must be. This makes it all the more imperative that we be about our Father's business, seeking and saving that which is lost. We must not deceive ourselves, should our society fill the cup of iniquity, the land will vomit us out, Lev. 18:24-25.

Sodom is an example of the punishment of eternal fire which awaits the wicked, Jude 7. It points out the certain judgment awaiting the wicked, especially the immoral and perverted. God delivered righteous Lot from the destruction of that society. So God can and will deliver His faithful ones whose righteous souls are vexed in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation, II Pet. 2:8-9. Finally, the world must be made to realize that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those who reject the blessed light of the gospel of Jesus and the moral standards He has declared, Matt. 10:15.

## **Extermination of the Canaanites And the Righteousness of Jehovah**

When the Israelites were camped on the east bank of Jordan, ready to cross over and take the land promised, God instructed them:

“But of the cities of these peoples, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them . . . as Jehovah thy God hath commanded thee; that they teach you not to do after all their abominations . . . so would you sin against Jehovah your God.” Deut. 20:16-18.

An oft heard assertion of the infidel is that Jehovah could not be totally benevolent God, one of love and mercy, and at the same time order the annihilation of the Canaanite nations. They go even farther and equate the God of the Bible with murderous tyrants such as Hitler and Stalin who committed genocide. Some of them attempt to make a distinction between the “cruel” God of the Old Testament and the God of love of the gospels as though there were two different beings. Their conclusion is that a God who would order the extermination of a nation is not worthy of our adoration. Of course, their real purpose is to discredit the God of the Bible and the religious system that worships Him. Today the same objections are being raised by liberal theologians. Really, this assault is not new, for the Gnostics of the second and third centuries held the same views. See Robert Milligan *Scheme of Redemption*, p. 194.

When Christians meet such challenges to their faith in the classroom they are often shaken, not knowing how to respond to the charge. Every Christian should be able to give an answer to this blasphemous indictment. The ten reasons given below give a scriptural and logical vindication of God's actions in dealing with the Canaanites.

1. We must remember that God is not only benevolent, but He is also *just*, "His work is perfect; for all his ways are justice: a God of faithfulness and without iniquity. Just and right is he." Deut. 32:4. Justice requires that sin be punished, "The wages of sin is death," Rom. 6:23. This same attribute of justice required that He severely punish His own chosen nation of Israel when they sinned, Lev. 18:26-29.
2. The Canaanites were punished because of their own sins, not just because of a whim of an unhappy God. "The land is defiled: therefore, I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants," Lev. 18:25. They had filled their cup of iniquity and their judgment had come. (Com. Gen. 15:16 and Rev. 17:4).
3. God, being the creator and sustainer of life, has the right to destroy those of His creatures that rebel and defile themselves and dishonor their Creator. This is illustrated in Jeremiah 18 when the prophet pointed out a parable of the potter making a vessel on the wheel. When it marred his hand "he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter," verses 4. So God does with nations, 18:4-12.
4. The Lord had the total good of the total race in mind in this judgment. A doctor is not cruel who removes a cancerous growth from a body to spare the whole body from infection and death. Nor is God cruel

when he removes and destroys a fatally diseased society of people who would corrupt many others if left alone.

5. It was necessary for God to cleanse the land to protect the chosen nation (Israel) from the moral and spiritual corruption of idolatry in order to preserve a fit environment for Messiah to spring from. "Thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in the land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee." Ex. 23:31b-33.
6. Infants who died were saved by His mercy whereas they would have grown up into idolatry and condemnation if left in that awful environment. Only the soul that sins is held morally responsible in externity, Ezek. 18:20.
7. Arrangements were made for the sparing of any righteous souls who wished to turn to the God of Abraham. See the case of Rahab, Joshua 6:17. Also leniency was offered to some of the tribes, Deut. 20:10-11.
8. This act of judgment demonstrated to the whole world the awful penalty for gross wickedness. Others could benefit from this, repent, and be spared. Thus it was a deterrent to other sinners.
9. The Canaanites had been exposed to the true knowledge of Jehovah and His righteousness in an earlier day. They had had Melchizedek, priest of God Most high, in their midst, Gen. 14:18-19. Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob and the patriarchs had lived among them for some 150 years. Their ancestors had known the traditions of God from the days of Noah. They had

witnessed the judgments of God upon Sodom and the cities of the plain, Gen. 19:24-29. They had consciences that cried out against their infractions of moral law, Rom. 2:14-15. Like the Gentiles of Romans, Chapter 1, they had refused to have God in their knowledge, therefore, God had given them up to destroy themselves, Rom. 1:21-28. With the knowledge of God that could be deduced from nature, they were "without excuse" for their idolatry and adominable sins.

10. The Lord, in his goodness had spared those nations 450 years because their situation was not wicked enough to warrant expulsion from the land, Gen. 15:16. This time could have been used for reformation. But it was not.

God with infinite wisdom, purity and justice is able to decree an act of severe judgment upon a whole nation such as we have been discussing. No man has the totality of knowledge to make such an awesome decision. One little point overlooked might change the whole picture. Nor has any man the total sense of fairness and justice and the moral purity to pass such judgments on his fellowman. Man is so easily prejudiced by many factors that he should never attempt such a decision. Fiends like Hitler and Stalin were more evil than the people they exterminated. They exterminated peoples for selfish motives. They destroyed good people who were trying to do their best. No such charge can be leveled against Jehovah and His judgments upon the Canaanites.

The Christian trembles when he considers the judgments of Jehovah against the wicked. With faithful Abraham, he confesses, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 18:25. We need not give place to the infidel who

blasphemes our God. "Is there unrighteousness with God?" With Paul we cry out, "God forbid." Rom. 9:14. "There is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," II Chron. 19:7. With David we sing, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Psalms 19:9.

## The Doctrine of Demons

A world in rebellion against God finds itself obsessed with the occult, devil worship, witch craft and demon possession. Books and movies are profiteering off of this morbid spiritual degeneracy. The current interest in demons prompts us to search the Scriptures to learn what God reveals on this mysterious subject. The speculations of the curious and the impostures of the wicked who scheme and play on the credulity of the ignorant and fearful have helped to create and maintain the wild systems of demonology that have prevailed through the years. *Imperial Bible Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 144.

### WHAT IS A DEMON?

The most common New Testament term is *daimonion*, translated *demon*, ASV (devils, KJV). Originally it denoted supernatural powers, generally in a good sense. The term and its cognates grew to describe both good and bad powers. By New Testament times it referred exclusively to evil beings. Some times they are called evil spirits, unclean spirits, foul spirits, angels of the devil, world rulers of this darkness, and hosts of wicked spirits in heavenly places. Also commonly used in the epistles are the terms, *principalities* and *powers*. *Principalities* is from *archai* and speaks of "angelic and demonic power." *Arndt & Gingrich Lexicon*, p. 112. *Powers* is the Greek *exousia* and suggests "rulers and functionaries of the spirit world." *Ibid.*, p. 278. Satan is the prince of the powers of the air, Eph. 2:2. Beelzebub was the prince of demons to the



Jews, Matt. 12:24. White, Rudell, *Demons*, Firm Foundation, Mar. 12, 1974, p. 7.

Under *daimonion*, Thayer gives the following as his second definition, "A spirit, a being inferior to God, superior to men." *Lexicon*, p. 123.

Based on the writings of the ancient Greeks, Alexander Campbell concluded that demons were the spirits of deceased, wicked men. Hesiod wrote, "The spirits of mortals become demons when separated from their earthly bodies." Plutarch states, "The demons of the Greeks were the ghosts and genii of departed men; and that they go up and down the earth as observers, and even rewarders, of men; and although not actors themselves, they encourage others to act in harmony with their views and characters."

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first Century, says, "Demons are the spirits of wicked men, who enter into living men and destroy them, unless they are so happy as to meet with speedy relief." Philo, the leading Jewish philosopher of the same period writes, "The souls of dead men are called demons." Justin Martyr, reflects the thinking of most early church fathers when he says, "Those who are seized and tormented by the souls of the dead, whom all call demons and madmen."

Lardner sums up the above quite well with these words, "The notion of demons, or the souls of dead men, having power over living men, was universally prevalent among the heathen of these times and believed by many Christians."

After setting forth the above definitions of the word demon, Campbell cited this rule of interpretation, "Every word not specially explained or defined in a particular sense, by any standard writer of any particular age and country, is to be taken and applied in the current or com-

monly-received signification of that country and age in which the writer lived and wrote." Campbell, Alexander, *Popular Lectures and Addresses*, p. 386. This conclusion we accept. However, regardless of our conclusion on this point, the rest of our information would be the same.

## THE CHARACTER OF DEMONS

In the New Testament, "Demons are . . . spoken of as personal, conscious, powerful, responsible agents, who perceive and understand, who hate and rage, who speak and act and tremble. Our Lord always deals with them as such." *Imperial Bib. Dict.*, Vol. II, p. 148. They are always pictured as foul, evil spirits that work harm to their victims. Demons are under Satan's controlling power. In Mark 3:22-23, the Jews charged, "He hath Beelzebub and by the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons. And he . . . (Jesus) . . . said unto them . . . How can Satan cast out Satan?" Jesus then believed Satan to control the evil spirits. It would be good here to remind ourselves that the King James Version uses the term "devil" where the American Standard uses "demon". But demons are not to be confused with Satan, the Devil.

## DEMON POSSESSION

Demons did actually possess the minds and bodies of human beings in the days of Christ and the apostles. There are at least twenty-six instances in the New Testament that speak of demon possession. A total of 80 places speak of demons in some way. In all of these we have matter of fact statements that can only be understood as accepting the reality of the affliction. A distinction is made between those who suffer some physical or mental illness or condition and those who have similar symptoms caused by demon possession. "And he healed many that were

sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons." Mark 1:32-34. Demon possession was more than epilepsy or insanity for these are listed as maladies cured in addition to demon possession in Matt. 4:24. Certain women had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Lk. 8:2. Skeptics have argued that there were no real demons, rather it was the attributing to some unknown spirit power that which was unexplainable to ancient man or that the Lord knew better but accommodated himself to the level of knowledge of that day. How could these doubters account for the response of the herd of swine at Gadara when the demons were cast out of Legion and allowed to enter them? Mk. 5:10-14.

### POSSESSION DESCRIBED

"Possession is that unnatural operation, in which one or more impure spirits through any sort of agency intrude into a human body, make themselves masters of the instruments of sensation, of movement, and of speech; attach the power of the soul to them, and in shorter or longer paroxysms make themselves manifest in strange sounds, gestures, and movements, for the most part of a mocking, licentious, and violent kind." Eschenmeyer as quoted in Delitzsch.

"The soul finds itself no longer in possession of its body, a strange something has forced itself between it and its body, and exerts a disturbing and hindering influence upon the bodily organs of the physical life." Ebard, from Delitzsch, *A System of Biblical Psychology*.

"We find in the demoniac the sense of a bondage in which he does not acquiesce, of his true life absolutely shattered, of an alien power which has mastered him wholly, and now is cruelly lording over him, and even drawing further away from Him in whom only any created intel-

ligence can find rest and peace. His state is in the most literal sense of the word; a 'possession': another is ruling in the high places of his soul, and has cast down the rightful lord from his seat, and he knows this; and out of his consciousness of it there goes forth from him a cry for redemption . . ." Trench, p. 170-171.

"The distinguishing feature of possession is the complete or incomplete loss of the sufferer's reason or power of will; his actions, his words, and almost his thoughts are mastered by the evil spirit till his personality seems to be destroyed, or, if not destroyed, so overborne as to produce the consciousness of a twofold will within him, like that sometimes felt in a dream." McClintock and Strong, Vol. II, p. 642. "This influence is clearly distinguished from the ordinary power of corruption and temptation wielded by Satan through the permission of God: its relation to it indeed, appears to be exactly that of a miracle to God's ordinary Providence . . ." *Ibid.*

## RESULTS OF DEMON POSSESSION

Victims of demon possession suffered a variety of afflictions. Each case was different. We note the following examples. The man of Gadara raved and roared frightfully, was wild, fierce and dangerous to himself and others. He had supernatural strength, was insane, went naked and frequented the tombs and deserted places, Matt. 8:28-34; Mk. 5:1-15. One possessed of a demon was blind and dumb, Matt. 17:14-18. Also it made the child dumb and dashed him down. He foamed at the mouth and ground his teeth and pined away, Mk. 9:17-18. A young girl had a spirit of divination, Acts 16:16-18. A man with a demon attacked and mastered two men, Acts 19:13-16. From the frequency of its mention and the fact that "many with demons were brought" on many different occasions,

we would conclude that it was a fairly common experience in Palestine in the first Century. Compare Matt. 4:23-24; 8:16, "many possessed with demons"; Lk. 7:21, Mark 16:17-20. There is no indication that the experience of seeing one possessed with demons was a rare thing.

## DEMONS WERE CAST OUT

Christ cast out demons repeatedly. Never a hint of failure in his exorcisms is noted. It was proof that "the kingdom of God" had come upon the Jews, Lk. 11:20. It, along with other miracles of healing was sent as proof to John the Baptist that Jesus was Messiah, Lk. 7:18-22. It along with other miracles was proof of his Messiahship in the apostle's message, Acts 10:38. The apostles themselves cast out demons and worked miracles and thus their word was confirmed to their hearers, Mk. 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3-4. James Henderson notes, "The demoniacs, recovered by his word to a sound body and a right mind, were more palpable convincing trophies of his power, and more palatable representatives of his work, than were his own disciples . . ." *Imperial Bib. Dict.*, p. 150.

Jesus conferred this power upon the apostles and the seventy when he sent them out to preach, Lk. 9:1; 10:17-20. Some, not of the immediate apostolic band also cast out devils in Jesus' name, Lk. 9:49. Christ did not forbid him. On the other hand when certain Jewish exorcists attempted to use Christ's name, to cast demons out, they failed, Acts 19:13-16.

When Christ and the apostles cast out demons, it was done instantly, Matt. 17:18, "And the demon went out of him: and the boy was cured from that hour." "And his daughter was healed from that hour" of the demon, Matt. 15:22-29. Paul charged the evil spirit "in the name of

Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour." Acts 16:18.

Inspired men cast out demons publicly before many witnesses, both friends and enemies. Never did they charge a fee or take a collection either before or after that or any other miracle they performed. How unlike "miracle workers" and exorcists today.

It is also important to remember that those men of God who could cast out demons were able also to work other notable miracles. "And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons, they shall speak with new tongues (languages, Acts 2:6-8); they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Mk. 16:17-18. If a man cannot do all of these, neither can he cast out demons.

### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

Several interesting facts about demons can be gleaned from the scriptures. Lk. 11:24-26 says, "the unclean spirit when he is gone out of a man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first." From this we can see:

1. Demons can exist outside of a "host";
2. They have an intelligence and will of their own;
3. They desire to inhabit a body;
4. A man who has been freed is liable to be repossessed

if he does not fill the void left in his life with wholesome spiritual things;

5. More than one demon could possess a person. Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast out of her, Lk. 8:2.

From the case of the demoniac of Gadara, we learn:

1. That demons maintained a separate personality while inhabiting a victim.
2. The demons had a supernatural knowledge. They recognized Christ as Messiah.
3. They recognized Christ's power over them. "And the demons besought him saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." Matt. 8:31.
4. They preferred even the body of a pig to no host body for a habitation.

Evil spirits often recognized Christ and his power over them and publicly cried this out through their victim. "And Jesus rebuked him (the demon) saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him, and the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, come out of him." Mk. 1:23-26, also Lk. 4:41. Jesus addressed the demons as intelligent beings over which he had power.

## **BIBLICAL AND POST-BIBLICAL EXORCISMS**

By a simple command, Christ cast out demons and they fled immediately. The apostles cast them out in the name of Christ, Acts 16:18, Lk. 10:17. No magical formulae or repeated efforts were needed. What a strange contrast that record is with the exorcisms of the Jews and Catholicism.

An ancient Jewish exorcism chant went: "Burst, curst, dashed, banned be Bar-Tit; Bar-Tema, Chashmogoz, Marigoz and Isteaham." Edersheim, Vol. 2, p. 776.

The following is a Roman Catholic ritual for exorcism from ancient times. "The priest, having arrayed himself in the official robes, first sprinkles the demoniac with holy water and then recites the prayer of the litany of all saints, the paternoster, and Ps. 53 (54 in our Bible); after this the two orations, in which he makes the sign of the cross over the demoniac, and commands the evil spirit to depart by the power of the mysteries of the incarnation, passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, the gift of the Holy Ghost and Christ's return to judge the world. After this follows the reading of John 1, Mk. 16:15-18; Lk. 10:17-19. Then the priest lays both hands on the head of the demoniac and says *Ecce crucem Domini. Fugite, partes adversa: vicit leo de tribu Juda*. After this comes the oratio with the special formula of exorcism: "I exorcise thee, unclean spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ; tremble, O Satan! thou enemy of the faith, thou foe of mankind, who hast brought death into the world, who hast deprived men of life, and hast rebelled against justice: thou seducer of mankind, thou root of all evil, thou source of avarice, discord and envy." While the priest crosses the brow and breast of the demoniac three times in the name of the Trinity. If the spirit does not then depart, the service is begun anew." Whitehouse, *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 812.

"Towards the end of the third century, an order of exorcists was established in the Christian church, which contributed materially to promote the growth of superstition, and led to much fraud and imposture. The practice also of a form of exorcism was introduced into the administration of baptism, on the ground, that as every one previous to baptism was in bondage to the devil, so he must in baptism be formally released from the evil spirit and be made to receive the good. The priest there-



fore was instructed to breathe thrice upon the face of the subject of baptism, and to say, Depart from him, foul spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Then followed another breathing upon the face, with the words, Receive the Holy Spirit through this same breathing and the blessing of God." This order still stood in the Latin ritual at the close of the last century. *Imperial Bib. Dict.*, Vol. II, p. 265.

## THE DURATION OF DEMONIC POWER ON EARTH

Although evil spirits and demons are mentioned in the Old Testament, we have no evidence of demon possession there like we have in the New Testament. We have nothing in our world today that resembles demon possession as described in the Bible. It seems that at that period of time when Christ and the Holy Spirit worked mightily upon the earth, God allowed Satan this added dimension of power. The repeated citing of instances by the inspired writers showing Christ's power over demons and the apostle's like-power, indicated that this phenomena gave them opportunity to demonstrate their power over these devilish beings and so establish that God was working in and through them, Lk. 11:20.

"To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," I John 3:8. He came to bind the strong man and spoil his possessions, Matt. 12:29. That strong man was Satan. By his sacrificial death, the world was judged and the prince of this world was cast out, John 12:31. By the cross he despoiled principalities and the powers (both terms refer to angelic and demonic powers of the spirit world) Arndt & Gingrich, p. 112. He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. The RSV says he disarmed these demonic powers. Eph. 4:8 describes the victorious Christ in triumphal parade with the defeated and captured enemies displayed behind him. This would surely include the agents of Satan of the spirit world.

As he reigns in heaven, angels, authorities and powers have been made subject to him, I Pet. 3:22. In his victory on Calvary and the tomb he brought to nought the devil, Heb. 2:14, who is the prince of demons. All of

these establish the point that Christ had a great victory over Satan and his evil workers in His death and resurrection. From that point onward, demon possession diminished and soon after the death of the apostles we have no bonafide record of real demon possession like the New Testament records. "Nor was it less natural that it should have died away gradually before the great direct, and still greater direct influence of Christ's kingdom. Accordingly we find early fathers alluding to its existence as a common thing . . . dwelling upon the power of Christian exorcism to cast it out . . . by degrees the mention is less and less frequent, till the very idea is lost or perverted." M'Clintock & Strong, Vol. II, p. 642. When the seventy evangelists returned from the successful mission, they said, "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name. And he said unto them I beheld Satan fallen as lightening from heaven." Lk. 10:17. This seems to be predictive of the results of the wonderful triumph of the cross.

### DO DEMONS POSSESS MEN TODAY?

If we believe people are demon possessed today, then we would be forced to conclude that supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit were needed to expell them. If that miraculous gift is still with us, would not all the others be also? Compare Mk. 16:17-18.

If sinners are demon possessed today, we would need supernatural power to cast out the demon so they could believe and be saved. But the gospel is the power of God to save, Rom. 1:16. Therefore, we need no such miraculous power.

Paul says God will not let us be tempted above that which we are able to bear, I Cor. 10:13. Demon possession was beyond man's power to control. We Christians

are to choose whether to obey Christ or Satan, Rom. 6:16-17. But the victims of demons were not so free to choose.

When Christ came down to establish the kingdom of God, Satan was allowed the power to extend his vile influence to the possession of human bodies and minds by his evil spirits. This then, gave Christ and his helpers opportunity to publicly show the power of God over Satan by casting out demons. Jesus said this proved that the kingdom of God had come, Matt. 12:28. When the kingdom had been fully established, when the need for supernatural gifts had been fulfilled, God's miraculous gifts were withdrawn and Satan's power to possess by demons likewise ceased. Compare I Cor. 13:8-11.

Evil spirits still exist today, but are not able to possess minds and bodies. They along with their master suffered an overwhelming defeat in Jerusalem that weekend in 33 A.D. when our Lord was crucified and resurrected from the dead. He crushed the Serpent's head. He lead captivity captive, Eph. 4:8. He despoiled principalities and powers and openly made a spectacle of them triumphing over them, Col. 2:15. Today, the influence of Satan and his demons is exerted only through doctrines, seductions and temptations, I Tim. 4:1. We must arm ourselves and resist him with the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit, Eph. 6:17. If we resist him he will flee from us, Jas. 4:7.

### **APPARENT POSSESSION EXPLAINED**

One last point should be noted. What is the explanation of the apparent demon possession we hear of? Many strange cases are reported by travellers to benighted lands of paganism. Even some unexplained cases are seen here in the States. Having established the fact that demons are not allowed by God to afflict men today, there must be some natural explanation for the apparent cases. Perhaps

it is schizophrenia, the split personality. Obsession with the occult and evil spirits coupled with ignorance of Biblical truth on the subject could lead to an imagined possession, the mind supplying all the symptoms even as in bodily illnesses. Insanity, severe nervous conditions and epilepsy might be mistaken for demon possession since those possessed in Bible times sometimes showed these symptoms. Then there are always the charlatans who simulate such things as this for the sake of gain. They often use the power of suggestion over weak minds to make them think that their condition is demoniacal.

## CONCLUSION

Thank God that Jesus despoiled principalities and powers when he arose from the dead and ascended on high. Thank God for the truth that makes men free, John 8:32. Thank God that we can know that we may not be subjected to the horrors of demon possession today.

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## Astrology: Right or Wrong?

"Astrology is the belief in the occult influence of heavenly bodies on human affairs and the practice or technique of divining events from astronomical observances." *Americana*, II, p. 577, 1969. Can one participate in this fad and still please God? God condemns astrology.

1. It is seeking for *forbidden knowledge*. Deut. 29:29, "The secret things belong unto . . . our God, but the things that are revealed belong unto us . . ." God has reserved knowledge of the future for himself. "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority." Acts 1:7.

2. Its origin is of *idolatry*. God warned against serving other gods and worshipping them, including the sun, or the moon or any of the hosts of heaven, which He had not commanded. Such is abomination, Deut. 17:2-4. Under Moses' law it was punishable by death.

3. It is *corrupting*. "Thus saith Jehovah, learn not the way of the heathen and be not dismayed at the *signs of heaven* for the heathen are dismayed at them." Jer. 10:2.

4. It is *forbidden*, Jer. 10:2 (see above).

5. It is *futile*. "I am Jehovah that . . . stretcheth forth the heavens above . . . that frustrateth the signs of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish." Is. 44:-24-25.

6. It is *worthless*. God challenges, "let now the astrologers, the star gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and

save thee from the things that shall come upon thee. Behold they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves," Is. 47:13-14.

The scriptures give us "all things that pertain to life and godliness," II Pet. 1:3. By prayer we can ask God's help. We must abstain from the appearance of evil, including astrology, I Thess. 5:22.



## The Anatomy of An Anti

Every generation produces a certain kind of Christian that is a constant source of irritation and hurt to the church. These misinformed brethren are distinguished by their strong, unyielding opposition to some special point which is in the realm of opinion. So strongly do they hold to their views that they ultimately break fellowship with the main stream of the church and form a splinter body. They are usually labeled "anti brethren" because of their negative views. They come in many varieties: anti-Bible class; anti-women teachers; anti-multiple cups; anti-located preachers; anti-orphan home; anti-cooperation, etc. In the New Testament we see the same attitude displayed by the Pharisees and by the Judaizing Christians of Paul's day. This "anti" spirit or mentality is always with us. A new variety of antism is produced every 20-25 years, yet all are of the same family, genus and kind.

Having a keen interest in the history of the church and having confronted different kinds of antis, the author has noted the following attributes that tend to show up in *most* of those who espouse some anti cause. It is conceded that not everyone will necessarily have all of these, but there is a pattern that emerges.

1. They are alarmists, fearing that the church is apostatizing. This is true of all antis, from the "anti-located preacher" brother to the "anti-eating in the church building" brother.
2. They are trying to save the church from this imagined apostasy.

3. Most all antis suffer from spiritual, "false pride." They think very highly of their knowledge, spirituality and loyalty to God, while discounting the same in other brethren who do not see things their way. Like Elijah, they think of themselves as the *only faithful* brethren that are left. They forget that God always has his seven thousand men.
4. They always suffer from a legalistic attitude toward their religion. They are more interested in rules than in the souls of men. We have a good example of this in John 5:1-18. The Jews cared nothing for the man Jesus had healed, they sought to persecute Jesus because he had broken their rules about the Sabbath day. Antis usually would rather see a person not obey the gospel than to obey, and be part of a congregation that did not share the *anti view*.
5. Legalism is evident when one's concept of religion is primarily a code of negatives and prohibitions. True Christianity is not only against sin and error, but also *for* truth and right. There is a spiritual balance seen in the teaching of Christ and the apostles that is not seen in the anti brother. He is all for keeping brethren unspotted from the world, but visiting the fatherless and widow is of little concern, Jas. 1:27.
6. The negativism always results in a lack of vital love and concern for fellow-men and even fellow-saints. The legalistic Jewish priest and Levite felt no pang of conscience when they observed their wounded brother and yet passed on the other side of the road, Lk. 10:30-37. So the brother who has the anti heart can forbid the church to help the needy infant because it is not a saint . . . as well as all other non-baptized persons and feel very proud of his righteousness. In-

structions to do good to all men (Gal. 6:10) are brushed aside with the wave of a hand by such teachers.

7. The *anti mind* is addicted to "mote hunting." No brother can be received and fully trusted. Everyone is constantly under suspicion. They can rationalize glaring faults in their own lives while attacking every imagined fault of their brethren, especially those who are not of their own party. Compare Matt. 7:1-5.
8. Those afflicted with this spiritual ailment have trouble distinguishing between traditions and cultural practices in the church and God-given Biblical principles. Some would argue that they have no human customs and traditions attached to their faith. They never stop to consider church buildings, song leaders, invitation hymns, times of service, arrangement of the scriptural items of worship and a hundred other such items. Some of these customs, hallowed by long usage, are made binding laws over which fellowship would be broken. Thus the one drinking cup of the old days was made a law by *anti minded* people when multiple cups were introduced. Some even taught it to be as vital as the scriptural elements of bread and fruit of the vine.
9. Anti brethren are strongly opinionated. Their view is indisputably right. They demand to be heard and all are expected to accept the view or prepare for battle. There is no room for liberty in opinion as the restoration pioneers taught. Everything is a matter of absolute right or wrong. They seem to feel that the Christian principles of grace and liberty are too dangerous and must be restricted. See Gal. 2:4, 5:13. Surely such men think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, Rom. 12:3.

10. This anti philosophy affects their method of Bible study. Being obsessed with their peculiar hobby, they study the scriptures to prove their point. Context is often ignored while verses are commandeered to serve as proof-texts against the opposition. This is then reflected in their preaching, and writing, for an opportunity to refer to the coveted theme is never passed by.
11. All antis love to forbid the church from practicing some good work or method of doing God's will. It matters not to them that God has not prohibited it. Paul predicted that when men would fall away from the faith they would forbid things, which God had allowed, I Tim. 4:1-3. This verse aptly describes all antis, i.e., *forbidding brethren*. They delight in making and imposing rules on other saints and then judging and condemning those who do not conform. James soundly condemns this spirit in 4:11-12. Paul refused to submit to such law-making brethren, Gal. 2:3-5.
12. When a man is of the *anti* bent he will sooner or later be involved in a factious strife within the church. We have all witnessed the larger, break away, anti groups, but even if a man does not follow such a large movement, he sooner or later will feel obligated to separate himself from brethren over some favorite rule of his. Paul wrote, "There must also be factions among you." I Cor. 11:19. Judaizing brethren could not stand by and see Paul's work among the Gentiles without some effort to circumscribe it! They never view factions as a work of the flesh, Gal. 5:20. It is glorified as a noble action to save the church.
13. Few antis are evangelistic. They are so consumed with their "issue" they haven't time to seek out and teach lost sinners the gospel. They must concentrate

on saving the brotherhood from what they term heresy. Mission work is rarely found among them for similar reasons. Also, they seem to have a hard time finding the interest to invest money in mere soul-saving ventures. Funds are generally expended in attacking non-conforming brethren through radio broadcasts and journals. Rather than evangelize, they work as parasites. They compass land and sea to draw away one member from a congregation which they term liberal. If possible they will capture a whole church and turn it to their view. Those who do not willingly accept the new view will be driven out. They feel very proud to capture buildings built by other brethren whom they despise. Ethics in such matters are of small account.

14. They are heartless towards mission work done by brethren they do not fellowship. They will subvert it, rend and tear the churches with no concern for the results to the babes in Christ. They would rather see a congregation, or an entire mission effort, destroyed, rather than allow it to exist without accepting their views. This is true also of congregations here in the States.
15. It should be mentioned that they are willing to practice deceit in order to grab control of a congregation. Many an *anti-preacher* has accepted work with a congregation which he despises as a "liberal" church so that he might change it. Seldom do they declare themselves until they, like termites, have eaten away the foundations. Also, they will feign humility and piety while they are in the minority. Then when they gain the advantage, they become harsh and aggressive, expressing a totally different attitude. Peter well describes them in II Pet. 2:1.

16. All antis of every stripe have a common bag of cliches and slogans. They are always the "*loyal*" church. All who disagree are liberal, or *diagressive*. Every anti issue is said to be *parallel to the missionary society*. All of them claim to have found a *binding example* to prove their point. It is noteworthy that they find binding laws of their own choice. They are unwilling to make all examples binding. Rather than follow their own logic, they conveniently excuse themselves. Few of them would bind the upper room for communion or other similar examples.

It is doubtful that there will ever be a time when the *anti spirit* will not be with us in some form. Therefore, we must work diligently to teach our brethren a correct and wholesome understanding of the doctrine of Christ. Also, we must ever be on guard lest such a root of bitterness spring up to contaminate the congregations we serve.