

THE BIBLE IS THE ANSWER

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Compiled and Edited

by

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years I have gathered tracts from all over our great brotherhood. Most of these tracts have been sent to me or else I have picked them up from tract racks while visiting with brethren in different places. They cover a wide range of subjects, but generally they have to do with the Bible, the church, the plan of salvation, baptism, and worship. Some of them have been printed in our monthly magazine, but most of them are filed away for future use.

To take full advantage of these writings, and to share them with the people of India, then I have decided to print them in a series of volumes like this one. I believe that you will find them to be interesting, informative, and above all, scriptural. You will observe that the emphasis all the way through is on the theme that **THE BIBLE IS THE ANSWER**. And indeed it is. We believe that with all of our heart and encourage you to go to the Bible for the final authority in all that you say and do in religious matters. Only then can you know that you are right and only then will you be right.

I know all of the authors in this book as being fine Christian men and preachers of the gospel of Christ, and therefore I can commend them and their writings to you without reservation. They are men who know God's word and who desire to share it with you.

In a time when people are constantly searching for answers to their religious questions, it is refreshing to

know that there is one source book that one can go to to find all of the answers. I would hope that the authors of these articles will be able to answer many of your questions as they refer you to the Bible and what it teaches. Should you have other questions that are not answered in these materials, then be assured that if you will go to the Bible that you will find the truth on every subject that you may be concerned about. Certainly these lessons cover the great themes that have to do with your spiritual welfare, and it is my prayer that they may lead you to believe in God and to obey his will, so that you may be saved in this world and that you may have the hope of eternal life in the world to come. This book has been prepared with this goal in mind. If even one is so benefitted then this effort will not have been in vain.

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GOD HATH SPOKEN

J. C. Choate

One of the big questions in the religious world today has to do with the way God speaks to modern man. Many would have us to believe that he speaks directly. Others tell us that he makes his wishes known through some sign or perhaps a dream. Still others would say that God touches their heart or influences their thinking. And on and on we could go with the testimonies of men. While these views are widely accepted, the strange thing is that they never seem to think about the possibility of going to God's book for the answer. Perhaps they are in a situation where they cannot go, and hold on to their religious beliefs and practices, and so they continue their game of self-deceit, vainly believing that God does in reality speak to them and thus condones their teaching. How sad.

Yes, it is sad, and we will see why this is true. If you are the one that really wants to know how God speaks today then please stay with me as we go to the Bible itself for the answer. God has always spoken to man and today is no exception. He has spoken, however, at different times in different ways. Please turn with me to Hebrews 1:1, 2 and we shall see for ourselves. The Hebrews writer begins by saying, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by

the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Now please note that he makes a contrast in God speaking in times past and in these last days. He spoke in the past to the fathers or patriarchs by the prophets. This would include those times prior to the law of Moses and also during the time of the law itself. But in these last days, or in the days following the death of Christ, which are said to be the last days (Acts 2:14-21), God speaks to us through Christ. Again, God spoke at the mount of the transfiguration at a time when representatives of the law and prophets were on hand, yet God spoke not only in their presence but also in the presence of Peter, James, and John, and said concerning his Son who was also there, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5). So there is no doubt concerning the one we are to hear, but how are we to hear him?

When we turn to John 1:1 we are told that, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He goes on to identify the Word as being Christ. In other words, Christ was with God but then he was sent by God to be his spokesman. Christ confirmed that what he said did not originate with him but rather it came from his Father. (John 12:49). But Christ was about to be taken away. What would happen then? How would God speak through him if he were not there? In this case, Christ promised the Apostles that he would send the comforter or the Holy Spirit upon them to guide them into all truth

and to call to their remembrance all that he had said unto them. (John 15:26 ; 16:7, 13). And so he did on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4). Not only did the Apostles receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the power that Christ had promised, but he also gave them the authority to lay their hands on certain chosen ones that they might likewise have miraculous power. With this power they were led of the Spirit to preach the Lord's will and to write it down so that we might have God's word in written form. In all of this, Paul says, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:12).

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the scriptures were written down and James then spoke of it as being the perfect law of liberty. (James 1:25). Paul said that all scripture was given by the inspiration of God and that it completely furnished man to every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Peter declared that he hath given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3). And Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13 that when that which is perfect is come, meaning the word of God in written form, then there would no longer be a need for miracles, signs, and wonders. Why ? Because God would then speak to us through his Son as it is recorded in the New Testament. Therefore when we read and study God's word then faith is produced in our hearts (Romans 10:17), and as we read on, the Lord tells us exactly what he wants us to do to be saved (Mark 16:15, 16), and when we do that then he saves us and adds us to his church. (Acts 2:47). Not only that, but he tells us in his word

all that he wants us to know about worship, the Christian life, and the world to come. To help spread his will he has asked his people to take his gospel into all the world and to preach it to every nation, and even to every creature. (Matthew 28:19, 20 ; Mark 16:15, 16). Furthermore, anyone who would preach anything that would be contrary to what he has said in his word is a false teacher and he will therefore have to suffer the consequences. (Galatians 1:7-9). He has said that his word is not to be added to or subtracted from but it is to be left as it is (Revelation 22:18, 19), since all will eventually be judged by it. (John 12:48).

God hath spoken and he speaks today through Christ and his written word. He has no new message for you and me or anyone else and therefore there would be no purpose whatsoever for him to speak to anyone separate and apart from his word. Please hear the word of the Lord today as it is revealed in the Bible, and obey it, and only then can you be saved.

“LIFTING UP CHRIST”

Harold Hazelip

Jesus once said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32). It is very difficult for us to comprehend the tremendous confidence that is reflected in these words. We hear them through nineteen centuries of history which has been influenced by the coming of Christ to the world. But Jesus spoke these words when there was little, if any, visible evidence that they would come true. His claim that all men would be drawn to Him probably seemed presumptuous to His enemies. Here is a relatively unschooled peasant from an obscure village; He owns nothing, has no political power. He is surrounded by men who, though honest, are unimpressive from a worldly view. Yet He announces that all men will be drawn to *Him*!

Earlier in the Gospel of John, we have had the expression “lifted up” used of Christ two times. In John 8:28, we read: “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.” Men are going to fully realize His identity when they have “lifted Him up,” He says. In John 3:14-16, evidently as part of His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus also said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so

must the Son of man be lifted up : That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All of these references by Christ to His being "lifted up" were spoken of the crucifixion. From a moral point of view, the cross was a symbol of degradation in His day, a criminal's death—hardly an exaltation. But Jesus uses the expression "lifted up" deliberately ; to Him the cross was a triumph, not a defeat.

Lifting Up The Brazen Serpent

The background of this expression is to be found in the twenty-first chapter of the Old Testament book of Numbers. Israel had murmured against God and against Moses in the Wilderness journey toward the promised land, and God had sent fiery serpents among the people as punishment for their complaining. The people confessed their sin after many had died from the serpents' bites, and asked Moses to pray to God for them. God revealed a plan to Moses : "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole : and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live." (Num. 21:8). Jesus makes an analogy between His own crucifixion and the lifting up of that brass serpent in the wilderness. In both cases, death was threatening men because of sin. In both cases, God Himself provided a remedy for the sin through His grace. In both instances, the remedy must be lifted up in public view. And in

both cases, there is healing or recovery for those who obey God.

Lifting Up Christ On The Cross

By now we should be prepared to ask, "How is Christ 'lifted up' "? The immediate reference is to the Cross. In less than one week after Jesus uttered the prophecy of our text, the crucifixion occurred. Mark describes the crucifixion in simple, but powerful, words: "And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull ... and it was the third hour, and they crucified him ... And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross... And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour." (Mark 15:22-33). It was the world's darkest hour, but God's brightest hour! Who lifted Christ up on the cross? We may reply that His enemies did, which is true. Yet, in a real sense God also lifted Him up by allowing Christ's death to atone for the sins of the world. Christ Himself voluntarily submitted to this lifting up. He had said earlier, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10 : 17-18).

The drawing power which was to draw all men unto Christ is His love ; the world can surely understand a love that gives its life for them ! Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:13-14). The crucifixion not only shows divine love for the sinner, but it also shows divine wrath toward sin. Sin is so terrible in God's sight as to require the death of His own Son for its remission !

Lifting Up Christ From The Grave

There are other ways to lift up Christ besides the crucifixion. God lifted Him up from the grave on the third day in the resurrection. The resurrection is the central event in Christianity. There is no power in a dead Saviour ! Hence Peter preached on Pentecost, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death : because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Then, having read a prophecy of the resurrection from David's writings, Peter commented further : "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all*

are witnesses." (Acts 2:24-32). There are many proofs of the resurrection for the consideration of twentieth century men. The tomb in which Jesus was laid was a new tomb ; no other had been laid there before. This means there could not have been a rapid disintegration of the flesh, and a confusion over whether skeletal remains in the tomb were His or someone else's. The tomb was hewn out of rock, which means there was no escape passage for Him if He had not actually been dead, or for His disciples to *steal* His body away. He was proclaimed dead by the Roman executioners, the blood and water which came forth from His side afford certain evidence that death had occurred, yet He later appeared to those who knew Him best in life and they were convinced of His identity ! He ate with them, talked and walked with them after His resurrection : they proclaimed it to their fellow men, gave the time and the place of the events, and died for their testimony ! If Christ were not raised, what motive could have prompted the Apostles to teach and die for the claim of His resurrection ?

It should be said on this occasion that the early Church had no special festival to celebrate His resurrection annually. The present date for Easter was set, after much controversy, at the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. Easter is named for a Teutonic goddess, Eastre or Estera, to whom sacrifices were made in April. Churches of Christ, in harmony with their purpose to restore Christianity as it was in the first century, observe the resurrection of Christ every first day of the week as the Church did in the New Testament period, and not with any

annual festival which has come down only through tradition.

Lifting Up Christ To Heaven

Christ was also "lifted up" in His ascension to Heaven. Mark 16:19 says, "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was *received up* into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." There at God's right hand, He reigns today over His Kingdom, the Church. "For he must reign," Paul wrote, "till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

Lifting Up Christ By Gospel Preaching

Perhaps the vital question right now is, "How may we lift up Christ today?" He has been lifted up in His crucifixion, His resurrection, and His ascension. But how can we exalt Him? First, Christ is lifted up by Gospel preaching. Paul reminded the Corinthians of his preaching while in their midst: "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2). A mutilated or changed Gospel will not lift up Christ; but a faithful declaration of every word which fell from His lips and the pens of inspired men will exalt Christ today.

Lifting Up Christ In The Lord's Supper

Secondly, we may lift Him up today by our faithful observance of the Lord's Supper. Paul wrote the Corinthians, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:26). In Acts 20:7, we are informed of the practice of the early Church: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Luke says the disciples came together on the first day of the week "to break bread," that is, for the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper. Actually, there can be no reason given from the New Testament for Christians to meet together every first day of the week but that the same passages of Scripture will show that they ought to observe the Lord's Supper when they come together. Hence, churches of Christ observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week in order to lift up Christ just as the early Christians lifted Him up.

Lifting Up Christ By Godly Living

We also lift up Christ today by Christian living. In spirit, in word, in deed, Christ may be magnified. Paul says in Titus 2:10 that when we fulfill our obligations as Christians, we "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Christ lives in the Christian, and through the Christian His teachings are manifested to the world.

Drawing All Men To Himself

We began our study with Jesus' words : "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." During His earthly ministry He drew all kinds of men : the poor and humble, the demon possessed, the tax-gatherers and fishermen, as well as high-ranking rulers among the Jews. After He was lifted up, His influence was even greater. Cornelius the centurion, the treasurer of Ethiopia, Saul the brilliant young Pharisee, Lydia the business woman, Dionysius the Athenian official, Sergius Paulus the proconsul of Cyprus—these are a few whose lives were drawn to Gospel obedience in the book of Acts. And still He draws men today. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6:44-45). Men are drawn to Christ by hearing and learning His will. Some turn a deaf ear ; but those who obey His will from the heart are the happiest and most valuable citizens of earth.

Christianity is not a religion for one day of the year ; it is a way of life for every moment of every day of every year. Will you look to Christ, Who is lifted up as the Saviour of earth, in humble and complete obedience, and thus receive the abundant life through Him ?

A WAY THAT IS RIGHT AND CAN NOT BE WRONG

(A sermon preached by Jesse P. Sewell at San Angelo,
Texas, U.S.A.)

No. 1

Beloved, I shall read as my text tonight three passages of Holy Scripture. The first is John 17: 20, 21, and it reads as follows: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The second is Rom. 16: 17, which reads as follows: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them." The third is 1 Thess. 5: 21, to which I now ask you to listen: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

With these scriptures in your minds, I shall state the proposition for my sermon tonight, which is, Let other ways be right, or let them be wrong; the church of Christ presents a way that *is right and can not be wrong*. I realize that this may sound, to many of you, both

conceited and extremely narrow ; but I pray you to hear me, in the same spirit in which I shall speak to you, before you pass judgment.

I shall do a thing tonight which I rarely ever do : that is, I shall mention the names and some of the doctrine of some of the most prominent denominations.

I have long been convinced that it, generally speaking, is *best for me* (I speak not for others) to simply "preach the Word," without reference to denominations or doctrines ; but on this occasion I have some things which I can better get before your minds by departing from my general rule, hence I do so. I beg that you understand that these references are made with the most sincere respect for the honesty and sincerity of every believer in Christ. I can not conceive of a man being dishonest in reference to things having to do with the destiny of his own soul. Hence I ask only that you hear me in the same spirit in which I speak to you.

Let us suppose that our city is badly divided, and torn into various contending factions. Its progress is being greatly retarded by this unfortunate condition of affairs. One of our citizens, a "newcomer," let us say, calls us together and presents to us a plan by which we may all unite without the compromise of a single principle of right on the part of any man. Now, beloved, would this citizen not be right, and would he not be performing a worthy task in presenting the plan and appealing to us to accept it ? Would he not be worthy of commendation, whether or not he succeeded or failed in getting us to accept the plan ?

The believers in Jesus Christ, in this city and elsewhere, are divided and torn into various contending factions. This awful condition of affairs is as much as, if not more than, any one thing preventing the accomplishment of the purpose of God in sending his Holy Son to earth to redeem and save man. If we would have the world believe that God sent Jesus to seek and to save lost souls, we believers must be one, even as the Father and the Son are one. The honest man looks on us with one Bible, one God, one Saviour, divided into hundreds of conflicting bodies, and says, How am I to know the right? He either becomes discouraged and gives it up, drifts into the church with his kinsmen, without any individual faith or convictions, or becomes an infidel. Beloved, this condition of affairs can not exist and the responsibility not rest on some one. It does not exist without a cause. Let us not, without due consideration, cast all of the responsibility onto our neighbours. Let us examine ourselves and see whether any fault be found in us.

I now invite your attention to the proposition: Let other churches be right or let them be wrong; the church of Christ presents to them a plan by which they may all unite without the compromise of a single principle of faith or duty, and thus do away with the divisions and dissensions which exist among them. Our plea is, that all believers should take the Word of God—all of that and only that—as the infallible rule of faith, discipline and practice. Our motto is, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent"; or let us speak only "as it were oracles of God." We beg

the churches of the world to give up all human names, creeds, strifes and divisions, and unite upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone. Whether we succeed or fall in this appeal, we are right, and can not be wrong in pleading for unity on the Word of God, and that alone.

No. 2

1. *The church must have a creed.* There can never be the union and harmony prayed for by our Master as indicated by our text, and declared by him to be necessary, that the world may believe, without a common faith. There can never be a common faith without a common creed. Is there a creed upon which all believers may unite without sacrifice of principle or compromise of conscience?

My good Methodist friends suggest the Discipline. But my Baptist, Presbyterian and Lutheran friends promptly object. So with the believers of all other denominations. My Baptist friends offer, as a substitute, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, and insist that, as a whole, if not in each detail, it is far superior to the Discipline. But they are having a difficult time convincing our good Methodist friends. Just here my good Presbyterian friends offer as a substitute for both the Discipline and the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, the Westminster Confession of Faith; and strongly insist that it is far superior to each of the others. So the offers and discussions might continue until the hundreds

of denominations are heard from, each presenting a different creed with a claim of superiority for it.

The church of Christ comes forward and presents as a creed, superior to all others, and upon which all believers may unite, the Bible, the Word of God, all of that, and only that. Can not all accept this without compromising either principle or conscience? If not, then some one is holding to principles not from God, and some one's conscience is based on human and not divine teaching. All divine teaching is in the Bible. But it is objected, all people can not understand the Bible; it must be simplified. If this be true, God did not intend for man to understand him when he spake, or, intending that man should understand him, he has failed in his purpose. In either case God's revelation is not a revelation at all.

But, it is insisted again, the people who reject other creeds and take only the Bible are not united on the Bible. But they are. There are no differences or divisions among them about what the Bible says. The divisions all come in when one party or another insists on introducing into the faith, work or worship of the church something not in the Bible. This will appear as we proceed.

David said, "The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul." Psalm 19: 7. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1: 16. Our Master said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." John 17:20. John said, "But these are written, that ye may

believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye may have life in his name." John 20: 31. Thus the law of God, the Gospel, the things spoken by the apostles and written in the Bible, constitute a perfect creed for the salvation of the lost.

Our Master said, to certain people who had believed on him, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31, 32. James said, "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls". James 1 : 21. James was talking to Christians. Paul said, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness ; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. Thus, the Bible, the Word of God—all of that and that only—is a perfect creed for the salvation of the lost and development and final salvation of the redeemed. Can not all believers accept it as a perfect and sufficient creed ?

In reference to the creed we insist, let others be right, or let them be wrong, as to their creeds, the church of Christ is right and can not be wrong in taking the Bible alone and urging all believers to give up other creeds and unite upon God's Word.

No. 3

2. *The name.* The individual followers of Christ and the church must have names. There is a great deal of division and dissension among the believers in reference to

these names. Can we find a name on which we can all unite without the compromise of principle? Let us see. Our good Methodist friends suggest their name, but other believers, just as sincere and pious, object that they are not willing to accept and wear a name which only honours a characteristic procedure. Our Baptist friends suggest the name Baptist, but other believers promptly object that they will not accept a name which honours only an ordinance of Christianity. Our Presbyterian friends then try, but are promptly told that a name which only indicates a form of government is not acceptable at all. And so the discussion continues until the hundreds of denominational names are presented and rejected.

Just here some sincere, consecrated believers suggests that there is no reason for all this discussion and division over the name; that there is nothing in the name anyway. Let us see. I say to my Methodist friend, "I will not call you a Baptist." He is not offended. I say to my Baptist friend, "I will not call you a Methodist." He is not offended. But I say to both, "I will not call you Christian." Now they are both angry. Why? There is something in a name—that's all.

The Church of Christ suggest that all believers discard all human denominational names and accept and use for all individual followers of Christ and for his church just such names as are to be found in the Bible. In the Bible the followers of Christ are called saints, disciples, Christians, etc. The church is called the Church, the Church of the First Born, the Church of God, Church of Christ, etc. All believers, regardless of the distinctive

denominational names they have taken, claim a right to these Bible names. Their human names cause division and we can agree on none of them. Not one believer is willing to concede to any one else the exclusive use of the names of the Bible.

Then let others be right or let them be wrong as to their names, the church of Christ is right, and can not be wrong, when it accepts and uses only the names given by divine authority and invites and urges all believers to unite with them in this practice.

3. *Election and reprobation.* Some believers teach, "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated into everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death." Other believers, just as sincere, just as learned and just as devout, stoutly deny this proposition. The discussion waxes warm and fierce. Is there no ground upon which all believers may unite without the compromise of principle? The church of Christ suggests that the Bible clearly teaches that men should :

(1) Believe in Christ "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned". Mark 16: 16. "And without faith it is impossible to be much 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.

(2) Repent of their sins. "And he said unto them, thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day ; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations." Luke 24: 46, 47. "Except ye

repent, ye shall all in like manner perish." Luke 13: 3.
"But now he commanded men that they should all everywhere repent." Acts 17:30.

(3) Confess Christ. "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10: 9, 10.

(4) Be baptized. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Matt. 28: 19. "Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." Acts 2: 38.

(5) Live a godly life until death. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Matt. 28: 20. "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1: 10, 11.

Now beloved, we insist that inasmuch as all these things are required by the Word of God, it is clearly right for men to do them. If we do them, and at last it proves to be true that "some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others are ordained to everlasting death, our having done them will in no wise change our destiny: If, on the other hand, this doctrine proves to be untrue, and that God accepts all

who believe, trust, love and obey him, and only such, then we are safe. Therefore, let others be right or let them be wrong, as to election and reprobation, the church of Christ is right, and can not be wrong, in believing and obeying the gospel and inviting and urging all others to do the same.

No. 4

4. *Universalism.* Some believers believe and teach that all men regardless of their faith and conduct in the present life, will ultimately be saved in heaven. Other believers do not believe this, and again we have division and dissension, contrary to the prayer of our Lord and the desires of all good men. We here suggest, because of the scriptures already read, and many others which might be read if I had the time, that men must believe and obey the gospel and live consistent Christian lives ever after. If at last Universalism proves to be true, and all men are happy with God, our faith, love and obedience will certainly not cause us to be lost. On the other hand, if it proves to be true that God saves and glorifies only those who believe and love and obey him, we are safe. Then, let others be right or let them be wrong as to Universalism, the church of Christ is right and can not be wrong in believing and obeying Christ and begging all others to do the same.

5. *Salvation by faith only.* Many believers insist that men are saved when they believe, and before and without obedience to God's commandments. Others deny this, and at this point the dispute becomes fierce. We in-

sist, because of the passages of God's Word read to you, that men must not only believe and trust, but that must also obey the Lord. If it proves to be true when we stand before God in judgment, that he does accept us and save us from our past sins the moment we believe and trust him, surely the fact that our faith is strong and vital enough to lead us to obey Christ will not cause us to be any less saved. But if it should prove, in that great day, that God demands not only faith but obedience also, we are safe. Therefore, let others be right or let them be wrong as to salvation by faith only, the church of Christ is right and can not be wrong in believing and obeying also, and urging all others to do the same.

6. *Operation of the Holy Spirit.* Many sincere and pious people believe that God operates on the hearts of people, independent of his gospel, by the Holy Spirit. If this be true, God alone determines on whom he will bestow this blessing. We insist that if there is such a blessing for the human family as a direct or independent operation of the Holy Spirit, that God, in selecting the one on whom to bestow it, will certainly not pass by those who accept his word, as it is indeed the word of God ; believe and trust his Son, lovingly obey his gospel and trust his promises, for those who do not. Then, while the church of Christ does not accept the doctrine of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, let doctrine be true or let it be false, we are right at this point and can not be wrong. We insist that all men must believe, trust and obey the Lord's gospel and trust him for his blessings. God will certainly not pass by those who thus honour him for ones who do not.

7. *Action of baptism.* Three distinct acts are accepted by portions of the denominational world as baptism. We accept only one, the immersion of a proper subject into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I shall not enter into a scriptural demonstration of our position on this point. It is not the purpose of this sermon to present the strong Bible support of our peculiar teachings, but rather to establish our original proposition, "Let other be right or let them be wrong we are right and can not be wrong." In other words, if they are wrong, we are right, and if they are right, we are still right. Therefore we present a common ground on which all believers may unite without compromise of principle. Now as to the action of baptism: No believer will deny that the immersion, in the proper way, of a proper person, is baptism. They only contend that sprinkling and pouring will do as well, and that they are more convenient. But more than half of the believers of the world, of all the centuries, counting the Eastern Catholics, including as learned, sincere and pious people as ever lived, deny this contention and boldly affirm that immersion is the only acceptable act for baptism. This act is admitted by all to be acceptable. The genuineness of all others is called in question by a majority of all believers. At this point, then let others be right or let them be wrong, we are right and can not be wrong.

8. *The design of baptism.* It is contended by some that baptism is an outward sign of an inward salvation ; that people are saved when they believe and previous to the time they are baptized. We plant ourselves on the passages already read tonight and insist that baptism is

a part of the gospel and must be obeyed before the alien has a promise of salvation from past sins. If it should prove at last that God saves men when they believe and before their obedience, surely we will be none the less saved because, we, in addition to our faith, or as an act of faith obey our Lord's commands. But if these scriptures stand, and they certainly will, and it proves that God requires not only faith but obedience also from those who believe and neglect or refuse to obey will be lost. Then let others be right or let them be wrong, the church of Christ is right and can not be wrong in obeying the gospel as well as believing it and in insisting that all others do likewise.

9. *The Lord's Supper.* That the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the house of God is admitted by all who believe in Jesus as the Christ. But it is observed with a great deal of irregularity. Some churches attend to it once a month, some once a quarter, some once a year, and some just whenever it is convenient. We insist that this sacred supper should be eaten on the first day of each week. Our Master said, "This do in remembrance of me," and again, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." Luke, in Acts 20: 7, says, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." The old law was, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." This did not say remember "every" Sabbath day. But the Jew understood that every Sabbath day had to be kept holy. So we understand that the disciples of Christ are to partake of the Lord's Supper on every first day of the week. But, as I said before, it is not my purpose tonight to present the scriptural foundation for our faith, but rather

to establish the proposition, let others be right or let them be wrong, we are right and can not be wrong. This is clearly true at this point. If it proves at the judgment that God is satisfied, if we observe the Lord's Supper once a month, once a quarter or whenever convenient, we will be none the less acceptable if we keep it once a week. If on the other hand, it proves that, as God required the Jews to keep every Sabbath, he requires disciples of Christ to eat the Lord's Super every first day of the week, those who depend on the once-a-month, etc., will be found wanting. Therefore, as to the Lord's Supper, let others be right or let them be wrong, we are right and can not be wrong in observing this ordinance once each week and insisting that all believers do likewise.

10. *Missionary work.* There is perfect union on the point that God demands that his children shall preach the gospel to every creature in all the world. But as to how this work shall be done there is a great deal of bitter dissension. Many contend that societies other than the church may be organized and maintained for this purpose. Others believe that the church, as such, must do the work. No believer contends that if the church does the work it will not be acceptable, but only that other ways are more practical. The church of Christ suggests that if there is a way which all admit to be correct, if worked, then we all accept this way and work it. Whether God approves the work done by societies other than the churches, we all know that he will approve the work if done by the churches. Hence at this point, let others be right or let them be wrong, we are right

and can not be wrong in doing missionary work through the church only and in offering this as a common ground for union.

11. *Instrumental music.* None contend that instrumental music is essential to acceptable worship, but many contend that it is permissible, that God will not reject the worship because of it. Without entering into any scriptural discussion of this question, which has caused so much trouble among believers since its first introduction into the church, we insist that the church of Christ is absolutely safe in rejecting it and worshipping God in song. In this we stand upon ground which all agree to be safe, and thus present a ground on which all can unite. If division continues because of it, we can not be at fault. Then at this point, as at the others discussed, let others be right or let them be wrong, we are right and can not be wrong in worshipping God in a way admitted by all to be acceptable.

Now beloved, I beg that you consider carefully the things presented to you in the same spirit in which I have presented them. In direct conflict with our Lord's prayer and the other passages of our text, the believers of the world are divided and torn asunder on every hand. It's a terrible sin for which some one must account when we all stand before God. Let us not be too quick to say. "Others are entirely at fault" Let us look the whole situation squarely and honestly over, and consider ourselves, that we may know that we are entirely free from this great wrong. Let us "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." In reference to the things discussed tonight I have presented to you a way which, regardless

of the right or wrong of other ways, is right and can not be wrong. I have presented you a way on which every believer may unite without the compromise of any principle. Should we not all accept it? And whether or not we succeed in getting all to accept it, are we not right in standing in it, and inviting all others to come and stand with us? These are serious and important matters, and I pray God that we all may consider them carefully, honestly and prayerfully.

SOME VITAL QUESTIONS AND BIBLE ANSWERS

by Macklyon

INTRODUCTION

There are many very vital religious questions with which we are confronted. Every man is responsible for his own soul, and must learn the truth on all such questions. The writer believes that the Bible is the Supreme authority in all matters religious, and as the final authority provides a sufficient answer to every problem of life. For this reason, we have presented the more common and vital questions of the day, with a scripture reference for the answer. Believing that the opinions of men are confusing, and have no place in religion, we have sought to eliminate all comments of our own, that you may read your Bible and know what it says.

It is our earnest desire that you shall know and obey the truth. John 8:24 ; Rom. 6:16-17.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED ?

1. Hear the gospel. Acts 2:37 ; Rom. 10:13-15 ; Jas. 1:25 ; Rev. 3:20.
2. Believe in Jesus as Christ. John 8:24 ; Rom. 10:10 ; Mark 16:16 ; Acts 16:31 ; John 3:16. Rom. 5:1.
3. Repent. Luke 13:3-5 ; 24:46 ; Acts 2:38 ; 17:30.

4. Confess Christ. Matt. 10:32 ; Rom. 10:9-10 ; Acts 8:36-37.
5. Be baptized. Matt. 28:18-20 ; Mark 16:15-16 ; Acts 2:38 ; 22:16 ; Rom. 6:3-4 ; Gal. 3:26, 27 ; 1 Pet. 3:21.

WHAT IS BAPTISM ?

1. It is a burial & resurrection. Rom. 6:3-4 ; Col. 2:12.
2. It is a planting. Rom. 6:3-5.
3. It is a bodily washing. Heb. 10:2-22.
4. It is a birth of water. John 3:3-5.
5. The element used is water. Acts 8:36-39.
6. It requires much water. John 3:23.
7. It requires going down into water. Acts 8:38.
8. It requires coming up out of water. Acts 8:38.

WHY BE BAPTIZED ?

1. Christ commanded it. Matt. 28:18-20 ; Mark. 16:15, 16.
2. For (unto) the remission of sins. Acts 2:38.
3. For (unto) the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38 ; Rom. 8:9, 11.
4. To wash away sins. Acts 22:16.
5. To enter the church. I Cor. 12:13 ; Eph. 1:22, 23.
6. To complete regeneration. John 3:3, 5 ; Jas. 1:17 ; (Col. 3:27 ; 2 Cor. 5:17).
7. Baptism saves. 1 Pet. 3:21.
8. To enter Christ. Rom. 6:3, 4 ; Gal. 3:26-27.

1. In Christ we are New creatures. 2 Cor. 5:17.
2. In Christ we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col. 1:14 ; Eph. 1:7.
3. In Christ we have reconciliation. 2 Cor. 5:17-19.
4. In Christ we have all spiritual blessings. Eph. 1:3.
5. In Christ there is life. 2 Tim. 1:1.
6. To reach atoning blood of Christ, shed in his death. Rom. 6:3, 4 ; John 19:34 ; Rev. 1:5.

CAN A CHRISTIAN FALL FROM GRACE—BE LOST ?

1. God warned against it. 1 Cor. 10:12.
2. Some had fallen. Gal. 5:4.
3. God provided for a brother's return. Jas. 5:19 ; Acts 8:22.
4. He made eternal life conditional. Rev. 2:10 ; 1 Cor. 15:2 ; Heb. 6:4-6 ; 2 Pet. 1:10 ; 1 Cor. 9:27 ; 2 Pet. 2:20, 21 ; John 8:15 ; Gal. 6:7-9.
5. If a Christian can sin, he can be lost. Rev. 21:8 ; 21:27 ; Gal. 5:19-21.
6. Weak brother can perish. 1 Cor. 8:11.
7. If Christians live after flesh, shall die. Rom 8:13.
8. Some gathered out of Kingdom, cast into fire. Matt. 13:41 ; (All in Kingdom are saved, John 3:3).
9. God spared not angels that sinned. 2 Pet. 2:4.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS KEEP THE SABBATH ?

1. Sabbath was given to Israel only. Deut. 5:1-5; Ex. 31:13.
2. It was a sign between God and Israel. Ex. 31:16.
3. Given for remembrance of deliverance out of Egypt. Deut. 5:15.
4. Was to endure throughout their generations. Ex. 31:13-16.
5. Was to end at Christ's crucifixion. Amos 8:4-9 ; Mark 15:33.
6. Sabbath was part of "law of Moses," "law of God" "law" delivered at Sinai. Neh. 1:1-8 ; Rom. 7:4, 7.
7. Christians are dead to that law. Rom. 7:4-7.
8. We are delivered from that law. Rom. 6:6.
9. Christ is end of that law. Rom. 6:14, Gal. 5:18.
10. Sabbath was blotted out at cross. Col. 2:14.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH ?

1. It is the body of Christ. Col. 1:18 ; Eph. 1:22, 23.
2. It is the family of God. 1 Tim. 3:15 ; Eph. 2:19.
3. It is the Kingdom of God, or Christ. Matt. 16:16-19 ; Acts 2:38-42, 47,
4. It is the Temple of God (the habitation of God through the Spirit). Eph. 2:20-22 ; II Cor. 6:16.

WHICH CHURCH SHOULD I JOIN ?

1. Only one church by divine appointment.
2. "There is one body" Eph. 4:4.

A Body is church. Eph. 1:22, 23 ; Col. 1:18.
B Hence only one church.
3. There is "but one body" (Church). I Cor. 12:20.
4. "I will build my church" (one) Matt. 16:18.
5. You can't join it. Be saved and the Lord will add you to it. Acts 2:47.
6. Gates of Hades shall not prevail against His church. Matt. 16:18.
7. Every plant God has not planted shall be rooted up. Matt. 15:13.
8. Don't become member of anything you can "join."

MUST ONE BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH TO BE SAVED ?

1. All saved are in the Church. Acts 2:47.
2. Church will finally be offered to Christ. Eph. 5:25-27.
3. Christ purchased it with His own blood. Acts 20:28. Did he purchase a non-essential ?
4. Christ gave Himself up for it. Eph. 5:25. Did He give Himself for a non-essential ?
5. Christ build the church. Matt. 16:18. Did he build a non-essential ?

6. God planned the church. Eph. 2:11. Did he plan a non-essential ?
7. If some are saved in it, and some out of it, there are two ways. Matt. 7:13-14.
8. Reconciled in the body. Eph. 2:16. Body is the church.

HOW DOES ONE ENTER THE CHURCH ?

1. By being saved. Acts 2:47.
2. See "What Must I do to be saved ?"

WHAT CONSTITUTES "TRUE WORSHIP

1. Teaching the word. Acts 2:42.
2. Contribution of means on the first day of the week. I Cor. 16:1-2 ; Acts 2:42.
3. Singing, I Cor. 14:15 ; Eph. 5:19 ; Col. 3:16 ; Heb. 13:15.
4. Praying. Acts 2:42 ; I Cor. 14:15 ; I Thess. 5:17.
5. Observing the Lord's supper on the first day of the week. Acts 2:42 ; I Cor. 11:26 ; Acts 20:7. These acts performed from the heart. Col. 3:16.

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE CHURCH ?

1. Church of God. I Cor. 1:1-2 ; I Tim. 3:15.
2. Church of the Lord. Acts 20:28. A. S. V.
3. Churches of Christ. Rom: 16:16.
4. "My Church (The Lord's) Matt. 16:18.

WILL GOOD PEOPLE OF ALL THE CHURCHES BE SAVED ?

1. Not everyone, but he that doeth. Matt. 7:21.
2. Some will be rejected. Matt. 7:23.
3. The chief of sinners was conscientious. Acts 23:1 ;
1 Tim. 1:15. And lost. Acts 9:6 ; 22:16.
4. Some doctrines false. Matt. 24:24 ; I John 4:1.
5. Can believe a lie and be damned. II Thess. 2:11-12.
6. To prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.
1 Thess. 5:21.
7. To try the spirits. I John 4:1.
8. To search the scriptures whether these things are so.
Acts 17:11.
9. Religious folk will not be saved unless born again.
John 3:3,5. Converted. Matt. 18:3.
10. God does not approve of religious division. Gal.
5:19-21 ; John 17:11 ; 20:21, 22, 23 ; I Cor. 1:10.
He who practices it cannot go to heaven. Gal. 5:
19-20.

WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH ?

1. Christ is head. Eph. 5:22, 23 ; Col. 1:18.
A Church is subject to Him. Eph. 5:23.
2. Elders in every church. Acts 14:23 ; Titus. 1:5 ;
1 Tim. 5:17 ; Heb. 13:17 ; I Tim. 3:1-7 ; Titus
1:7-10.
3. Deacons as helpers. I Tim. 3:8-13 ; Acts 6:1-8.
4. Members. I Cor. 12:27.

5. No ecclesiastical orders, synods, conferences, conventions etc. Each congregation independent of all others yet bound together in love for a common salvation. Jude 3.

WHAT WERE THE MEMBERS CALLED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ?

1. As followers of Christ—disciples. Acts 20:7.
2. As to purity of life—saints. I Cor. 1:2.
3. As related to the Father—children of God. Gal. 3:26 ; Rom. 8:16.
4. As related to each other—brethren. Heb. 3:1 ; I Cor. 15:1, 6.
5. CHRISTIANS. Acts 11:26 : 26:28 ; I Pet. 4:16.

DO WE NEED CONTINUOUS REVELATIONS ?

1. All scripture is inspired of God. II Tim. 3:16-17.
2. God has given all things that pertain to life and Godliness. II Pet. 1:3.
3. Faith was once delivered to saints. Jude 3.
4. Holy Spirit to reveal to apostles ALL truth. John 16:13.
5. Apostles wrote their revelation. Eph. 3:1-4.
6. When we read we may understand. Eph. 3:1-4.
7. If preach any other gospel accursed. Gal. 1:6-9.

DO MEN TODAY POSSESS MIRACULOUS POWERS ?

1. Time for miracles has passed. 1 Cor. 13:8, 10.
2. Purpose for miracles ceased.
 - A Purpose was to confirm word. Mark 16:20 ; Luke 24:46-49 ; Acts 8:6 ; Heb. 2:1-4.
 - B Word once confirmed need not be continually confirmed.
3. Means of obtaining miraculous powers cut off.
 - A Power given by Baptism of Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4, 43.
 - B Power given by laying on of Apostles' hands. Acts 6:6 ; 8:6 ; 8:12-21 ; 19:6.
 - C Do not have access to either of these today.

Get your Bible and read these references for yourself, "to see if these things are so" (Acts 17:11). "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 Jno. 4:1). Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32).

BIBLE BAPTISM

Rubel Shelly

Not a single element of the will of God is by mere chance or caprice. Everything in the plan of God is purposeful! Each part of the divine plan is designed to do something that must be done for the sake of man's salvation from sin! Paul commented on the purposive nature of the wisdom and will of God when he wrote of "the riches of (God's) grace, which he made to abound toward us *in all wisdom and prudence*, making known unto us the mystery of His will, according to *his good pleasure which he purposed in him* unto a dispensation of the times, to sum up all things in Christ." (Eph. 1:7-10).

Since every element of the will of God is purposeful, we may immediately conclude that there is no such thing as a "non-essential element" in the plan of salvation. If it is a part of God's plan then it is essential unto salvation!

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE FACTS TO OUR STUDY

Baptism is the most frequently disputed element in the plan of salvation. Is baptism essential unto salvation? Or is it a "non-essential element" of the will of God? Let us apply the two principles which have been discussed in

the introduction, to our subject. First, everything in the plan of God is purposeful. Baptism is designed to do something that needs to be done ! It is not a part of the gospel by mere accident, but by divine design ! Second, nothing which is "non-essential" has been included in the plan of salvation.

The fact that baptism is essential unto salvation is so clearly taught in the New Testament that it seems impossible that anyone would try to evade his responsibility in this regard. Peter was clearly giving a command on the day of Pentecost when he said, "Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ ..." (Acts 2:38). Later when Peter preached the gospel to the people at the house of Cornelius "... he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:48).

Just on the basis of the facts presented so far, how would you answer someone who asked, "Is baptism essential unto salvation ? Do I really have to be baptized in order to be saved ?" If you believe the Bible to be a true revelation of God's will for men, there is only one answer that you could give. "Yes," you would reply, "baptism is necessary unto salvation because it is commanded by God."

In the course of this study, we shall go further into the matter and show not only that baptism is commanded but also some of the reasons why it has been required of men. That is, we shall go to the New Testament and find out what baptism does in the plan of salvation. To illustrate the nature of our study, consider the Lord's Supper. Does God require Christians to partake of the

Lord's Supper? Yes. But does God ever indicate *why* he requires this of Christians? Indeed he does indicate several reasons why we are commanded to eat it. For one thing, the Lord's Supper reminds us of Christ's sacrificial death for our sins. "This do in remembrance of me," said Christ. (Luke 22:19). For another, Christians are commanded to eat the memorial supper in order to "proclaim the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:26). Other reasons for this observance could be cited, but these are sufficient to illustrate the point. God commands that we eat Lord's Supper. But he also specifies reasons why he has given that command.

The same thing is true with regard to baptism. God commands it. That fact is sufficient to let us know that baptism is essential unto our salvation. But has God, as he did with regard to the Lord's Supper, told us any of the reasons underlying that command? Has he revealed what function baptism serves in his divine plan? Yes! And in the course of this study we shall point out several of the things which are accomplished at the point of one's baptism in water. By such a study, it is hoped that the significance and essentiality of baptism will be firmly established in your mind.

BAPTISM SAVES

First, the New Testament teaches that baptism saves one from the guilt of his past sins. The apostle Peter wrote of the time "when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through

water : which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God." (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

Noah lived at a time when "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and when "every imagination of the thoughts of (man's) heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5). But Noah was not like the other men of his generation. He still feared God and served him in uprightness. Therefore "Noah found favour in the eyes of Jehovah." (Gen. 6:8). Thus it was that God determined to save Noah and his family from the sinful world of their day. He revealed a plan to Noah by which he could be delivered. "By faith, Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (Heb. 11:7).

Noah preached to the men of his generation and exhorted them to turn away from their sins and be saved. But none outside his own family would heed the appeal. After God had manifested great patience with those wicked people, He finally called Noah and his family into the ark which they had built according to God's instructions. God shut them in that ark and opened the heavens and rain began to fall. Such a great flood resulted that even the highest mountains were covered by water ! Thus it came about that, through the waters of the flood, Noah and his family (1) were saved from the destruction of the antediluvian world and (2) were

enabled to emerge into a new existence in a purified world !

After referring to the salvation of Noah "through water," Peter affirms that the water of baptism "also after a true likeness doth now save you." The Greek word translated "true likeness" in this text is *antitupon*, the word from which we have derived our English word "antitype." Thus Peter is actually saying that the salvation of Noah and his family is a type of the salvation which men can receive through the waters of baptism. Just as the waters of the flood saved them from the destruction of the world before the flood, so the waters of baptism save us from the condemnation which results from sin. Just as the waters of the flood enabled them to emerge into a new existence in a purified world, so the waters of baptism serve as a grave for the "old man of sin" and enable us to come forth to "walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4).

Please notice that this baptism which is said to save us is water baptism, not baptism in the Holy Spirit or fire or any other element. But what type of salvation does baptism bring? Not salvation from persecution, hunger, sickness or death, for the baptized person is as subject to these as the unbaptized. Not final salvation at some future time of judgment, for Peter wrote that baptism "doth NOW save you." The only reasonable conclusion is that baptism saves us from our past, or alien sins !

That this is the truth about baptism's power to save is proven by a study of other verses in the New Testament on the same subject. Such a study will show perfect

harmony between Peter's statement and every other inspired statement about baptism: For example, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16). This statement clearly makes baptism a condition of one's salvation from sin and condemnation. Also, Luke quotes Peter as having commanded inquiring sinners on Pentecost, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." (Acts 2:38). And Ananias instructed the penitent Saul of Tarsus, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16). All of these divinely inspired statements and directives harmonize perfectly with the declaration of 1 Peter 3:21. Baptism saves ! It delivers men from the guilt of their sins ! It serves, as the flood of Noah's time did, to separate the saved and the lost ! It is a line of sharp demarcation between those who are still under sin's condemnation and those who have been delivered from it !

But someone may be quick to object that this means "water salvation" rather than salvation by the grace and power of God. No, not at all. Was Noah saved by the grace and power of God ? Of course he was. But the waters of the flood were used as a means through which God could exert his saving power ! It was God who saved Noah and his family, but God chose to save them *through water*. Now, "after a true likeness," baptism saves us. Not that baptism is our Saviour, but it is an instrument through which God exerts his saving power. When Noah set foot on dry land after the flood had abated, he built an altar and gave praise to God for

his salvation. He did not sacrifice to the water ! When one is baptized today for the remission of his sins, he praises God for his salvation. He does not trust in or give glory to water ! *The power to save is exclusively God's but baptism is an instrument used by God for exerting his saving power !*

Thus to be baptized in order to receive the remission of sins is not to trust in the power of water. It is to trust in the power of God ! Surely this is why Peter adds that baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." No man can have "a good conscience" so long as he knows that he is resisting the will of God. But in being baptized according to the requirement of the will of the God one is able to stand before him in all good conscience ! One who has been properly baptized is therefore able to have a good conscience because of the knowledge that he has obeyed the commandment of God and has received the forgiveness of all his past sins !

BAPTISM BRINGS ONE INTO CONTACT WITH CHRIST'S BLOOD

Second, the New Testament teaches that baptism brings one into contact with the blood of Christ. By eternal decree of God, the fact is established that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9:22). Thus, in order for man to have remission of his sins, a sacrifice had to be secured and offered, the blood of which would be sufficient to remove sins's stain. The

blood of animals was insufficient to take away sins (Heb. 10:4), therefore Christ came in the flesh as "the Lamb of God" to be offered as our sacrifice.

In instituting the Lord's Supper as a memorial to his sacrificial death, Christ "took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." (Matt. 26:28). And Paul later wrote concerning the significance of Christ and his blood and saith, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7). Thus it is clear that the blood of Christ was shed with man's salvation in view and that his blood is necessary unto our redemption.

The blood must be reached ! But how ? At what point does God apply the cleansing power of the blood of Christ to our souls ? *Christ's blood was shed in his death and men are baptized into his death.* "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were *baptized into his death* ? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3-4). Can you not draw the logical conclusion which follows from these Bible facts ? It is through baptism into the death of Christ that one receives the benefits of the blood which was shed in Christ's death on the cross !

WE ARE BAPTIZED INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

Third, the New Testament teaches that we are baptized into the body of Christ. "For ye are all children of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST did put on Christ." (Gal. 3:26-27). In the third chapter of Galatians, Paul is emphasizing that men become children of God, not by circumcision of the flesh, but by faith. And "faith," as Paul is using the term in this chapter, is objective. That is, he is not referring to the *act of believing* but rather to *what is believed*. He is talking about the gospel! But what does the gospel require of men? It requires that they be baptized. And baptism serves to put one into Christ, into his spiritual body.

Someone may reply by saying, "Yes, I agree that baptism puts one into Christ. But a person must be saved before he can enter the body of Christ!" This notion cannot be harmonized with the scriptures. The New Testament does not teach that one is saved by one process and then added to the body of Christ by another. It teaches that being in Christ is necessary unto salvation!

Redemption is "in Christ." "In whom (i.e., Christ) we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7). The *forgiveness of our sins* is "in Christ." "In whom (Christ) we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." (Col. 1:14). *Reconciliation* is "in Christ." "And might reconcile them both in one body

(i.e., the body of Christ) unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2:16). *salvation* is "in Christ." "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Tim. 2:10). All *spiritual blessings* are "in Christ." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1:3).

Is any man's soul secure without redemption, forgiveness of sins, reconciliation, and all spiritual blessings? A foolish thought. Of course it is not! For these are the things which make souls secure against the day of judgment. But to whom do these blessings belong? To those outside of Christ or to those who are "in Christ?" The verses from the Word of God have been cited which establish that all of these blessings are "in Christ." Therefore no man can be saved until he is "in Christ." And the New Testament plainly teaches that men are "baptized INTO Christ." (Gal. 3:27; cf. Rom. 6:3).

From these facts it is clear that the *unbaptized person is without salvation* because he is still *out side of Christ!* Baptism is essential unto salvation. It is not a command to men who are already saved, but is a condition to be met by sinners in order for them to receive the remission of their sins!

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the simplest single statement in all the Word of God on the subject of baptism is found in Mark 16:16.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Examine that statement closely and you will learn all that anyone really needs to know about the purpose of baptism. Christ is talking about salvation from sin. He is stating the conditions upon which such salvation can be received. "Do these things," he is saying, "and you shall be saved." Do what things, Lord? "Believe and be baptized," comes the reply from God's own Son!

No one questions the necessity of believing on Christ. We understand, as the inspired writer said, that "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him." (Heb. 11:6). Then why question the necessity of being baptized? The Lord's statement makes faith and baptism coequal conditions of salvation. If one condition be granted, then the other must also be granted! If faith is necessary, then so is baptism.

Why resist the Lord's will? Submit to immersion in water by the authority of Jesus Christ and allow him to save you by divine grace! Do so and you will be saved from the guilt of your past sins! You will be brought into contact with Christ's saving blood! You will be "in Christ."

Jesus Christ died for your sins, was buried in the earth and rose from the dead to live a glorified spiritual life—all for your salvation! In baptism, we become united with him in the likeness of his death. (Rom. 6:5). We die to sin, are buried in water and then rise to walk in newness of life! "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was

raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4).

"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16).

CAN I KNOW I AM SAVED?

Gynnath Ford

Yes, you can! Do you remember when you were first converted? Do you remember how happy you were when you came up out of the water after being baptized? You had confessed your faith in Christ, repented of your sins, and then portrayed his burial and resurrection in baptism. (Romans 6:4,5). If anyone had asked you if you were saved at that precise moment, you would have shouted, "Yes"! Do you think God loves you any less now than he did then? Do you believe the blood of Christ which washes away sins is any less powerful today than it was when you first became a Christian? No! Then, why do you doubt?

How Could This Be?

There was a man who put property and business first, offered his two virgin daughters to evil men, and committed incest when he was drunk. Yet the Bible says that he was just, righteous, and godly? How could this be?

Lot was the nephew of Abraham. When he chose the rich land of the Jordan, he put property first. When he moved into wicked Sodom, he put business first. When the two messengers of God came to warn him of the destruction of Sodom, he invited them into his house.

When the evil people of that city wanted to practice immorality with these two strangers, Lot offered his two virgin daughters to them instead of his guests. When Lot and his two daughters fled to the mountains, these two girls became desperate and devised a scheme whereby they would have children by their own father (Genesis 13, 19).

Several centuries later, the great apostle, Peter, speaks of Lot in these words : "God ... delivered *just* Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked : (For that *righteous* man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his *righteous* soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds) ; the Lord knoweth how to deliver the *godly* out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished." (2 Peter 2:7-9).

Peter was speaking by the authority of the Holy Spirit and this apostle of Christ said that Lot was just, righteous, and godly ! How could this be ?

A Man of Faith

There was only one way ! He was not righteous in and of himself but he was counted righteous by God because he was a man of faith. He had faith to go with Abraham when he left his homeland according to God's command. He had faith to leave Sodom and some of his own family when God said he was going to destroy it. He did not live a rebellious life against God. He was not stubborn and hardened in sin. He did not plan to sin when the pressure was put upon him by the wicked citizens of Sodom. He did not purpose to sin when his daughters committed incest with him. He lived

a life of righteousness but stumbled along the way. Even though he fell, he kept on going. Because of this he was counted righteous.

Father of the faithful

Is this difficult to accept? What about Abraham? He committed adultery with his wife's handmaiden and lied to kings twice about his wife, but he is called the father of the faithful (Genesis 12, 16, 20). How could this be? Because he had faith in God. He obeyed when God called. He went in to his wife when she was past age and they had a child. He was willing to offer that son as a sacrifice upon an altar. Because he was faithful, God counted him righteous.

The apostle, Paul, uses the example of Abraham to show how it is that we are saved by faith. "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3).

The Example of David

Paul also quoted the psalm of David to prove this point. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth [counts] righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute (count) sin" (Romans 4:6, 7).

How did David know this? He had committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed, breaking at least six of the ten commandments in the

events surrounding his affair with her. On another occasion he numbered the people to see how many fighting men he had, putting his trust in his own strength and not in God. He also failed to correct his son, Amnon, when he committed fornication with his half sister. This led to the murder of that son and the rebellion of another son, Absalom, against his own father. (2 Samuel). Yet, some day we will meet David in the presence of God. Why? Because he walked after God and was quick to confess his sins and shortcomings. He never quit serving God because he made so many mistakes. He continued to practice obedient faith in God. Because of this, he, too, was counted righteous and listed in God's hall of fame (Hebrews 11).

The Thief on the Cross

Perhaps the greatest example of one being counted righteous was the thief on the cross with Jesus. He lived only a few hours after he received the promise of Christ, "... today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23: 43). He certainly did not receive this promise because he earned it or deserved it. He, himself, admitted that he was getting just what he deserved. There was only one way he could get into paradise. God counted him righteous. He trusted in Jesus and not in himself and his own righteousness, however little that might have been. Why is this story in the Bible? Is it not to tell us of the love and mercy of God shown through his Son, Jesus Christ?

God Counts Us Righteous Today

The example of Abraham is given in order that we might have confidence in our salvation. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore, it was imputed (counted) to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ..." (Romans 4:20-25; 5:1).

We were justified by faith when our faith led us to repent and be baptized. Saving faith is always a synonym for obedient trust.

When we were baptized, we were not obeying a work which earned salvation for us, but we were obeying an act of faith which brought us in contact with the saving blood of Jesus (Acts 22:16). Rather than being saved by works by which we could boast we were saved by grace through faith, showing our complete dependence upon Christ by being obedient to his will. And we continue to be justified by grace through faith as we are obedient to his will.

*Our Salvation Is Dependent on
Our Present Faith*

Our salvation is not dependent on how few sins or mistakes we make, but whether or not we are faithful to Christ. Jesus says that we must forgive our brother if he sins against us seven times in one day (Luke 17:4). Does God require more of us than he, himself, will do? Certainly not! This means that God is forgiving to us if our lives are filled with an attitude of godly sorrow and a desire to do better in the future.

When Jesus gives rewards he will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things ..." (Matthew 25:21). He will not say, "Well done, thou good and *perfect* servant." We cannot be perfect in the sense of sinless perfection, but we can be faithful.

A father and son began to build a temple. The father has been building for thirty years. The son has just begun his carpenter's trade. He has little experience and makes more mistakes. The father is more skilled in his work and makes fewer mistakes; but he is not more faithful and zealous. This is the way we are living the Christian life today. Some do better than we do. Some have more experience and are nearer perfection, but they cannot exceed us in putting our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot be perfect, but we can be faithful even though we make mistakes.

Standing on the Promises of God

When I became a Christian, I knew I was saved because I was standing on the promises of God. I know I am saved today because I am standing on the promises of God !

The apostle, John, wrote an encouraging letter to God's children. "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth : But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:4-7).

The Bible talks about two walks, one in darkness and one in light. Even those who walk in light often sin, but the difference is the blood of Christ. If we are faithful to him, he covers our sins with his powerful blood. The child of God is like an automobile with windshield wipers which never fail. The blood of Christ *keeps on* cleansing us from all sins as we walk on the king's highway. If you fall into sin, there is a way to recovery if you will take it. If you will get up and "confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). How long will he keep on doing this ? Seven times in a day and seventy times seven he will forgive (Matthew 18:22 ; Luke 17:4).

Will this not encourage children of God to sin and live any way they want to ? No ! It will produce righteous living on our part when we realize how much God loves us. The apostle, John, said, "These things I have written unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : And he is the propitiation [atonement or payment] for our sins ..." (1 John 2:1-2).

When we see how good God is to us, how can we continue to sin against him and our fellowman who was made in his image ? When we realize that our sins caused Jesus to suffer on the cross, we will die to sin and live the selfish life no more. When we see that he is going to accept us in spite of our sins, then we will quit worrying about our salvation and start to love as he loved us, even accepting our fellowman in spite of his sins.

We Can Know We Are Saved !

The Bible says so ! "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13).

Do you believe on the Son of God ? Then God is talking to you ! He did not say perhaps you will have eternal life, or maybe you will have eternal life but "ye may *know* that ye have eternal life ..." How can you know ? You believe ! Keep on believing ! That is what he is saying. Your faith has brought you this far, and your faith can lead you home to heaven. Don't

give up! Keep walking in the light, and he will cover the mistakes you make with his precious blood. Then you can have real confidence in your salvation, not because you are so good but because he is so good, not because you are so righteous but because he is righteous, not because you keep the law of God perfectly, but because he was perfect.

But I Still Have Doubts

Maybe you have a valid reason for doubting your salvation. Are you travelling away from God or toward him? "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition [destruction]; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:38-39).

Yes, you may have doubts because you are drawing back, not moving forward, drying up, instead of growing spiritually, producing only leaves, not bearing fruit. But it does not have to be that way! You can be prosperous and fruitful in the Lord's work! You can overcome temptations! I know you have tried and tried again and failed, but God is not as interested in our present achievements as he is in the direction of our growth. Begin now to worship God more regularly. Help those who are in need. God will provide! Share the good news of Christ with others. When you gain confidence in your salvation, then it will be contagious and cause you to spread it to others. Pray more regularly and fervently. Depend on the Lord for your strength and

not on your own wisdom and power. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ ... with *all* thine heart ..." (Acts 16: 31, 8:37).

A man came into the garage with a motorcycle. He asked the mechanic to repair it. "Do anything you want to do, but don't touch the motor." You can hear the mechanic muttering, "Fellow, you better find another garage."

We must not say, "Lord, here is my broken life, take care of it and my problems, but don't touch my heart. I'll take care of that." Is there an area of our lives we want to leave as it is and we do not want God to change? Do we wear a sign on our heart which says. "Hands Off!"

Jesus says, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Turn loose of your heart and life! Don't hold back! Then you can know that you know that you are saved because you have complete faith in him who died for you! See you in heaven!

NEW CREATURES

J. A. Thornton

It should be the intrinsic desire of all to be new creature. Paul said, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature ; old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17. All are in need of the new birth "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We hear much about becoming a new creature and how we become such but let us see just what the Bible teaches concerning new creatures. It does not matter so much as to what we have heard relative to becoming new creatures or what we or others may think but what does God say about it. After all that is what we must meet when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

BORN AGAIN

I feel sure that all will agree that to be a new creature is to be born again. Therefore, let us study new creatures from that standpoint. I realize that much confusion is found in the world relative to the new birth but this confusion can be removed if we will come to the word of God. Many think that the new birth process is one of mystery and even incomprehensible. If this be true then God is an unjust God to predicate our eternal

happiness on the incomprehensible. I believe the new birth process is simple because God's way has always been simple.

In any birth there are two agencies. This is true of the physical birth with the begettal and coming forth. One is not born physically until he comes forth. So we conclude that in the new birth there are two agencies, namely the begettal and the coming forth. How is the begettal part of the new birth brought about? Just what means does God use? These questions can be answered only by the word of God. What you or I think about it does not matter. Let us take the Bible. "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born (begotten ARV) again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." I Peter 1:22,23. From this we simply learn that we are begotten through the means of the word of God. This is in perfect harmony with the statement of Paul "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." I Cor. 4:15. No man therefore can doubt that we are begotten by the word of God. Though some may ridicule such an idea yet you can see it is plainly stated in God's word.

Now the question may arise, just when is one begotten of God? The answer to this question is also found in the word of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born (begotten ARV) of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." I John 5:1. This states exactly when

one is begotten of God. Anyone therefore that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is begotten of God. When one is begotten he is not yet born. Therefore, the one that believes is not yet born until he comes forth.

Just when is the new birth complete? Jesus plainly states this in John 3:5, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Here are the two agencies in the new birth. Christ, himself, said we are to be born of water and the Spirit. I have no authority to teach otherwise or to even minimize the importance of either agency. The Holy Spirit directed the apostles to write the New Testament: Therefore, when one is begotten by the word he is begotten by the Spirit. Beyond a doubt the water of this passage has reference to baptism. No scholar of any note will deny this when his scholarship is at stake. Now, just think for a moment. What is there in the entire Christian system to which this might have reference. Can you think of anything "water" could have reference to, other than baptism? Therefore, when one believes and is baptized for the remission of sins, he has been born again.

When a person is born again he has an entrance into the kingdom of God, Jesus in John 3:5 so states. It should be the desire of all to enter the kingdom. Christ said we should seek it first. Mt. 6.33. There are many ways stated in New Testament for an entrance into the Kingdom but all of them mean exactly the same thing and are equal to the new birth. To be a new creature is to be born again.

DOING THE WILL OF GOD

There is a rule of logic that goes like this: "things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." An entrance into the kingdom is given to those who are born again and to those who have done the will of God, therefore, to be born again is equal to doing the will of God. Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21. This clearly shows that the person who merely believes is not born again, for the person who merely believes (or says Lord, Lord) shall not enter the kingdom. This passage also shows that man is active in the new birth and not passive as many would have us be. If a person were not active in the physical there would not be a coming forth. God has done his part in purchasing redemption through the giving of his only Son and we are but to meet his conditions.

A will or testament is of force after men are dead as is shown from Heb. 9:17. Christ sealed his will with his death and it became effective after his death. A will may be made conditionally or unconditionally according to the desire of its maker. If one make a will and specifies certain condition, no one can receive the benefit of the will unless he meets the conditions. Christ chose to specify certain conditions, no one can receive the benefit of the will unless he meets the conditions. Christ chose to specify certain conditions in his will. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mk. 16:16. In Luke's

record of these conditions repentance is listed as a condition. The benefit is salvation. The conditions are Faith, Repentance and Baptism. When a man makes a will, no one has a right to change any of the conditions. I cannot, therefore, hope to receive the benefit of His will unless I meet his own conditions. Another thing, we might remember that two wills cannot be of effect at the same time. Those who lived under the Old Testament will not therefore be judged by the New, neither will we be judged by the Old. Even the thief on the cross died before the new will became effective, therefore I could not hope to be saved on the same conditions as was he. Before a man dies he may give freely of his estate but after his death only those mentioned in his will may receive his substance. You can now see that all who do the will of God do exactly the same thing as those who are born again. To be born again give an entrance into the kingdom of God and to do the will of God give an entrance. Things equal to the same things are equal to each other.

THOSE CONVERTED ARE NEW CREATURES

The very expression "new creature" implies a change or conversion. The essentiality of conversion will not be denied by any believing in Christianity. Let us remember our rule of logic, "things equal to the same things are equal to each other." To be born again gives an entrance into the kingdom, to do the will of God give an entrance into the kingdom and to be converted gives

an entrance into the kingdom therefore, all of these expressions mean the same thing and process that brings them about is the same. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 18:3. This shows that conversion is essential to an entrance into the kingdom. Conversion is also essential to the forgiveness of sins, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out....." Acts 3:19.

How is the conversion process brought about? Christ stated the process in Matt. 13:15. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and **SHOULD BE CONVERTED**, and I should heal them." The process takes this order, seeing and hearing, understanding with the heart, then conversion. You can easily see this is the same process of the new birth, doing the will of God all giving an entrance into the kingdom. This is shown in every case of conversion in the book of Acts in which it specifically states what they did. In Acts 2 Peter and the other apostles preached the death burial and resurrection of Christ. Peter concluded his sermon like this, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that this same Jesus whom you have crucified is now both Lord and Christ. When they heard this they were cut to the heart and said, men and brethren what shall we do? Peter answered and said, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of

the Holy Spirit." Now don't you see, they did exactly what the new birth requires, they did the will of God and who would doubt they were converted ?

The Samaritans believed and were baptized according to Acts 8:11, 12. Then the eunuch believed and was baptized Acts 8:26-39. The household of Cornelius was commanded to be baptized after Peter had preached to them. They believed for faith comes by hearing the word of God. We cannot afford to minimize a command of God. Acts 10:48. The Philipian Jailor believed and was baptized as Acts 16: 29-33 clearly shows. The Corinthians did likewise (Acts 18:8) as well as did Saul in Acts 22:16. I plead with you to take your Bible and read all these references and see for yourself. You will note that in each case it specifically mentions that they were baptized and yet people will say one may be converted without being baptized. You will note also that nothing is said about them joining any church. I wonder why ? Acts 2:47 gives us the answer—"The Lord added to the church day by day those that were being saved." If you want to be absolutely sure you are a member of the New Testament church, just do what they did and let the Lord add you to the church. He will add you to this church, the one he built, the one he purchased with his own blood. Then join nothing religiously but leave that up to the Lord, this is perfect assurance.

The term "conversion" means to change. There must be a change of heart, a change of life and a change of state or relationship. The heart is changed through faith Acts 15:9, one's life is changed by repentance and his state or relationship is changed by baptism. Rom. 6:3-5.

When a person has experienced all these changes he is completely converted. When he is converted he has an entrance into the kingdom (Mt. 18:3), and is a new creature. Remember to be a new creature is equal to being born again, being converted and doing the will of the Father in heaven.

WHERE IS A PERSON A NEW CREATURE ?

Our basic text definitely locates the New Creature. It says, "If any man be IN CHRIST he is a new creature." From this we must conclude that one can not be a new creature outside of Christ. Can a person then know when he is in Christ? If so, how can he know when he is in Christ? The only way any one can know that he is in Christ is to have God's word for it. Just exactly HOW does one get into Christ? If we can find that we will know whether we are new creatures or not. One not believe INTO Christ, the word "into" is a term of transition, from outside to the inside. Just believing does not transfer one from the outside to the inside. The term "unto" means to go in the direction of a thing but not yet completely transferring from the outside to the inside. We believe "unto" righteousness and repent "unto" life but the term "into" is not used with reference to these acts. We read in Rom. 6:3 "know ye not that so many of us as were baptized "into" Christ were baptized into his death." This plainly states we are baptized INTO Christ. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." Since a man is baptised "into" Christ and he must be in Christ to be a new creature, therefore, one cannot be

a new creature without being baptized. This is God's Way, let us accept it. "We are all the children of God by faith, for as many of you were baptized "into" Christ have put on Christ. Gal. 3:26-27. Here is another reference that state just how one gets into Christ. There is not another passage that states exactly how one gets into Christ. Baptism apart from faith or repentance will not place one into Christ. But by the process of all working together one enters Christ and becomes a new creature.

A person who is not a new creature, he is not expected to act like a new creature, he is not expected to walk in newness of life. If we can find when a person is told to walk in newness of life we will know when he is a new creature. "Know ye not that so many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ; therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the death by the glory of the Father, even so we also should WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE." When is a person to walk in newness of life ? Before or after baptism ? This passage clearly shows it is after baptism. Therefore, one is not a new creature until he is baptized.

From all that has gone before we see the process is always the same in becoming a new creature. A new creature is one who has been born again, one who does the will of God, one who has been converted and one who is in Christ. You may rest assured no one else is a new creature. You will note that all of these things compose but one process: Are you a new creature ? If not why do you not become such today. God has done his part, are you ready to obey him ?

CONDUCT OF A NEW CREATURE

The very expression "new creature" implies a difference in action as well as other phases of life. Just what should a new creature do? Paul said, "As ye have received him so walk ye in him." A new creature must walk in newness of life. Many times we see people who claim to be new creatures continue on the same old road they traveled before conversion. New creatures are to walk a new life, be no longer interested in the things of the world. As Paul said, "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God...Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatryIn which ye sometimes walked when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, see ye have put off the old man with his deeds: and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. 3:1-10. If a man be risen with Christ (from baptism Rom. 6:4) then he is a new creature and the above scripture tells us what he is to leave off. If you would be a new creature you must, by the grace of God, put them aside.

A new creature is one that is interested in worship. He worships God at every opportunity. In times past, he may not have worshipped God but now he does.

He even overcomes obstacles in order to worship him. Paul said, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves as the manner of some is....." Heb. 10:25. In the days of Paul many were persecuted for being Christians. Many were killed just for worshipping according to the New Testament pattern. Yet, even though one might have to suffer for it, he says "Not forsaking the assembling." Let us worship him more.

Are you a new creature? If not, this tract has told you how to become one. Remember the process of being born again, converted and becoming a new creature is the same. You believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, don't you? You are willing to repent of your sins, aren't you? Then aren't you willing to be baptized, not to get into some church but, for the remission of sins? If you will do this the Lord will add you to the church, his church. Acts 2:47. May the Lord help us to do his will.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Franklin Camp

There can be no proper understanding of New Testament Christianity, without a clear knowledge of the New Testament church. The average person of today, having never known anything but denominationalism, thinks it has always been. They have never studied the New Testament and, therefore, do not know the difference between the New Testament church and modern denominations. It shall be my purpose in this article to show the difference.

YOU OUGHT NOT PREACH YOUR DENOMINATION

When I mention the church someone always says, "you ought not to preach your denomination." They mean by this that I should not mention the church. I do not think that those who make this statement realize what they are saying. Let us notice some of the logical conclusions of this statement and, when you study carefully these conclusions, you can see the difference in the New Testament church and denominations.

NOT IN THE BIBLE

“You ought not to preach your denomination,” is a frank admission that denominationalism is not in the Bible. This would have to be true, or else you are insisting that I should not preach things that are in the Bible. If I can preach the Bible and not preach denominationalism, then it is evident that denominationalism is not in the Bible.

UNSCRIPTURAL

“You ought not to preach your denomination,” is an admission that denominationalism is unscriptural. I have already shown that the statement is an admission that denominationalism is not in the Bible. Anything unauthorized by the Bible is unscriptural. Anything that is not taught in the Bible, is unauthorized by the Bible. Denominationalism is not taught in the Bible; and, therefore, is unauthorized by the Bible. Anything that is unauthorized by the Bible is unscriptural. Denominationalism is unauthorized by the Bible, therefore it is unscriptural.

ANTI-SCRIPTURAL

“You ought not to preach your denomination,” is an admission that denominationalism is anti-scriptural. Anything that is anti-scriptural is opposed to the scriptures; and, of course, the scriptures would be opposed to it. Anything not authorized by the scriptures is anti-scriptural. To teach or practice anything unauthorized

by the scriptures is to oppose the scriptures, because they forbid adding anything to them: This principle has always been true. The one who adds anything to the Bible is anti-scriptural. The person that preaches denominationalism has added to the Bible. The person that preaches denominationalism is anti-scriptural. Anything that is unscriptural is anti-scriptural. Denominationalism is unscriptural (proof already given), therefore, it is anti-scriptural.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH NOT A DENOMINATION

“You ought not to preach your denomination,” is an admission that the New Testament church is not a denomination. The New Testament mentions the church. One cannot preach what is in the New Testament without preaching the church. We have already seen that a person can preach all that is in the New Testament, and not preach denominationalism. It should not be difficult then to see that the New Testament church and denominationalism are two different things. If I preach denominationalism, I am not preaching the New Testament church. If I preach the New Testament church, I am not preaching denominationalism. Thus, they have the proof, from their own statement that the New Testament church is not a denomination.

ADMISSION OF PERVERSION OF SCRIPTURES

Denominational preachers will say, “You ought not

to preach your church." When they say this, they are admitting that the Scriptures do not authorize denominations. I have already proven this. These same denominational preachers, when pressed, will turn right around and appeal to some passages of scriptures to try to prove that denominations are right. Look at their position. They say "you ought not to preach your denomination," thereby admitting that such is not in the Scriptures. But, when pressed, they appeal to the Scriptures. They admit they know they are perverting the word of God, in trying to use the Scriptures to support denominationalism.

"You ought not to preach your denomination," is an admission on the part of the one who makes the statement that they are a member of, and working for, a church you ought not to preach about. Why belong to something that ought not to be preached? I agree that all ought to quit preaching their denomination, and preach the New Testament church.

"When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." (Mt. 16:13, 14).

IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Christ asked His disciples who men believed Him to be. They answered that some thought He was John the Baptist, or Elias, and so on. This shows that it does make a difference what one believes. There is no evidence to show that these people were not sincere or

honest in believing that Christ was John the Baptist, or Elias, or some other prophet: Their honesty and sincerity did not make it right. Does anyone think they could have been saved while believing that Christ was John the Baptist? Those who believed that Christ was John the Baptist believed he was just a man, for John was but a man. The Jews and modernists of today believe that Christ is just a man. Can they be saved while believing such? All who believe the Bible know that anyone who thinks that Christ is wholly human, and not divine, cannot be saved. Is this not proof that it does make a difference what a man believes about Christ? If it makes a difference what a man believes about Christ, will it not also make a difference what a man believes about other things? In order to be saved, one must believe the truth about Christ. If one believe the truth about Christ to be saved, then will it not follow that one must believe the truth about other things the Bible teaches to be saved? If not, why not?

SIMILARITY NOT IDENTITY

There was some similarity in Christ and John the Baptist. There was some similarity in Christ and Jeremias. Jeremias was the weeping prophet, and Christ wept over the lost condition of the Jewish nation. The fact that Christ was similar to John or Jeremiah did not mean He was either. You cannot reason from similarity to identity. There is some similarity in a cow and a horse; but who would reason that a cow is a horse,

because they are similar? There is some similarity in a man and a monkey, but is anyone so foolish to reason that this proves that a man is a monkey? Cain's worship was similar to Abel's, but it was rejected because it was not identical. The fire Nadab and Abihu used was, without doubt, similar to the fire that God told them to use, but similarity was not enough. They learned the hard way that similarity is not identity, and God wants identity.

1. There are many people who make this same fallacy today in religion. They think that because what they are, or have done, in religion is similar to that which God authorized, that it is the thing God wants done. I suppose that all churches are similar in some ways to the New Testament church. But similarity does not prove identity, and the only church that pleases God is the one identical with the one He ordained. There was some similarity in the sect of the Pharisees and the church, but the Pharisees were not the church. Since God was not satisfied with the Pharisees, though similar to the church, He is not satisfied with denominations today that are just similar to the church.

2. Many people think they have been baptized because their baptism was similar to New Testament baptism. The baptism of the people in Acts 19 was similar to the baptism authorized by Christ, but it was not sufficient because it was not identical to it. John's baptism was in water for the remission of sins, and these points were like the baptism commanded by Christ. These points of likeness did not make up for the difference between them. As a result those in Ephesus had to

receive the exact baptism commanded by Christ. I have talked to some people who had the idea their baptism was all right because they had been immersed. The ones at Ephesus had been immersed, but this was not enough. New Testament baptism is for a person that believes in Christ, has repented of his sins, confessed his faith in Christ, and then is baptized for the remission of his sins, so that the Lord will add him to His church. If you were baptized in infancy your baptism is wrong, because it is not identical with New Testament baptism. If you were baptized because you were already saved your baptism is wrong, because it is not identical to New Testament baptism. In short, these are not New Testament baptism, because they are *only similar*. Baptism, to be right, *must be identical to New Testament baptism*. Why accept a substitute, when you can have the genuine ?

ANSWERS OF MEN WRONG

“When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am ? And they said, some say Thou art John the Baptist ; some, Elias ; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” (Mt. 16:13-14).

Read carefully the question asked by Christ. Notice that His question was, “whom do *men* say that I am ?” Now with this in mind, look at the answers that were given by *men*. Some men said He was John the Baptist. This answer was wrong. Some said He was Elias. This was also wrong. Still, other men said He was Jeremias ;

but this answer was wrong too. Various men had various answers but they were all wrong. There was not a single correct answer given by men. This principle is just as true today as it was then. When questions that pertain to religion and salvation are answered *by men*, the answers are *always wrong*. It is also true today, as then, that men have their answers for religious questions. Most of the people of that day were guided by the answers given by men, and this is still true.

SOME ANSWERS MEN GIVE

1. When the question, "What must I do to be saved?" is asked, men have their answers. Billy Graham says. "Make a decision for Christ, just accept Christ as your personal Saviour." Where did he get his answer? Certainly not from God for *no inspired man* ever told the lost that they could be saved in this way. He is just as wrong on what to do to be saved, as the men of Christ's day were on who He was. Others answer the question by saying, "Pray through, or get religion." Where did God ever say this was the way to be saved? It is not in the Bible. This is another of man's answers to the question, and it is wrong.

2. When the questions are asked about baptism, the answers of men fly thick and fast. Who should be baptized? Men say, "Babies and people that are already saved." Where has God authorized anyone to baptize a baby? The Bible is as silent as a tomb about any baby being baptized. The authority for baptizing babies comes from men (the Catholic church, A.D. 1311); and

is therefore, wrong. Again, where does the Bible teach anyone to be baptized, because he is already saved? It does not teach it. The Bible places "shall be saved," the remission of sins, *after* baptism (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). The man who says to baptize babies, or to be baptized because you are already saved, got his answer from man and is wrong. When we come to the question of how to be baptized some men say, "Take your choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion." Have you ever read in the Bible where anyone was given the choice of one of three ways to be baptized? These are men's answers, and are wrong. *The answers of men on baptism are just as wrong today, as the answers of men were wrong as to who Christ was.*

3. Then there are questions about the church and men have their answers ready. How many churches are there? The answer comes in a hurry, "Go to the church of your choice." *Just where does this answer come from?* If it comes from God, it can be found in the Bible. Where is the verse that says, suggests, or implies anything about two, much less 250 churches from which a person may choose? The church of your choice is the language of men. *The man who advises you to go to the church of your choice is just as wrong about the church, as the men of Christ's day were wrong about Him.*

4. When we ask how to become a member of the church, some men say, "Join the church." Again, may I ask where does the Bible say anything about joining the church? It does not say it. The Bible speaks about being "added to the church," but there is not even a suggesting of joining it. This is another of man's answers

to a religious question, and the pattern still holds—*wrong again*.

5. Is salvation in or out of the church? The common answer is, "You can go to heaven and never be in the church." Where does this answer come from? The Bible says that the church is the house (family) of God (I Tim. 3:15). Is salvation in God's family or out? Read Rom. 8:17, and you will find the Lord's answer, and it does not say out of God's family. *The answers of men about salvation being out of the church is just as wrong as the answers of those in the days of Christ who said he was John the Baptist.*

Whatever the question may be, if you get your answer from men, you have the wrong answer.

MEN DIVIDED

Jesus asked the question, "Whom do men say that I am?" There were various answers given. Men were not agreed as to who Christ was. They were divided among themselves. It was no accident that they were divided. There was a definite reason for their division. Now, as in the days of Christ, there is always a reason for division. The reason they differed about Christ was because they were going by opinion. Each group was guided by what some man thought, rather than by revelation. This is the exact principle that causes division today: Each group that is separated from other groups, is holding to some opinion of man, rather than going by what the Bible says.

APOSTLES UNITED

Let us now notice the Lord's question to the apostles and see their answer. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The answer given by Peter was the answer of all the apostles. Where there were differences among *men*, the apostles were in entire agreement. Why were the apostles agreed, while the others differed? Jesus gives us the answer in verse sixteen. Jesus said that the apostles did not get their answer from *flesh and blood* (men), but by revelation from God. The apostles were guided by faith (revelation), while the others were guided by opinion. Here is the solution to the problem of religious division. Let men lay aside their ideas, opinions, and walk by revelation then unity is the result. There is no other possible ground for unity. Let us just suppose that on this occasion an attempt had been made to bring about unity among these various groups and the apostles. How could it have been accomplished? Could unity have been brought about by the apostles compromising with the others? If the apostles had done so, they would have exchanged truth for error. Surely, anyone can see that the apostles could not have compromised the truth—that Christ was the Son of God—to have unity. While on the other hand, those who said Christ was John, or Elias, not only could have, but should have been willing to give this up and accept what revelation said. If that was true then, why is it not true today?

MANY WRONG ANSWERS ONLY ONE RIGHT ANSWER

When Christ asked the question as to who He was, a number of answers were given. Four answers were given by men, and one by the apostles. What is the lesson to learn from this? It is simple, yet one that multitudes have never learned. Here it is. *There may be a number of wrong answers to a religious question, but there is only one right answer.* There is only one right answer to two plus two. There may be a thousand wrong answers, *but never more than one right answer.* There is only one right answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" There are hundreds of wrong answers. This shows conclusively that when we understand the Bible *right*, we will understand it alike. If we do not understand it alike, somebody is wrong. If we do not understand it alike, someone has failed to understand what it teaches. *When men differ in matters of faith, someone is wrong.* The men of Christ's day differed among themselves and differed from the apostles. There does not live the man that can make them all be right. If they could not differ among themselves, and differ from the apostles and be right, how can it be possible for men to differ among themselves, and differ from the apostles, and be right today? What men could not do then—cannot be done now.

WERE THE APOSTLES NARROW-MINDED ?

Did not the apostles have the right to insist that

those of their day believe the same thing they did? Would the apostles have been narrow-minded for insisting they believe as they did? The apostles could do this since they believed what God said. Churches of Christ have the same right: to insist that others believe as we do, for the same reason—we are guided by the Bible. Neither does this make us narrow-minded, unless it did the apostles. We are right, not because of who we are, but because the Bible is right and we teach the Bible.

DID CHRIST DO WHAT HE PROMISED ?

Jesus said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build My church." Did Christ do what He said he would do? Did He build His church? If you say that He did not, then He did not keep His promise, and He could not be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world if He made a promise that he failed to keep. If on the other hand you admit that He built His church as He promised, then at some time there was in the world a divine church. When this church that Christ built was in the world, was it important? If there were other churches then, were they as good as the one Christ built? Could one go to heaven then, in the sect of the Pharisees as well as in the Lord's church? Surely, anyone that thinks soberly would agree that if there had been a thousand churches other than the one the Lord built they would not have been as good as the one He built. The very fact that His was divine would make it superior to all others, because the divine is always superior to that which is human. One book is not as good as another because

the Bible is a divine book. Christ was a man but He was superior to all other men because He was also divine. If the Bible is greater than all other books because it is divine ; if Christ is greater than all other men because He is divine : then, why would it not follow that His church is greater than all other churches because it is divine ? No one would want to substitute a human book for the book divine. No one would want to substitute a human Christ for the divine Christ. Then why be a member of a human church instead of the divine church ?

IS THE CHURCH THAT CHRIST BUILT IN THE WORLD TODAY ?

It was at one time, and if it is not on earth today, why is it not ? The fact that it was here at one time, should suggest that if it is not here now, it ought to be. All will agree that the church in Jerusalem was the Lord's church. Read the second chapter of Acts. The Lord added to the church such as should be saved. Were these not added to His church ? I am sure that He would not build His church and then add people to another one. Is it possible for that same church to be in Birmingham today ? We are agreed that it was in Jerusalem. The next place that we find the church in the New Testament was in Antioch.

CHURCH IN ANTIOCH LIKE THE ONE IN JERUSALEM

Take your Bible and read the eleventh chapter of Acts. Was the church in Antioch the same as the one in Jerusalem? If it was, then it was the one Christ built. There cannot be any doubt that the church in Antioch was the same as the church in Jerusalem, and therefore was the Lord's church. It was started by members of the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:19). Since the church in Antioch was started by those who belonged to the Lord's church in Jerusalem, would not the conclusion be that it was like the one in Jerusalem? The church in Birmingham is supporting Carl Johnson in India. Does anyone think we are supporting him to establish Baptist churches? When the church in Antioch was started by members of the Jerusalem church it evidently was like the one in Jerusalem; therefore, it was the Lord's church. In the next place the Jerusalem Church sent a preacher down to Antioch. They would not have done this had not the church in Antioch been like the one in Jerusalem. Would anyone ever conceive the idea that we are sending someone to preach for a Baptist church in India? I think not, Neither did the church of Christ in Jerusalem send a preacher down to Antioch to preach for a Baptist church.

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH THE LORD'S CHURCH

We have seen that the church in Antioch was the

same as the one in Jerusalem ; hence, it was the Lord's church in Antioch. How did the Lord's church get in Antioch ? It was started in Antioch by the preaching of the word (Acts 11:19-20). Now, if preaching the word would produce the same church in Antioch that was in Jerusalem then why would not preaching the word in Birmingham produce the same church in Birmingham that was in Jerusalem ? The answer is—it will. Is the word of God being preached in Birmingham today ? If so, then the Lord's church is here. Furthermore, when the word was preached in Antioch it did not produce anything but the Lord's church. If there is anything in Birmingham today besides the Lord's church, something other than the gospel is being preached. But Paul said the one who preached anything else would be cursed. How then can you have anything besides the Lord's church, in Birmingham or anywhere else, with God's approval ?

DID CHRIST HAVE THE RIGHT TO BUILD THE CHURCH ?

“And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church ; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18).

In this statement, we have the promise of Christ to build His church. Christ promised to build His church and no other. He did *not* say, “I will build My churches.” It is evident from this statement that He had in mind only one. Since Christ promised to build only one church and the world is filled with churches, it will help to clear things up if we can learn what right Christ had to build the church. Did Christ have the right to

build the church? Surely, if anyone had the right to build the church, Christ did. If it was not right for Christ to build the church, it would not be right for men to do so. This does not mean that men have the right to build churches just because Christ had the right to build His; but, it does prove that, if Christ did not have authority to start the church, no man could not claim that right.

RIGHT OF PROPHECY, AUTHORITY, PURCHASE

Christ said He would build His church. It is evident that He had the right to do so, or He would not have promised to build it. Why did He have the right to build the church? First, it had been prophesied that He would build the church. "Behold the man whose name is the Branch: and He shall grow up out of His place: He shall build the temple of Jehovah; even He shall build the temple of Jehovah; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both". (Zech. 6:12, 13). Here we have it prophesied that Christ would build the church, and be both King and Priest over it. In the second place, Christ had to have authority from God to build the church. It was not until after Christ could say, "All authority hath been given unto me," that He could build the church. In the third place, Christ had to die for the church. "Feed the church of the Lord, which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself up for it: that He

might sanctify it, having cleansed it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. 5:25, 26). These passages prove that Christ's right to build the church rested on three things.

WHAT OTHER CHURCH CAN CLAIM THESE ?

It was in fulfillment of prophecy, He had authority from God, and He died for it. If God required these three things of His Son, in order for Him to have the right to establish the church, would He require less of anyone else ? What other church can claim these three things ? What denomination today exists in fulfillment of prophecy, received authority from God to start, and the man who started it died for it, before it was started ? There is not a single denomination that can make such a claim. The church that Christ built meets all these requirements ; and, therefore, exists by *divine right*. There is not another church that can meet these requirements. This means that every other church exists *without divine right*. Yes, the world is full of churches ; but, there is only one that is here by divine right. Let the preachers who claim that denominations have the approval of God, prove that they meet these requirements. If they cannot give proof that they meet the requirements that the Lord's church had to meet, they cannot prove they have the right to exist. There is only one church, the Lord's, that meets these qualifications, and that means there has never existed but one church by divine right.

THE FOUNDATION

In this same connection, the Deity of Christ is made the foundation of the church. Any church that has any other foundation is wrong, because the foundation is wrong. Believer's baptism is the foundation of the Baptist church. The Bible teaches believer's baptism, but this is not the foundation of the church. This is evidence that the Baptist church is not the Lord's church. Method is the foundation of the Methodist church. The very name of the Methodist church suggests this. This is also the wrong foundation ; and, so, it is not the Lord's church. Holiness (a perverted idea of holiness) is the foundation of the Holiness church. This is, like-wise, the wrong foundation ; hence it is not the Lord's church. *Any church resting on any other foundation other than the deity of Christ is wrong, because it has the wrong foundation.*

THE PLACE OF THE APOSTLES IN THE CHURCH

"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mt. 16:19).

No one can properly understand the church of the New Testament, without knowing the relation the apostles sustained to it. "God set some in the church, first apostles" (1 Cor. 12:28). In this passage Paul shows that the apostles were first in the church. This has no reference to the time of entrance, but rather of rank or order. The

fact that the apostles sustained a relationship to the church that no others did, shows that there were some things peculiar to the apostles. Let us notice some of the things that were peculiar to the apostles.

AMBASSADORS

The apostles were ambassadors. 2 Cor. 5:20. The word ambassador was never used of any except the apostles. The word means one clothed with authority, and representing one's government in another country. This is exactly what Paul said of the apostles. "We pray you in Christ's stead." This is the meaning of Christ's statement to Peter in Mt. 16:19. God has no living ambassadors today. No man, or set of men, can bind anything that the apostles did not bind, nor can they loose anything that the apostles bound. The apostles still function as ambassadors through the New Testament.

SPECIAL CALL

The apostles, being ambassadors, needed a special call. "Paul called to be an *Apostle*" (Rom. 1:1). For one to be an ambassador he must be appointed by the government. He cannot just assume the responsibility. Because the apostles were ambassadors, clothed with authority to act in behalf of the government of heaven, they had to be appointed. No preacher today has any authority; therefore needs no special call. Preachers would never claim to be called directly by God today, if they knew

the difference between an apostle and a preacher. Preachers cannot bind or loose anything. They are not ambassadors.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The work of the apostles, being peculiar to them means that they had needs that were peculiar for their work. The very fact, that the apostles had responsibilities that preachers do not have, should suggest they had needs that preachers do not have.

The apostles were to reveal the truth. Paul said that he received the gospel by revelation (Gal. 1:12). "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery of His will." (Eph. 3:3). We have the truth revealed today in the New Testament. The apostles wrote it. No man today can write any new revelation. This shows that we have no living apostles. In order for the apostles to reveal the truth, they needed a special guide. (Jno. 16:13). This accounts for the apostles having the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Because of the nature of the work and needs of the apostles, the Holy Spirit sustained a relationship to them that He did not to others. The promises of the Holy Spirit in Jno. 14, 15, and 16 are limited to the apostles. The word Comforter found in Jno. 14:16, 26; 15:26 and 16:7 was a promise to the apostles and no one else. Christ was talking to the apostles when he made the promises in these chapters. After the church was established we find many references

to the Holy Spirit, but not one time is He called the Comforter. If the promise of the Comforter in Jno. 14, 15, and 16 is not limited to the apostles, why is this word not used in connection with the Holy Spirit and others? It would indeed seem strange, since we have numerous references to the Holy Spirit and Christians, that if it were to be related to Christians as it was to the apostles, the same word is not used. If people could one time see that the apostles had a special need, a special measure of the Holy Spirit, because of a special work, then most of the confusion that exists about the Holy Spirit and His work would vanish.

SPECIAL CREDENTIALS

In the next place, the apostles needed something special to prove their work was special ; therefore, the miracles they performed. Paul asked the Corinthians, "Were not the signs of an apostle wrought among you ?" (2 Cor. 12:12). These miracles were their credentials as ambassadors. Revelation and confirmation went together. When one ceased the other ceased. Thus, we have apostles, revelation and confirmation. We have no living apostles, no therefore revelation and no confirmation. All so-called miracle workers today are fakes. (2 Thess. 2:9).

"And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God. (Mt. 16:16).

Let us study some parallels before we leave our scripture in Matthew 16. Notice that in verse 16 we have *The Christ, The Son, The Living God*. In Matthew 3:1 we read,

those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea." In this verse we find that John was called *The Baptist*. Now, let us look at Eph. 1:21, 22: "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." In this passage Paul uses the phrase, *the church*. Let us put all these phrases together, and study some parallels. Putting the phrases together from the above passages, we have the following.

The Christ—The Son—The God—The Baptist—The church.

HOW MANY ?

Will you now study each of the following questions, in connection, with each of these phrases ? The Christ means how many Christs ? I am sure that all will say the Christ means one and only one Christ. The Son means how many Sons ? Again, all will agree that there is only one Son as referred to here. The God means how many Gods ? All are still agreed that the God means only one God. The Baptist means how many Baptists ? Be careful and honest in your answer. Does the Baptist mean thirty million (I do not know if that is how many that claim to be Baptists or not) while *the* Christ, and *the* God mean one ? If the Baptist, means any number, why would not *the* God, mean any number ? The church means how many churches : Does it mean 250 or 300 churches ? Does not the phrase *the church* suggest the same in number as *the* Christ, or *the* God ? How can

a preacher find 250 churches in *the church*, and only one Christ in the Christ ?

WHICH CHRIST ?

Which Christ is the Christ ? Would not the answer be : *the* Christ you can read about in the Bible ? The Son is which Son ? Again the answer is, the one you can read about in the Bible. The God is which God ? The answer is still, the one you can read about in the Bible. The Baptist is which Baptist ? The answer remains, the one you can read about in the Bible. You can read about only one, and he said that he had to decrease. One minus one leaves how many ? "The church" means which church ? Would you still answer, the one you can read about in the Bible ? People of today want me to preach *the* Christ and *the* God of the Bible, but condemn me for preaching *the church* of the Bible. Why is it that the religious world wants the Christ of the Bible, but not the church of the Bible ? Are they consistent while they contend for the Christ of the Bible, but reject the church of the Bible ? As for me and my house, I had just as soon believe in and belong to a Christ, that you cannot read about in the Bible, as to believe in and belong to a church, you cannot read about in the Bible. What is the difference ? If you reject the Christ of the Bible, you do not believe the Bible. Neither do you believe the Bible, if you reject the church of the It must be evident that in the final analysis there is no difference, since both reject the Bible.

WHAT KIND ?

Any Christ you cannot read about in the Bible is what kind of Christ? I think all will agree that such is a false Christ. Any Son you cannot read about in the Bible is what kind of Son? Would he not be a false Son? Any God you cannot read about in the Bible is what kind of God? Without doubt, such is a false God. Any kind of Baptist you cannot read about in the Bible is what kind of Baptist? Remember there is only one you can read about in the Bible. Any other must be a false Baptist. Any church you cannot read about in the Bible is what kind of a church? Would it not likewise be a false church? If not, then how can a Christ that is not mentioned in the Bible, or a God that is unknown to the Bible, be a false Christ or a false God? In Athens, the people had an altar to an unknown God. Before Paul taught them of the true God, the God of the Bible, was their god true or false? If a God that is unknown to the Bible is a false God, then what is a church that is unknown to the Bible? What about the church you are a member of? Can you read about it in the Bible? If not, then why not leave it, and find the church of the Bible?

THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE

Is it possible for the Religious World to be United ?

The days of Christ's ministry on earth were rapidly coming to a close. Christ could, with His prophetic eyes, see the cruel crucifixion approaching. Thinking of His followers, however, He fervently prayed to the Father that they "may all be one." (Jno. 17:21).

His prayer included not only the apostles, but also "them also that believe on me through their word." (vs. 20). He prayed, then, that all His followers be united.

Now, it is evident that division exists instead of the unity for which Christ prayed. Over 350 religious groups exist with many of them divided into factions. Yet, all claim to follow Christ. Is this situation pleasing to God ?

Paul Condemned Division

A few years after Christ's prayer, the church was established. In Corinth the congregation of Christians divided themselves over preachers. Some claimed to follow one man ; some professed to be disciples of another. The apostle Paul condemned this division by saying:

“Now I beseech you...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment....Is Christ divided ? was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ?” (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Paul was simply instructing them that they should follow Christ and that no factions should exist.

“But,” someone says, “division makes competition and that is healthy because it causes each group to work harder.” The fact remains, however, that God desires unity. His way is best. And if the energy of all religious people could be directed to those who have not heard of Christ instead of teaching doctrines peculiar to each denomination, the whole world would soon hear of Christ.

“Well,” says another, “we just cannot all see the Bible alike.” Nevertheless, the Bible contains complete unity. It is not a book of confusion. Division exists when men add their doctrines to what the Bible says. Division is also caused by accepting ideas of men, tradition, and “church creeds” instead of the Bible for authority (Matt. 15:9 ; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Christ prayed for unity. Paul condemned division. “In unity there is strength.” Religious division pulls families apart. It is economically wasteful. It promotes ill-will between neighbours and friends. Is it necessary to further show why people should dwell together in unity ?

HOW MAY UNITY BE ATTAINED ?

Basically, there are three methods of attaining unity.

One is by compromise. Denomination leaders have conferred at length in an effort to compromise points in order to attain unity. This method, however, is not satisfactory. The end result is only a combination of doctrines most favourable to men.

The second attempt is the one by which Catholics would have religious people united. They claim to be the authority and if unity is gained, it must be by others simply accepting the doctrines and traditions of that body. Unity cannot be attained in this way. Bible believing people cannot accept Rome with all her traditions and peculiarities.

Finally, religious unity must come by a sincere search of the Bible, accepting it as authority (as it claims), and holding to the teaching therein. Unity can be attained by people going to the Bible and to it alone ! Where the Bible speaks, follow it ! Where the Bible is silent, remain silent ! Where the Bible tells how to do something, do it just that way and that alone ; where the Bible commands an act, but does not specify how, do it in way that harmony can exist. This method should be acceptable to all religious people. It will work ! God approves.

CONCLUSION

Religious unity can exist—but only if religious people will return to the Bible and to it alone for doctrine and practice. No other creeds are needed. If they teach the same as the Bible, they are useless ; if they teach something other than the Bible, they are wrong and cause division. Cast them aside !

So, let's go back to the Bible—and it alone !

WHAT CAN A CHRISTIAN WOMAN DO IN THE CHURCH ?

Guy F. Caskey

In our time, in many parts of the world, there has been a clamour on the part of women for equality with men in every area of culture and society. At times, and in places, the outcry has become vehement and sustained. The noisy demands and complaints have reached the height of an uproar and the expression of those feelings has increased in intensity and persistence until they have escaped the notice and hearing of no one—not even those in high places of position and authority. Nor can it be denied that, in a great measure, these cries and demands have been effective in accomplishing their purpose.

WOMEN'S SUCCESS

Women control much of the wealth of the world; many administrate successful businesses; others hold responsible positions of trust and authority—such as Mrs. Golda Meir of Israel and Mrs. Indira Gandhi of India. Countless millions of them around the world have attained great heights in training and refinement of mind and manifest leadership qualities unsurpassed. In countless

instances, women have excelled in the fields of education, economics and politics.

WOMEN DEPRESSED

Yet, in times past, and in many places of the world today, women are little more than beasts of burden to dig in the garden to provide food for their families, to carry heavy pots of water or loads of wood on their heads, to spend their lives in abject drudgery and wretched toil, eking out a miserable existence. And it would be even more miserable if they had ever experienced any of the better things of life with which to contrast their present plight. In many societies, woman is little more than an instrument for the fulfillment of man's physical lust and animal desire.

WOMEN ELEVATED

Pure New Testament Christianity has given to woman the most exalted place of any religion or system of ethics the world has ever known. It defines the lofty position the elevated circumstance God intended that she occupy and enjoy in this world. Let us give brief attention to the noble and majestic treatment she is to receive: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). This is a self-denying and self-sacrificing love a man is to have for his wife. The Christian woman is called a "co-heir of the grace of life," and her husband is admonished to

“honour” his wife—which means to treat her as a “precious possession” (1 Pet. 3:7).

WOMAN'S PLACE

But the questions with which we are presently concerned about Christian women are: What is their sphere of service? What is their place or position? Is their work equivalent to that of men? Are the boundaries of their service to God synonymous to that of men in the church? There is but one way to satisfactorily answer these questions, and that is to go to the word of God and make sincere inquiry of what is taught there upon the subject.

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN CANNOT

Let us give attention first to what a Christian woman cannot do:

1. *She cannot be the head of man.*

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ: and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11:3). This word *head*, *kefale* (κεφαλή), means “superior, chief, principal, one to whom others are subordinate.” So, the Christian woman cannot be the chief or principal over her husband (or over man), but rather, she is to be subordinate to him. “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the

head of wife, even as Christ is the head of the church” (Eph. 5:22, 23).

2. *She cannot exercise authority or dominion over a man.*

“I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silence” (1 Tim. 2:12). This word *authentein* (αὐθεντεῖν) means “one acting by his own authority or power, to have authority over, exercise dominion over, domineer, one who executes with his own hand” (The Analytical Greek Lexicon).

3. *She cannot be a public preacher of the word of God.*

In 1 Corinthians 14:34, Paul said: “Let your women keep silence in the churches...” This is an imperative. It is not a matter left to one’s own wishes or discretion, but is a mandate from heaven, a prohibition by God. The New English Bible translates this sentence: “Women should not address the meeting.” And further in verse 35: “It is a shocking thing that a woman should address the congregation.” Another translation says, “It is considered a disgrace...”

4. *She cannot serve as an elder or an overseer in the church.*

It is not particularly uncommon for a woman to be appointed as an elder in a denominational church, just as one frequently sees a woman who is a public preacher. But both of these positions violate the divine principle of headship, which position God delegated to man. Why did God enact such principle? Is this discrimination? Is He partial to man over woman? Indeed, not! There are several reasons for this: (1) “Adam was first formed than Eve” (1 Tim. 2:13); (2) “And Adam was not deceived

but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14); (3) "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Cor. 11:8, 9); (4). God intended that she serve in other capacities. Her sphere of service is not less honourable, nor is it less important or effective. It is a place, in fact, of nobility, of beauty and of power. No one has greater influence in the Lord's church than a capable and dedicated Christian woman. But her God-assigned place in the church and its work is not the same as that of men—it is not a position of headship, of public proclamation of the gospel.

But the important question remains: What can she do in the church? Again, our only authority in deciding this issue is the New Testament. If we do not intend to allow it to guide us in this lesson of paramount importance, how can we appeal to it as authority and support for anything we believe and practice? If we have no respect for it in this area of teaching, why not consign it to the garbage bin?

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN CAN

Here are some things the new Testament teaches a Christian woman can do in the church:

1. She can expound the word of God.

"And this man (Apollos) began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And hearing him, Priscilla and Aquila took him and more accurately to him explained the way of God" (Acts 18:26). This word *explain* or *expound* means

“to set forth or declare” (Thayer). In a private situation in the company of her husband, this Christian woman taught (or helped teach) a man.

2. *She can guide.*

“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house...” (1 Tim. 5:14). This term *guide* means “to occupy one’s self in the management of a household” (Analytical Greek Lexicon); “to manage family affairs” (Thayer). This, of course, includes teaching her children, shaping and forming their plastic and impressionable hearts.

3. *She can pray and prophesy.*

“But every woman that prayeth or propheseth...” (1 Cor. 11:5). Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9). This word literally means “to set forth a matter of divine teaching.” There were times, both in the Old and New Testaments, when this was done by special and divine faculty. Sometimes it carried the idea of presaging, or foretelling future events. But basically, it simply means “setting forth a matter of divine teaching.” In consideration of the sphere of her service, in the context of her operation, a Christian woman can set forth a matter of divine teaching. For her to step outside this realm in which God has placed her to do her work would be to infract the law of the Lord and call down his displeasure.

4. *She may school others.*

The older women are instructed to be teachers of that which is right. They are “to teach the young women orderly behaviour, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good,

submitting themselves to and respecting the authority of their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited" (Tit. 2:4-6). The word for *teach* here is "to school, to steady by exhortation and guidance; to control, curb, discipline; to hold one to his duty." The whole idea is one of training younger woman both by verbal teaching and showing by example. If this were widely believed and practiced today (this wonderful course of teaching outlined by Paul), there is no doubt it would greatly reduce the problems of juvenile delinquency, aspiration for more and more material comforts, unfaithfulness to each other on the part of companions and the almost countless broken homes in the so-called Christian world.

5. *She can be a servant of the church.*

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1). Such a servant executes the commands of another—in this case, God's commands. She is here represented in her activity of assisting Paul in his work and her devoted concern for the good of others. A servant, let us remember, is one who serves.

A Christian woman's power and influence, in teaching and good works, for the advancement of the Cause of Christ are almost limitless. May she humbly and gratefully learn the region of service in which God has placed her; may she multiply and exercise her God-given abilities in quarter, without the desire or intent to overpass that line and usurp man's common-wealth, and thereby break God's law and further contribute to the world's chaos.

“NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING”

Joe D. Schubert

God has always been concerned with the assembling of His people together for worship and fellowship. In every age He has commanded it. It is not only right to assemble ; it is a sin to fail to do so.

The duty of assembling was an important practice during the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, long before the church of the Lord was established. So frequently were the meetings of the people together under the Law of Moses that God ordained two silver trumpets and differing sounds to call the people together (Numbers 10:2,3). The Jewish poet in Psalm 122:1 echoes what must have been the feeling of all faithful Jews toward these worship assemblies : “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”

God has also planned that assembling together for worship and fellowship should play a vital role in every Christian's life. He thinks that it is so important that He has commanded us to meet *regularly* to engage in worship. The inspired writer of the book of Hebrews says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25).

The church of the first century was an assembling church. There is nothing more evident than that the members of the church met *every* Lord's Day for public worship and the observance of the Lord's Supper. Referring to the church of Christ at Troas, Luke writes in Acts 20:7 that "upon the first day of the week" the disciples "came together to break bread." Each week has a first day, and the Christians at Troas met on the first day of each week to take the Lord's Supper.

The church at Corinth did the same. Because this church *regularly* met together each Sunday for worship and fellowship, Paul commanded them, "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Cor. 16:2).

The church in Jerusalem also continued steadfastly and regularly in its worship assemblies. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread and in prayers." (Acts 2:42).

Faithful Christians must still assemble together regularly on Sunday, the Lord's Day, to worship him. It was on Sunday that Jesus conquered death, coming forth from the grave (Mt. 28:1). Before He ascended into heaven Jesus appeared to His disciples many times, on the first day of the week. The Day of Pentecost, on which the church was established, fell on Sunday. This is the day when the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles to 'guide them into all truth', and it was on this day that the church of Christ was born. Thus we can see why Sunday is the day set aside for Christians to assemble together "to break bread."

But there were assemblies in the early church on days other than Sunday as well. One of the first compliments paid to the Jerusalem church was that "all that believed were *together*." (Acts 2:44). When the first persecution arose, we find that same church assembled together." (Acts 4:31). Consider Barnabas and Paul at Antioch—"a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people" (Acts 11:26). When, after the first missionary tour, these same men returned to Antioch, they "gathered the church together" to rehearse all that God had done by them (Acts 14:27). We read of the church being "gathered together" for purposes of discipline (1 Cor. 5:4). We read of the home of Mary, and her son, John Mark "where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12), and of the "whole church" assembled to teach. (1 Cor. 14:23, 26). Could we possibly say that *all* these assemblies were on Sundays?

If we feel like we could, perhaps we need to turn to the second chapter of Acts and read where that first church in Jerusalem continued "*daily* with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house" (Acts 2:46).

Realizing the many assemblies that the early church had, the direct command of our Lord in Hebrews 10:25 takes on new meaning for us: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." Whether "the day" in this verse refers to Sunday, or to some other day of assembling, or to some great day predicted to come

sometime in the future, does not change the meaning of the verse. *The only hindrance great enough to entitle a Christian to forsake his assembling together is a hindrance from God.*

Nothing should be allowed to interfere with our being present at *all* services of the Lord's church. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Certainly placing the church first in our life, and allowing neither work nor play to hinder our obligation to meet with the saints, is one way we can "seek the kingdom first." Jesus also said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20). When we miss an appointment with the Lord's people, we have also missed an appointment with the Lord.

Our heavenly Father knew that we would need these assemblies. God intends our worship to give us the indirect benefits of increasing our knowledge, developing our character, and stimulating our zeal. Worship increases our knowledge, for example, when we "speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16), and when we study God's Word. Worship develops our character: We develop humility through partaking of the Lord's Supper. As we pray we build our faith and as we give we learn generosity. Since we tend to become like the object of our worship, by directing our worship towards God we are developing a character like His.

Some other reasons for being regular in our attendance at church services are:

(1). That we show our love for the Lord. Jesus said in Jno. 14:15: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." We have already noted Hebrews 10:25 and other passages that command us to assemble for worship.

(2). That we may grow into mature Christians. Peter declared, "As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" (I Pet. 2:2, ASV). We must receive spiritual food if we are to have spiritual growth. We cannot grow while we are indifferent to the worship services where the Word of God is taught.

(3). Attendance at worship services protects us against apostasy. Peter said that for one to fall away after he has known the truth is worse than if he had never known it in the first place (II Pet. 2:20-22). Our attendance at worship services gives us the strength we need to overcome our mistakes and to remain faithful to the Lord.

(4). We must attend and learn to enjoy the fellowship of other Christians. If we do not enjoy a period of Christian worship and fellowship in this world, how will we be able to enjoy it in heaven?

(5). We should attend all the worship services of the local congregation of the Lord's church of which we are a member to show our submission to the elders who are over us. The Hebrew writer commands us to "obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" (Heb. 13:17). When the elders or bishops of the church have planned services, even if they be on Wednesday or some other day during the week, we must make every effort to

be present. They watch for our souls and feel that we need this spiritual uplift.

When a Christian moves into a new community he should immediately locate the church of Christ and identify himself with it. It is each Christian's duty to work and serve under the oversight of the elders of a local congregation.

When we absent ourselves from the worship services, we not only break one of the Lord's commandments, but we also deprive ourselves of all the blessings that are contained in those services for us. We are most inclined to forsake the assembly when we become discouraged or when we have sinned. But that is the time when, more than any other, we need the fellowship of others and the strength of God whom we love.

Just after Christ, through the inspired writer, gives the command in Hebrews 10:25 not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, He adds in the next verse: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins". This means that forsaking the assembling, unless we have been providentially hindered by God, is a willful sin and can cause us to lose our soul.

May each of us, as children of God, have the courage to make the following vow:

I will make no engagements
on Sunday morning, Sunday evening,
or anytime else
when the church assembles ;
Because I am a Christian
And that time belongs to my Lord.

WHO CHANGED THE SABBATH ?

Bill Flatt

Did the Roman Catholic Church change the Sabbath to Sunday ? The answer is NO.

NAILED TO THE CROSS

The Sabbath or Saturday is not kept by Christians because the law of which it was a part was nailed to the Cross. In the Christian era we are under Christ and not Moses (Mark 9:2-9) ; we are under a new Covenant (Hebrews 8:6), the new and living way (Hebrews 10:20). Jesus abolished the law which contained the Sabbath when He died on the Cross (Ephesians 2:14-16). "Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross ; having spoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come ; but the body is Christ's" (Colossians 2:14-17.) Notice verse 17 says that no one is to condemn us for not keeping the Sabbath. Why ? Verse 14 tells us. The law of which the Sabbath was a part, was nailed to the Cross.

10 COMMANDMENTS PART OF LAW OF MOSES

Some honest people say that the Ten Commandments were not a part of the law of Moses, that they were given before the time of Moses. This is not true. Listen to Moses: "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deuteronomy 5:2,3).

The word "Sabbath" is found 60 times in the Greek New Testament. Religious people who believe in keeping the Sabbath, admit that it means the Sabbath in 59 out of 60 cases, but deny that it means the Sabbath in Colossians 2:16. This is unsound scholarship. *Sabbaton* is the exact spelling of the Greek word used in Colossians 2:16. Precisely the same spelling is used by inspiration in Matthew 28: 1 where it says, "Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." And in Luke 4:16, where it says that Jesus entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Jesus lived under the law of Moses, but He abolished it when He died. Is the "Sabbath" Saturday in Matthew 28:1 and in Luke 4:16? It certainly is, and this proves that the Sabbath is also Saturday in Colossians 2:16. So, do not judge us for not keeping Saturday; it was abolished at Calvary.

The "ministration of death" which included the Ten Commandments, was abolished (2 Corinthians 3: 7-11). That which was "written and engraved on stone" was

the Ten Commandments. And, this section of Scripture shows that they were abolished.

Romans 7:4 says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." Then verse 7 says, "What shall we say then ? Is the law sin ? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law : for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Notice what it says. We are made dead to the law, the law which contained the commandment "Thou shalt not covet." Of course, this is one of the Ten Commandments. This clearly shows that we are not under the Ten Commandments.

The Sabbath became an abomination unto God (Isaiah 1:13 ; Hosea 2:11). The law had to be changed when Jesus became High Priest, for the priesthood changed (Hebrews 7:12). Jesus could change the law, for He is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28). He took it away ; we are no longer under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14 ; John 1:17).

The phrase "the law" included the whole law ; civil (Acts 23:3), ceremonial (Luke 2:27), and moral (Matthew 22:36, 37). Jesus and the Apostles did not bind the Sabbath upon the church ! However, nine of the Ten Commandments are enjoined in the New Testament (Acts 14:15 ; 1 John 5:21 ; James 5:12 ; Ephesians 6:1 ; 1 Timothy 5:8 ; Romans 13:9). We therefore keep these nine commandments, not because they were a part of the Ten Commandments, but because they are taught by

Christ and His Apostles. They became a part of the Law of Christ Jesus.

LAW SERVED ITS PURPOSE

The law served its purpose in bringing man to Christ. But now that Christ has come, we cannot still be under the law (Galatians 3:16-29).

SABBATH GIVEN ONLY TO ISRAEL

The Sabbath was not given to Christians, but to Israel (Exodus 31:13). Neither was it given to those who lived before the time of Moses (Deuteronomy 5:2-4). It was a sign between God and the "Jews." It was given as a memorial of God's deliverance of those who were slaves in Egypt (Deuteronomy 5:15).

EARLY CHRISTIANS WORSHIPPED ON SUNDAY

Early Christians worshipped on the first day of the week or Sunday. Acts 20:7 says: "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow and prolonged his speech until midnight." "Break bread" in this passage is worship. Notice 1 Corinthians 10:16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?"

"The first day of the week" of Acts 20:7 is Sunday. The Greek phrase cannot be correctly translated "Sabbath." For example, the same Greek phrase is translated "the first day of the week" in Matthew 28:1 and in Mark 16: 1, 2 where we read, "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Megdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen." The Sabbath was past when the first day of the week came.

Christians gave of their means on Sunday (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). Jesus was raised from the dead on Sunday (Mark 16:1-6). The church was fully established on Pentecost which was Sunday (Acts 2). The first day of the week is the Lord's Day and should not be referred to as the Sabbath (Revelation 1:10).

The Roman Catholic Church could not have changed the Sabbath to Sunday in 364 A.D. Note these facts from primary source materials written before 364 A.D.

108 A.D.—"If then they who walked in ancient customs came to a new hope, no longer living for the Sabbath, but for the Lord's Day, on which also our life sprang up through him and his death....." (Ignatius, *Magnesians*, IX:1.)

125 A.D.—"On the Lord's Day.....come together, break bread....." (*The Didache*, XIV:1.)

150 A.D.—"Incense is a vain abomination unto me, and your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure. He has therefore abolished these things." (*Epistle of Barnabas*, II.)

200 A.D.—We solemnize the day after Saturday in contradistinction to those who call this day their Sabbath.” (*Apology*, XVI.) “We neither accord with the Jews in their peculiarities in regard to food, nor their sacred days”. (*Apology*, XXI.) “The old law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specified times (at the cross); so also, the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary.” (*Answer to the Jews*, IV.) These statements were made by Tertullian.

In light of these facts, it is absurd to claim that the bishop of Rome changed the Sabbath to Sunday in 364 A.D. Church Councils recognized Sunday as the day of special meaning to the Christian, but they did not establish these meanings; they did not change Saturday to Sunday. Jesus abolished the Sabbath when He died. There is a great difference in recognizing a practice already in existence and originating a practice. For example, the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. stated that our 27 books of the New Testament were inspired; but, notice, this council did not originate that inspiration. The inspiration of the New Testament is not dependent upon their declaration. The Holy Spirit inspired these 27 books in the first century when they were written (2 Peter 1:21). Inspiration is not dependent upon Church Councils; and neither is the abolition of the Sabbath and the institution of the first day of the week. In these two instances, Church Councils merely recognized the facts, facts established from on high in the first century.

Since the Apostles and the first converts to Christianity were Jews and were raised to keep the Sabbath,

the fact that they did not keep it can only be explained by saying that this change from Saturday to Sunday was made by divine authority.

God abolished the Sabbath when Jesus Christ died, and Sunday was divinely instituted as the day of special significance to Christians from the very beginning of Christianity.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

S.C. Kinningham

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS DIFFERENT

The church of Christ differs from all other churches in many respects. These differences exist in organization, in doctrine, and in worship. They do not grow out of a mere desire to be different from all other people, but are rather a matter of conviction resulting from a careful study of the scripture. We believe that God has given a divine plan for the organization of His church, the exact doctrine to be taught, and a divine plan of worship for all of his people. Whenever there is a deviation from that divine plan, differences will result. And the one who holds to the divine plan is not responsible for the differences, but the one who departs from it is the one who is guilty.

One of the points in which the church of Christ differs from most others is the fact that it does not use instrumental music in worship to God. Questions are often asked regarding this matter, and many wonder why we do not use it. For the benefit of all who are concerned enough about this question to give a little thought to it, we submit here the teaching of the New Testament on the part of the worship with which the musical instrument is often connected by men. The use of instrumental

music in worship is either right or it is wrong. Since God has given to us a divine plan of worship, the things to be done are not left to the choice of man. Instrumental music is either scriptural or it unscriptural. If it is scriptural it will be found in the scripture, and if not found there, it cannot be called scriptural. Likewise, anything that is not found there cannot be said to be authorized by God, and if not done by His authority we have no right to do it. We must make a thorough study of the scripture to find out whether instrumental music can be used in worship to God with His approval.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS A NEW TESTAMENT INSTITUTION

As we begin this study, let me say in the first place that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an institution of the New Testament. It did not come into existence until the old law was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross. The members of the church of Christ are a New Testament people. We do not read of the existence of the church of Christ in the Old Testament at all, nor do we read of Christians there. The church of Jesus Christ is strictly a New Testament institution, and Christians are strictly a New Testament people. And that being true, we can find out only from the New Testament about the organization, doctrine, and worship of the church. We are not concerned in this study about how people worshipped God in the days of Moses, nor at any time while the law of Moses stood. But we are deeply concerned about how the members of the church of the Lord wor-

shipped God in the days of the apostles. For we believe the way they worshipped is the way all Christians should worship throughout the entire Christian dispensation.

The scripture says in Heb. 1:1-2, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds". That should forever settle the question of how God speaks to man today. The scripture says it is through Christ. And it is through him alone that we can know what God's will is.

In Heb. 9:16 we are told that He is the mediator of the New Testament. The scripture says, "And for this cause He is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance". A mediator is one who stands between two parties. The two parties in this case are God and man. Christ is the one through whom God speaks to man, and man can approach God through Christ. The New Testament, of which He is the mediator, went into force after Christ died. Heb. 9:16-17 says, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth". So, after Christ died, his testament went into force, and has been in force ever since. This testament is called the New Testament, and the one that was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross is called the Old Testa-

ment. This means that the New Testament scripture is the scripture that is intended for people today, and in it we must forever stand. And when we talk about a thing being scriptural, we mean that it is set forth in the New Testament scripture. Anything that is not found in the New Testament scripture is not scriptural today.

Christians must walk by faith. Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight". And he said in Rom. 10:17 that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing, by the word of God". And since we are a New Testament people, faith comes by hearing the words of the New Testament. In the third chapter of Galatians, faith is put in contrast with the law of Moses. In vs. 2, the apostle said, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" And then in vs. 12 he said, "the law is not of faith". So the faith by which we are saved, by which the Christian walks, and by which we worship does not come from the law of Moses. It comes from the New Testament. We might say, too, that there is a difference between *faith* and *opinion*. Opinion is what one thinks. Faith is based upon testimony. Faith in matters of worship must be based upon the testimony of the New Testament scriptures.

In the New Testament, we have the standard of acceptable worship. In Jno. 4:24 Jesus said, "God is a Spirit : and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". Worshipping God in truth is an absolute necessity if our worship is to be acceptable to God. Then, in his prayer to God, Jesus told us in Jno. 17:17 what truth is. He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth : thy

word is truth". The only way, therefore, we can please God in worship is to do it the way He says in His word. So, then, to the New Testament we go to find out what his will is with reference to music.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC NOT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

We turn to the beginning of the New Testament and read its pages one by one, and we find no mention of any kind of music until we get to chapter 26 of the Book of Matthew, and verse 30. It was on the night of Christ's betrayal, and after the Lord's supper was instituted. The scripture says, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives". Mention is made of singing, but nothing is said about a mechanical instrument in connection with it. As we read on from that point, we find no music until we come to Mark 14:26. There, the statement is again made, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives". Again, there is no mention of the instrument. We read on through Luke, and through John. They make no mention of music. It is not until we come to Acts 16:25 that we find another reference to this matter. There, Luke says, "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God : and the prisoners heard them". The scripture says they "sang". But does not mention an instrument. Since they did not add the instrument, we will not. Reading on from the Book of Acts, we find the next mention of music in Rom. 15:9. There, the scripture says, "And that the Gentiles might

glorify God for His mercy ; as it is written, for this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name". The only mention of music again is vocal, and not instrumental. The word "sing" has been used by the inspired writers in all of its forms, but mechanical musical instruments have not been mentioned by them in any form.

Our next reference is found in 1 Cor. 14:15, where the scripture says, "What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also : I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also". The apostle said he would sing with the spirit and with the understanding, but did not say he would sing with the instruments. We read on through Second Corinthians, and through Galatians, and do not find another mention of music until we come to Eph. 5:19. Here the scripture says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord". There is no mention of any other instrument in this scripture than the heart. Melody is to be made in the heart. If we are to be scriptural, we must do it the way the scripture says. We keep turning the pages of the New Testament, and as we read on through the Book of Philippians we do not find anything about music. But when we come to Col. 3:16 we find where the scripture says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord". According to the scripture, the singing is to be done with "grace in your hearts", and not with a

mechanical instrument. The only way that one can get a mechanical musical instrument connected with singing in any of these passages is to add it where the Lord has not. But let us read on through the New Testament and see what more is said about it.

As we read first and second Thessalonians, first and second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, we find no reference to music of any kind. But when we come to Heb. 2:12 we find this statement: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee". Instrumental music is again conspicuous for its absence. The Lord has not mentioned it so far, and we will not add it. The next reference is found in James 5:13 where the apostle says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" Note the term "sing" without the instrument. Passing on from that point, we read through first and second Peter, first, second, and third John, and Jude without finding any other reference to music at all. The only other book left in the New Testament is the Book of Revelation, a book of signs and symbols. And with some of the symbols of Revelation, as they are used in connection with music, we will deal in the lesson that is to follow this on the same subject. But let me suggest here, that in all of the New Testament, where the direct statements concerning our worship to God are found, there is not the slightest intimation of mechanical musical instruments. That means they cannot be called scriptural. It also means they cannot be used in worship by the authority of God. He has not so authorized in the Testament of His Son. It must be admitted by all that the use of

instrumental music in worship to God is something that men have added without even a sign of authority from the New Testament.

When men make music upon mechanical instruments, they do it with their hands and not with their heart. And the apostle Paul said in Acts 17:24,25, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things". The praise we offer to God must be the fruit of our lips. In Heb. 13:15 the scripture says, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name". Inasmuch as we are told in the New Testament to "sing and make melody in the heart", and are not told to use mechanical instruments, we should be content to worship God the way He says. John said in 2 Jno. 9, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son". And he said in Rev. 22:18-19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in the book". Let me urge that you abide in God's

word in all matters of worship that your soul may be blessed of Him.

Inasmuch as the church of christ is a New Testament institution, every item of worship engaged in must be derived from the New Testament scriptures. That is the reason we do not use instrumental music in worship. Authority for its use is utterly lacking in the New Testament. Therefore, it cannot be used without running over the authority of God and adding to His word. But people often ask, "When, and how, did it begin in worship if it is not taught in the Bible" ? That is a perfectly good question, and we shall be glad to devote time to it. Not only shall we give time to this question, but we shall also notice some of the arguments that are often made in favour of the use of instrumental music in worship.

A DEPARTURE FROM THE FAITH FORETOLD

Before the death of the apostles, they predicted a falling away of the church—a departure from the faith. The apostle Paul said in 2 Thess. 2:1-4, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself

that he is God". That is a clear prediction of the falling away of the church and the development of the man of sin after the death of the apostles. Then in 1 Tim. 4:1-3 the scripture says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth". Here is a departure from the faith foretold by the apostle, caused by seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy.

THE DEPARTURE SEEN

There were three major steps of this departure which led to a full fledged apostasy. The first was in organization, which began to take shape with the Nicene Council, and resulted in the Catholic church. The second departure was in doctrine, which resulted in the Pope's claims to infallibility and the right to make laws. The third departure came in worship, resulting in the many practices of denominationalism that are seen today. It is the departure that involves the worship to God that we are particularly interested in at this time, and more specifically, the part with which instrumental music is connected.

It is quite obvious to all who read the New Testament that instrumental music had no place in the worship during the days of the apostles and early Christians.

And as we delve into the pages of Church History, we find that instrumental music did not come into use in the worship of the church until sometime in the seventh century. In McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 8, Page 739, we find this statement regarding instrumental in worship : "Sir John Hawkins, following the Rominish writers in his erudite work on the HISTORY OF MUSIC, makes Pope Vitalian, in A.D. 660, the first who introduced organs into churches. But students of ecclesiastical archaeology are generally agreed that instrumental music was not used in churches till a much later date, for Thomas Aquinas, A.D. 1250, has these remarkable words : "Our church does not use musical instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may pot seem to Judaize". ...It is alleged that Marinus Santus, who lived about A.D. 1290, was the first that brought the use of wind organs into churches, and hence he received the name of Torcellus. Then in Chambers' Encyclopedia, Vol. 7 Page 112, we find this statement: "The organ is said to have been first introduced into church music by Pope Vitalian I in 666. In 757 a great organ was sent as a present to Pepin by Byzantine, to the emperor, Constantine Copronymus, and placed in the church at St. Corneille at Compiegne".

So, the earliest date to be found in the encyclopedia for the use of instrumental music in church worship is 660 A.D. This was over 500 years after the death of the last of the apostles. And even then, writers in Church History agree that it did not come into general use until a much later date than that. The one who is responsible for the introduction of instrumental music in

church worship, according to the encyclopedia, is Pope Vitalian. It then becomes a glaring fact that instrumental music in church worship did not originate with Christ, nor with the apostles, but with Pope Vitalian.

In the sixteenth century there became a growing unrest throughout Europe created by the exceeding corrupt state of religion. Men became so vigorous in their protest against such corruptions that a general reformation movement was begun. Martin Luther took the lead in denouncing publicly the things which he believed to be wholly out of line with the sacred scriptures. He founded what is known as the Lutheran Church. Then contemporary with him was John Calvin, followed by John Wesley and others. Perhaps it would be of interest to you to know that all these men believed instrumental music in the church to be sinful. As for Martin Luther, he rejected it, and said, "The organ in the worship to God is an ensign of Baal". John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian Church and author of the Calvinistic Creed, said, "It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of tapers, or revival of other shadows of the law. The Roman Catholics borrowed it from the Jews". When John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was asked about the organ he said, "I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither heard nor seen". Adam Clark, one of the greatest scholars of the Methodist Church, and a fair minded commentator, said, "I am an old man and an old minister, and I here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship to God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music as

a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth". Charles Spurgeon has been recognized as one of the greatest Baptist preachers of all time. He preached to 10,000 people every Sunday in the city of London. When asked about the use of instrumental music in worship, he referred to 1 Cor. 14:15 where Paul said, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit and with the understanding also", and he said, "I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery." That is what the great men of the Reformation thought about it.

A RETURN TO THE NEW TESTAMENT ORDER

In the early part of the 19th century men began to open their eyes to the corrupt and deplorable condition of denominationism and set about to restore to the world the church of the Lord Jesus Christ as it existed in the days of the apostles. To do this, they resolved to take their stand upon the scripture, and use it as their sole guide. They resolved to speak where the Bible speaks, and to be silent where the Bible is silent. That is where we stand today, and we believe that course to be for ever safe, and the only one that is safe. But some insist that they can see no harm in using instrumental music in worship, even though it is not found in the New Testa-

ment. And many arguments are made in an effort to justify its use. So we shall notice some of those arguments now.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ALL RIGHT IN THE HOME BUT NOT IN THE CHURCH

The first argument that we shall notice is based upon one's right to use instrumental music in the home. People say, "If it is all right to use it in the home, then why is it not all right in the church?" That argument is based upon a misconception of what makes a thing right or wrong. The home is circumscribed by moral law, and anything is permissible in the home that is morally right. But Christ, the head of the church, has prescribed the very acts of worship, and everything to be done in the church. And nothing is permissible in the church that is not specified in the scripture. In 1 Cor. 11:20-22 Paul clearly distinguished between some things that might be done in the home and that could not be done in the church. He said; "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before another his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not". It was perfectly all right for them to have a feast at home, but they were rebuked for doing it in the church. In the very beginning of the church, Luke said in Acts 2:46, "And they continuing daily with one

accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart". They met in the temple for prayer and praise to God, but ate their meals at home. Some of the churches could profit by this example today.

No one denies the right of Christians to have fried chicken, cake and ice cream, and other things of a similar nature on their table at home, but in the worship to God they would be sinful. Yet, it would be as appropriate to have angel food cake and jello on the Lord's table, or perhaps a bit of cheese to eat with the unleavened bread, as it would to add mechanical musical instruments to the singing of spiritual songs in the house of God. There is as much authority for one as there is for the other. One may not use instrumental music even in the home in worship to God. When spiritual songs are sung, they must be sung the way God says if he is to be pleased in the matter. The place has nothing at all to do with the way spiritual songs should be sung.

In Mark 7:1-13 we find where Jesus condemned the worship of the Jews for similar reasons. The Jews brought into their worship things which were perfectly legitimate in the home, but they corrupted their worship in doing so. "When they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and

scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands ?” Now, these things that the Jews were holding to were perfectly all right from a moral point of view. And such practices had stood with God’s approval in the home for many centuries. But when they brought them into their worship, it became a sin. Jesus said, “Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”. The thing that was morally right made their worship sinful by adding it where God had not required it. If everything could be brought into the worship that is legitimate in the home, then without doubt, the home and the church would be made the same. But since they are two separate institutions, let us respect in each the law that God has given to govern it and not corrupt ourselves by trampling that law under foot. We shall notice other arguments in the lesson to follow, but as we have the scripture to guide us in all matters of worship and holy living, let us in that for ever abide that in all things we may be blessed of Him.

The subject of worship is nothing new to man. It is as old as the history of man itself. Wherever man has gone in all the spacious bounds of the earth, the records indicate that he has ever bowed in worship to something that he considered greater and higher than himself. God has always sought to direct man in his worship to Him, and he has been specific in his requirements. There has never been an age in which God has intimated that he would be pleased with just any kind of worship that man saw fit to offer. God has never accepted the worship

of any man unless that worship has been in harmony with his expressed will. If a thing is not expressed in God's word it cannot be offered to Him in worship as a matter of faith. And if not of faith, it is sin. There are things done in worship to God today that people admit cannot be found in the New Testament, and yet the worshippers feel that they will be accepted of God because they are sincere in what they do. For instance, we are told specifically in the Testament of Christ to "sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord", to "sing and make melody in the heart", and many use mechanical musical instruments with their singing without any authority from the scripture at all for doing so. And even though there is not one line of scripture authorizing instrumental music in worship to God, many efforts have been made to justify its use on the part of those who use it. If you have been using instrumental music in worship to God, and are sincere about trying to please Him, perhaps you will be benefited by an examination of some of the arguments that are made in an effort to justify its use.

Instrumental music is said to be an aid in worship. Shall we assume that we cannot do the thing that God has specified without adding to it? Surely, no one would assume that we cannot sing and make melody in our hearts without the aid of a mechanical instrument. Then, if we can do the thing that God requires without the aid of a mechanical instrument, we must admit that we are doing something that is neither necessary nor expressed in God's will at all when we use the mechanical instrument. And instead of its being an aid, it is the addition

of another kind of music altogether to that which God has specified God has specified "melody in the heart" expressed as "the fruit of our lips". That is definitely "vocal". But when the mechanical instrument is used, there are two kinds of music—"instrumental", and "vocal".

When it is suggested that the mechanical instrument helps us to carry a tune better, it might be well to remember that the carrying of a tune as we generally think of it is not made a condition of acceptable worship anywhere in the Bible. Men are not required to "carry a tune", but to "sing and make melody in the heart". The *vanity* of man is more often considered in the use of mechanical musical instruments than the will of God. An effort is made to appeal to the finer senses and keener tastes of man rather than to lift up the soul in praise to that Infinite Spirit who would have all men worship Him in spirit and in truth. If this charge seems unjust, then point to the passage in the Testament of our Lord that expresses the will of God that you are trying to satisfy in the use of instrumental music. No, instrumental music does not lift the soul up to God. It will do the same thing for an animal that it will do for the human being. Bring your dog into the house and let him listen to the strains of the violin and see if he is not aroused as much by it as the couple on the dance floor is aroused by the music that inspires them.

Instrumental music is often put in the category with hymn books, lights, pews, indoor baptistries, etc. But one is in desperation reaching for his last straw when he seeks justification of instrumental music on that ground. None of these things enter into the worship at all and

have no effect whatsoever upon any act with which they might be connected. If one uses all of these things, or if he doesn't, the music made is the same. But, when musical instruments are used, the music made is not the same. Another kind is added. One might sit in the pew, look on a hymn book by the aid of an electric light and sing without adding at all to what God has instructed him to do. Or, he might stand on his feet in the dark without a hymn book and sing the same songs in the same way. He has still done what God said—no more, and no less.

It is often suggested that there will be instrumental music in heaven, and if they have it in heaven, then surely it would be all right to have it in the church. Let me suggest in the first place, that heaven is a spiritual realm. We are told in Heb. 12:23 that it is the place where "the spirits of just men are made perfect". Flesh and blood will not be there. Paul said in 1 Cor. 15:50, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God". So, it would be folly to speak of material things in a spiritual realm. Because we read of harps in the Book of Revelation, it is often concluded that they will be literal harps of gold. But in the very first verse of that book we are told that it is a book of signs and symbols. It says, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John". The scripture says He "signified" it. Many signs and symbols are used in "signifying" the things of this Revelation. The things that are used as symbols need

not be looked for in heaven, but rather the thing that is symbolized. And no symbol or sign is ever a sign of itself. So, let us turn now to the thing that symbolizes the music in heaven and see what is said about it.

Rev. 14:1-2 says, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder : and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps". The American Standard version says, "And the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps". Thus, we have the music in heaven symbolized. There are three things necessary in order to have music. There must be rhythm, volume, and melody. The rhythm is symbolized by the voice "as the voice of many waters". The volume is symbolized by the "voice as the voice of great thunder". The melody is symbolized by the voice as the voice of harpers harping with their harps". But we do not expect to see the things themselves that are used to symbolize the music, for if we did, then we would expect to hear the surging of literal waters in heaven, the literal peal of thunder, as well as the literal harps of harpers. We would also expect to see fierce beasts and horses of various colours galloping down the streets of heaven. For if one of these symbols is to be found there, we might with equal propriety look for them all.

Attention is often called to the fact that instrumental music is found in the old Testament, and that people used it back there with God's approval: therefore, it must not be

offensive to Him. It is true that instrumental music was used in Old Testament times in worship to God. But to say that God authorized its use, even then, is quite another thing. A search of the Old Testament scriptures will reveal the fact that David, Israel's second king, was the one who introduced it into the worship, and did so without authority from God for doing it. When God gave instruction for building the tabernacle, and all the things to be used in it, he made no reference at all to mechanical musical instruments. There is no record of their having been used until David introduced them. And it was David who said, "Praise him with the sound of the trumpet : praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord". Ps. 150 : 3-6. This was 450 years after the tabernacle was built and its worship ordained of God. Then do you ask, "What was God's attitude toward it?" Well, here it is; found in Amos 5:21-24 : God said, "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offering, of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." God stated as his reason for rejecting their offerings and their songs, that He was not willing to hear the melody of their viols. In the first five verses of the next chapter, the Lord pronounced a woe upon various ones, and among them were those who "invent to themselves instruments of music like David".

It is true that God told the children of Israel to make trumpets, but he told them the use that was to be made of them. And nowhere in the scripture do we find where they were used as musical instruments. In Num. 10:1 the scripture says "and Jehovah spake unto Moses saying, Make the two trumpets of silver; of beaten work shalt thou make them : and thou shalt use them for the calling of the congregation, and for the journeying of the camps". Thus, they were used for calling the congregation together, and for the journeying of the camps, but not in the singing of songs of praise to God. Not only was instrumental music not brought into the worship in the Old Testament times by the authority of God, but even that law itself is done away. In Col. 2:14 we are told that Christ took that law out of the way nailing it to the cross. Then in Gal. 3:10 we are told that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse : for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them". To bind part of the things in the law of Moses upon us would be to bind it all upon us animal sacrifices, their feast days, and all.

People often ask if we are told in the New Testament "not" to use instrumental music. No, not just in those words. He has not told us just in those words "not" to offer animal sacrifice. But we say, "animal sacrifice ended with the Law of Moses". And that is right. But the same thing that would make the offering of animal sacrifice wrong in worship to God today would make instrumental music wrong. God did not tell Cain "not" to offer the first fruits of his land as a sacrifice to Him,

but when God told him to offer an animal sacrifice, that made any other kind sinful. God did not tell Moses "not" to smite the rock, but when Moses smote it after God told him to "speak to the rock", he sinned. Surely then, if we can see where those things were a sin in the sight of God, we can see where it would be a sin to *play* when God said "sing".

Then, last of all, we are told that "sing" comes from the Greek word, "Psallo" which means to pluck, or twang the strings of an instrument. It is true that "sing" does come from the Greek word "psallo" which means to pluck, twang, or cause to vibrate; but it does not necessarily mean the strings of an instrument. It means the plucking of anything, or causing anything to vibrate. And in connection with singing, it is never given the meaning anywhere in the New Testament of plucking the strings of an instrument, nor singing to the accompaniment of musical instruments. There is no translation of the New Testament extant in which the word is given such meaning, neither is there any authority on New Testament Greek known who gives it such meaning. The authorities tell us that the heart of man is the instrument caused to vibrate in making praise to God. All students of the scripture acknowledge the fact that one can worship God acceptably without musical instruments, and that the use of them is not at all necessary to the doing of what God has said. Then let us be content to stand upon that which we all know to be right, which all admit to be safe, and take no chances on spoiling our hope of heaven by bringing into our worship things wholly unauthorized by the God whom we worship. Let us celebrate his praise in song as it is written that his loving favour may rest upon us.

RESTORING THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY

Frank Winters

ALTHOUGH the spirit is invisible to mortal man, it is more real and more significant than anything material. Strictly speaking no one has ever seen a person. When, at death, the spirit takes leave of the body, we know that person has gone away. We know that in nature the really great forces are invisible, such as electricity, gravity, and atomic energy. Scientists say that science advances as men are able to see the invisible beneath the surface of the visible.

So it is in true religion, which rests not upon temples or buildings, or organizations of men, but upon the omnipotent, invisible Spirit of God, and has to do with the spirits of men. In Proverbs we find this meaningful scripture, "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord." It is not that God has placed a lamp within the spirit of man, the spirit itself is the lamp, which God lights with the Word of his revelation.

Seeking the Spirit

What is the spirit of Christianity? Webster says the spirit of a thing is its animating principle, its pervading influence. Let us search the Word of God to find the animating principle of Christianity, the spirit of that finest and sweetest way of life the world has ever known. We

may be shocked to find that the greatest teaching Jesus ever gave has been the most neglected by his followers.

Let us go back to the age-old city of Jerusalem. Jesus has instituted the Lord's Supper, washed the feet of his twelve disciples, and, now, Judas has gone out into the night. As if a burden has been lifted from his heart, Jesus begins talking to the eleven, talking earnestly and tenderly of things nearest his heart, as recorded in the 13th chapter of the gospel of John: "*Little children a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another.*" He spoke many things to them that night, things they didn't then understand, but in the days and years that were to come, they must have looked back, as we look back, to the giving of the "*new commandment*" as the giving of the *spirit of Christianity*. This holy passion of love, particularly for one another, is the animating principle of Christianity.

A new Commandment

Love was not new in the religion of Jehovah, but this was to be the love of a *different kind* and order. Until now, there had been no "one another" and its measure was to be "as I have loved you." But it was more. When the Holy Spirit came into this planet, it brought something from God, something of God. It brought the germ of eternal life, and those who were born of water and the Spirit, with new lives and new divine spirits, congregated to form little heavenly bodies in different sections of the

world. Love was the tie to bind them more closely together than even the ties of flesh and blood. When the gospel of the love of God and Christ had lighted their spirits, the light that shone forth to the world from these lamps of the Lord was their love of one another. The apostles and disciples preached to every nation, and love was their *uniform* as soldiers of the cross.

In the Jerusalem church, founded soon after this new commandment was given, there occurred the unique and amazing experience of brethren sacrificing even their property to relieve the needs of one another. This was not required by any apostle, neither was it a socialistic economy. It was the spontaneous expression of brotherly love which had already filled every heart.

A Golden Thread

This golden thread of love runs throughout the New Testament, and on this thread is strung all the other graces and virtues of Christianity. The sweet lessons on love which Jesus gave appear on almost every page, but we can view only a few passages from the great trio—Peter, John, and Paul.

Peter was impetuous, but his writings are especially clear and calm. In obedience to Jesus' command to "feed my lambs," he writes to young lambs of God what Peter loved to call the "sincere milk of the word." "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1 : 22). He crowned his "Christian graces" with "in your godli-

ness add love of the brethren, and in your love of the brethren, love.”

We come now to interview the aged Apostle John in his first epistle. “John, you gave us the words of the new commandment which Jesus gave you apostles when you were a young man. You are an old man now, still filled with the Holy Spirit; what do you now say of love?” “I say, ‘He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.’ ‘No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is made perfect in us.’ ‘He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him’ ” (1 John IV).

The Love Chapter

Paul was not a natural lover as was John. When we first meet Paul, his hands are stained with blood, but his 13th chapter of First Corinthians, regarded by many as the finest chapter of the Bible, is, of course, the great New Testament psalm of love. We have said it was the most neglected teaching. J.W. Mc Garvey, commenting on this chapter, says, “This scripture has been admired by all ages, but unfortunately it has been kept by none.” Aren’t these words of Paul the most striking words that ever fell from the tongue or pen of man? “*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,*” “*though I have the gift of prophecy,*” understand all the mysteries of heaven, “*though I have all faith,*” could speak to a mountain and see it move into the sea, “*though I give all my goods to feed the poor,*” every dollar and rupee and everything I possess, “*though I give my body to be burned,*”

though I walk boldly up to the stake to be burned for Christ; if I have not love, I am a lost soul! I would still lack something that makes me absolutely unacceptable to my Father in heaven. In amazement I cry, "If there is something so tremendously important as this, then let me not rest until I have found it and embraced it, and proclaimed it from the housetops to all professed followers of Christ!"

Early Writers on Love

In the first century, millions of souls were converted to Christ and the course of the world's history was turned around. In that age the critical importance of mutual love of Christians was everywhere recognized. Jerome Preserves this familiar story of John. In his old days, they would carry him into the church. Too weak to speak any length of time, he would simply repeat over and over, "little children, love one another." Christians, then, as they have been ever since, became impatient with this simple teaching and asked why he always said this. "Because," said John, "it is the Lord's command and, if it be fulfilled, it is enough." Tertullian of the second century describes the impression made upon the world by Christians, "Everyone said," "See how they love one another. They are ready to die for each other." It is the unanimous record of that day.

Two hundred years after Tertullian, lived the illustrious Chrysostom, who comments on Christ's new commandment and its design to convert the world if Christians obey it. "*Miracles do not so much attract the*

heathen as the mode of life, and nothing so much causes a right life as love. The heathen admire our doctrines, but they are hindered by our way of life. Wherefore, I fear lest some grievous thing came to pass and we draw down upon us the vengeance of God." It is significant that this man standing already in the shadows of the apostasy, feared the great calamity and sees as its primary cause the fact that the *love of the early church had been, by disciples of Christ, forsaken and abandoned!*

"The Greatest of These Is Love"

Love is certainly the greatest thing in Christ's religion, but it seems that there is a great lack among us of such love as existed generally in the primitive church. There have been glimpses of it which all of us have known, but not that revolutionary quality and measure so essential to make our congregations heavenly places, and our lives divinely happy. *Formalism, legalism and materialism* have largely supplanted *brotherly love and heartfelt religion.*

We are thankful for all the fine things in the church and any word of criticism is expressed in love. But we believe it is apparent that generally between congregations and members of the church there is a great lack of the *spirit of Christ, and love of one another.* Millions of heart-aches caused by church troubles might have been avoided if only Christian hearts had been filled with love. In many instances, disciples come into houses of worship with a noisy or party spirit, seemingly unconcerned about others, and with but little reverence or piety. Often they

sit down to hear sermons based largely upon the faults of others, but with little teaching upon *love*, the supreme quality held in common by the Father and his children. On the other hand, we have seen churches where love was emphasized and have seen them made over into bodies of unity and happiness because of their love.

A personal Appeal

For many years, I have been serving as an elder in the church, yet only in recent years have I awakened to the vital importance of love in our religion and the need of it by every one of us, including elders and preachers, as well. I appeal to you who preach the gospel as one who has looked up into your faces for so many years, I beg of you, preach more love to your congregation and live a life of love before them. Inspire them to love one another. It is the greatest thing in religion, the greatest thing you can do for them, and it is their greatest need.

Christians, if you are not happy in your religion, I give you a magic formula which will be worth more to you than all in this world you may possess. Get to loving people. Love the brethren and show them that you love them. You will get the surprise of your life at the effect it will have upon them and also upon you. It is the source of the finest pleasure in this world. Pray for it and practice it, see how many times you can use it every day. Practice loving those who may not love you. See how happy this makes you. It will work a revolution in your life. Sometimes I get to thinking of the faults of my friends and brethren. This makes me mis-

nable. Then realizing my mistake, I bring love back into my heart. Like the Cinderella fairy story where mice became men, my brethren become saints again, and I am happy. Love can bring far greater happiness in our lives than wealth or fame can bring, but this is almost wholly unknown to most Christians. Gentile reader, try practicing loving thoughts and deeds over and over and over every day and see for yourself,

The greatest difficulty is the failure of almost every one of us to realize his own need of it. Although I have I preached it and tried to lead others into it, and it has brought me unbounded joy, yet I have but touched the hem of the garment, and stand in need of it every day.

Sometimes I wonder what the spirits of our departed brethren might say to us if the curtain could be lifted. I think they might say, "why did you not teach us more of love? We know, now, it was the greatest essential of Christ's religion. Please send someone to teach it to my brethren still alive in the world. Tell them that God is love, and, if they have a Christlike spirit of love for one another, God will one day bring them to dwell in love, forevermore.

WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN

Johnny Ramsey

The major teaching of the Bible has always been the coming of Christ. In the Old Testament the constant theme was: "Christ is coming!" The first part of the New Testament affirmed that He had come. The emphasis of Scripture since Jesus ascended to glory (Acts 1:11) is summed up in these expectant words: "Christ is coming again." The next to last verse in the Bible points toward His return:

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

An excellent little poem has made this teaching more meaningful to me for the past fifteen years. It was written by a preacher of the ancient gospel. Mr Gene Carrel of Indiana has said:

*"When life's journey shall have ended
And we stand before the throne,
When the book of life is opened
And the deeds of men made known
When the Lord shall meet the world
And shall judge the lives of all
When all men are rightly parted
And the Reaper's cry shall call
When the righteous are rewarded*

*And the wicked known their end,
Will the world at last remember
That a Saviour died for men"*

It is indeed tragic that so much error and speculation surround this grand subject. Some have said that the Bible teaches Christ is coming soon. But, the Scriptures teach now what they taught 2,000 years ago and the Lord has not yet returned! We read in Matthew 24:36 that no one knows "the day nor the hour" when the Redeemer will return in judgment. He will come suddenly, "as a thief in the night" (I Thessalonians 5:2), for "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 25:13). Therefore, it behooves all of us to be ready, spiritually, at all times. As William Cullen Bryant suggested in his famous *Thanatopsis*:

*"So live that when thy summons comes to join
That innumerable caravan which moves to that mysterious realm
Where each must take his chamber in the silent halls
of death That thou go not as the quarry slave at night
Scourged to his dungeon But sustained and soothed with
an unfaltering trust Approach thy grave like one who
wraps The drapery of his coach about him And lies
down to pleasant dreams."*

The only way we can do this is to *live* daily in preparation for death. As Isaac stated long ago, "I know not the day of my death" (Genesis 27:2), so it is with us. In view of the unannounced coming of our Lord, as well as the uncertainty of our earthly sojourn we must be constant in pursuing the life of a Christian. The apostle Peter, in

speaking of the end of the world, has given these words of II Peter 3:11.

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?”

From a human standpoint we can see the wisdom of God in not telling us when Christ will manifest Himself again. It is much like an incident that perhaps all of us recall from childhood. Occasionally, my parents would leave us three children with a friend while they went out for the evening. At such times we preferred that our parents would tell us *exactly* when they planned to return home. If they said, “ten o'clock,” we could really be rowdy until fifteen minutes prior to ten. Then we would stop the noise, clean up the house and get the “baby-sitter” in a good mood before our parents returned. But, if Daddy said, before leaving the house, “You children be good and we will be back sometimes tonight,” we had to be prepared for their return at any moment! Our Redeemer has told us He shall return but no man knows when. Thus, the followers of the Master strive to be ready always for His advent. There is no time for careless, reckless, shameful conduct. We dare not boast of our strength and ability to withstand His mighty power. In 1962 a most interesting piece of journalism came to my attention. It was written by a leading reporter for a large American newspaper on the fiftieth anniversary of the sinking of the mighty Titanic at sea. In April of 1912 over fifteen hundred lives were lost therein. Just thirty minutes before

that "unsinkable ship" went down, one of the crew said to a lady on deck: "Madam, even God Himself could not sink this ship." One of these days a far greater tragedy will take place. Perhaps there will be million as unprepared for that day as were the crew and passengers of the illfated Titanic. On that April day in 1912 hundreds lost only their physical, earthly existence. But the results of the Day of Judgment will linger throughout eternity! Let us never forget:

"The way we live now will determine where we live then."

Have you ever wondered what will happen when Jesus comes? There have been so many false doctrines taught on the subject that we need to analyse this point with two questions:

- (1) *What will not happen when He comes?*
- (2) *What will happen?*

WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN HE WILL NOT :

A. Set Up His Kingdom:

This is a popular theory—that Christ will come back to earth to reign a thousand years on David's throne in the city of Jerusalem. But the Bible does not teach such a doctrine. The New Testament affirms that our Lord is reigning now (1 Corinthians 15:23-25) and has been since His ascension back to heaven (Ephesians 1:20-23). God

“raised Jesus up to sit on David’s throne” (Acts 2:30). In two references in the Old Testament we learn that Jehovah’s and David’s throne were the same (I Kings 2:12; I Chronicles 29:23). It simply referred to a place of rulership. In Revelation 3:21 Christ affirms that He sat down with God in His throne. The moment Jesus did so He was also on David’s throne!

Our Lord is not coming back to earth to establish His kingdom because that kingdom was set up 2,000 years ago. If you will read carefully the following verses, in sequence, you will see that the kingdom of Christ came with power in the first century (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:4). The kingdom had to come in the first century during Peter’s lifetime, because he had “the keys of the kingdom” (Matthew 16:19). The New Testament tells us that men were in Christ’s kingdom in the days of the Apostles. Notice carefully these passages:

Colossians 1:13

“Who delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.”

Hebrews 12:28

“Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God...”

In Revelation 1:6 we read that members of the Lord’s church comprised “a kingdom of priests unto God.”

B. Restore Judaism:

No, the law of Moses will not be reinstated when our Lord returns. A fanciful notion with many religionists is that the Jews will once again be especially favoured and their law will be the standard during "the millenium reign." Not only are such folk deluded concerning Christ's reign they are also mistaken about the standard of judgment. Jesus, through His death, ushered into the world the new covenant which is the everlasting testament (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20). The gospel He commanded the apostles to preach will last until "the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Men shall then be judged by the words of Christ (John 12:48; Romans 2:16).

C. Give Sinners Another Opportunity:

The doctrine called "the gospel of the second chance" is not taught in the Scriptures. It is contrary to the plan of God. The purpose of this life is to prepare for eternity. Today is the day of salvation; therefore we are taught to be obedient *now* (II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:15.) When Christ returns He will not come "to deal with sin" (Hebrews 9:28). The only way we can be blessed eternally is to "die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). When the Saviour comes suddenly we shall be rewarded according to our conduct (Revelation 22:11-12). The gospel is being preached now; we dare not delay obedience to it!

*"The clock of life is wound but once
And no one has the power*

*To tell just when the hands will stop
At late or early hour*

*Now is the only time you own
Live, love, toil with a will
Place no trust in the morrow
For the clock may then be still",*

The tragedy of waiting for *tomorrow* to obey Jesus is seen when we realize that Christ may come *today!* How sad it would be to die thinking about becoming a Christian.

"For it is appointed unto man once to die, And after this cometh judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN HE WILL:

A. Come to Judge:

In John 5:28-29 the Bible tells that all shall be raised from the grave—both good and evil—when Jesus comes. Immediately following this resurrection will come the judgment. Our Lord revealed in Matthew 25:31 that all nations shall be gathered before Him. Paul affirmed that God had proved the universal nature of the final judgment in raising Jesus from the dead (Acts 17:30-31). The dead, small and great, shall stand before the Lord to be judged according to their deeds (Revelation 20:12). The clarity of Romans 14:12 is helpful on this point.

“So then each one of us shall give account of himself unto God.”

That day will certainly be an awesome occasion. We will stand face to face with Christ, our Redeemer, to give an account for the actions of our life. On that occasion we shall better comprehend the passage in Revelation 6:17:—

“For the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?”

B. Reveal Even the Secrets of Our Hearts:

We are reminded in Romans 2:16 that “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.” Solomon declared that every secret thing shall be brought into judgment. The Bible teaches that nothing escapes the notice of the Lord (Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13). The Psalmist spoke on this same point in Psalms 139:

“O Lord thou hast searched me and known me...for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.”

Our Saviour can see beneath the outward veneer of a hypocritical devotion; He can detect inward sin as easily as outward impurity. When men have hidden from others on earth shall be clearly manifested when Christ comes in judgment. A realization of this truth should help us to improve our motives, attitudes and thoughts—as well as our deeds!

*"You can fool the hapless public
You can be a subtle fraud
You can hide your little meanness
But you cannot fool God."*

We might try to run away from the Lord but we can never hide from Him. Unless we live a Christ-centered existence every day we shall, as Edgar A. Guest stated at the end of time "find ourselves with empty hands and wonder what we are worth."

In Matthew 25:1-13 we read the thought-provoking account of ten virgins. Five of them were prepared; five were unprepared for the marriage feast of the Lamb of God. Those who failed to be ready had the door of eternal bliss shut in their faces. To me the saddest words in the Bible are those: "And the door was shut." Such finality! Too late! Something to regret throughout eternity.

Friend, are you prepared to meet the Saviour at the Judgment Day? Are you a Christian? Have you been baptized into the Lord unto the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38)? Are you living daily in accordance to His word? If not, make *today* the very moment of your greatest decision.

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day shall bring forth". (Proverbs 27:1).

Christ is coming again one of these days. We dare not delay our preparation lest we meet Him with regret. What a joyous occasion it shall be for those who have lived in harmony with the Bible's teachings.