

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Editor :*  
**J. C. CHOATE**

*Associate Editor*  
**SUNNY DAVID**

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## EDITORIAL

### How May We Know What God Wants Us To Do?

There are a number of religions in the world. Even among believers in Christ, there are many contradicting things taught. The average person, therefore, is left confused and wondering what he should believe and do to obey and to please his Maker.

Several things should be kept in mind when we study the Bible.

1. We should observe that the Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments. The first testament (God's will for man) became old when the Lord saw fit to give a new testament. The Hebrew writer says that "He taketh away the first that he may establish the second." (Hebrews 10:9). He also explains how that Christ not only gave the new testament but sealed it or made it binding with his death. We read then concerning Christ, "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. For where a testament is, there must also 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." (Hebrews 9:15-17).

Does this mean that the Old Testament is no longer God's word? No, not at all. By all means, it is the word of God, but it is no longer binding as a law. For example, God commanded Noah to build an ark but he did not command us to build one. He commanded his people under the law of Moses to offer animal sacrifices but he has not commanded us to do that. He asked his people to remember the sabbath but he does not require that we do that.

We are now under a new law, a better law, the law of Christ as set forth in the New Testament. We must understand this if we are to know what the Lord would have us to do.

2. We must study the New Testament to know what the Lord would have us to do to be saved, what church he adds the saved to, how to worship, etc. A good practice, for example, would be to take all of the scriptures that discuss salvation, all scriptures that talk about the church, all that speak of worship, and then see what stands out and what conclusion you would come to. Good common sense will tell you that some things done in the religious world is not according to the Lord's teaching. Remember, that the Lord's word does not contradict itself, that it is simple and clear, and that it should be obvious from such a study what the Lord would have you to do and what he would have you to be. Remember too that the Lord will not save on man's terms or accept substitutes.

3. The Lord wants us to obey his will only and he will not save us until we do. Once we do that then he will save us and add us to his church. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). On complying with his teaching then we should be able to show from the scripture how we were saved, how that made us Christians only, and members of Christ's church.

There are some who think they have obeyed God when they have not. They take only part of the scripture, use scripture to contradict other scripture, and fail to do all the Lord has commanded. It is so easy to be deceived. Search the scriptures. Check again and again on what the Lord has said. Compare all that you do with God's word. The Apostle Paul exhorted that we should examine ourselves to see if we be in the faith. (2 Corinthians 13:5). See if you were saved like those in the book of Acts. See if you are a member of the church that Paul, Peter, and others were in the first century. Only by checking and re-checking can you be sure.

The Lord would have us all to be saved. Paul says concerning Christ, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4). Peter said that the Lord would not have any to be lost but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9). Again, Peter told Cornelius and his household, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34, 35). And to make certain that man could be saved, Christ even sacrificed his own life to make that possible. (Romans 5:8). Paul said that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:4). But that's not all. He has made all of this known through his will and has commanded that this good news should be preached to every creature under heaven. (Mark 16:15). Therefore, it is possible to know the truth (John 8:32), and to obey the truth. (1 Peter 1:22). When we follow the Lord's instructions then we will believe in Christ, repent of our sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and would be baptized for the remission of sins. Look at Acts 2 and see if they didn't do just that. As a result of doing that then the Lord has promised to save us and to add us to his church. Again, when you read Acts 2 then you will observe that is exactly what happened to those who obeyed the Lord in the first century. Then once we do that then we are in position to live for him and to worship him in spirit and in truth. (Acts 2:41; John 4:24).

Now, what is hard and difficult about that? Surely, nothing. Then let us take every precaution to make our salvation as sure as

possible. The salvation of our souls depends on it.

4. What the Lord requires of one, he requires of all. He does not save one, one way, and another, another way. In other words, he saves all alike. He adds all to the same church. Therefore Christ could say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6).

In conclusion, keep in mind that where there is division in religious matters, when one is supposedly saved one way and another is supposedly saved in another way, when there are numerous churches, different names, and different ways of worship, then that means that something is wrong, and that all cannot be right. To know that then that should cause each of us to take a closer look at the things that the Lord has said and to be sure that we do only what he has commanded. Don't be afraid to ask questions and don't be afraid to investigate. We have nothing to hide. We want to know the truth. When we and others do that then it is only then that we can be sure that we have done what the Lord wants us to do, and to prove that then we are all made one in Christ.



**associate  
editorial**

## According to its kind

Just imagine what it would be like if all who claim to preach Christ and His salvation were really preaching His doctrine to the world. If it was so, then there would be no denominationalism, there would be no confusion, and there would be no conflicting faiths among those who profess to be the followers of Christ. Wouldn't it be nice? Think of all denominational churches who are trying to put down each other, thus spending much precious

time which could be used for the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Think of all the money which is being used, wasted, infact, for establishing office buildings and church buildings of different organizations, sometimes on the same street close to each other. The division and the confusion exists because not all are preaching the same doctrine of Christ.

By the doctrine of Christ we mean the New Testament of Christ. It is also the doctrine of God for us today, since God speaks to us through His Son. (Hebrews 1:1,2). Christ Himself never wrote any book or a tract, but His apostles, whom He had authorised, wrote His doctrine in the New Testament. For this very purpose He had sent to them His Holy Spirit, Who came to remind them of all the things He had taught them. The Holy Spirit also guided them into all truth. Further, the Holy Spirit also revealed to them many other things in addition to those things that Christ had taught them personally when He was with them on earth, because they were unable to "bear them" at that time. (See John 14:25,26; 16:12-14). The apostles thus being led by the Holy Spirit in all truth wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit all things that we need to know and follow as God's will. The apostle Paul, therefore, said, "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16,17). The apostle Peter forewarned, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:20,21). Thus, the doctrine of Christ includes all that Christ taught while He was on earth, and whatever His inspired disciples wrote in the New Testament by the inspiration of the Spirit.

Christ taught that "The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11). The Bible contains the word of God. Now, if all who claim of preaching and teaching God's word were in fact preaching and teaching God's word alone, then that would mean that all of them had sown the same seed, and consequently there would be the same thing produced, since seed produces according to its

kind. If that was really so, then that would have taken care of various denominational churches, and denominational names and teachings. Then there would be no Catholics or Protestants, or Baptists or Pentecostals, or other such denominations, like we have today.

If all have from the beginning preached the same doctrine of Christ then there would be Christians only today, and not of this kind or that kind, tist or dist, etc. The disciples were called Christians, according to Acts 11:26. Also see Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16. Then, if the doctrine of Christ alone was preached, all followers of Christ would be members of the same church today. Christ promised and built His own church. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). He added and still adds all the saved to his own church. (Acts 2:47). They were all baptized into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13), and the body is the church. (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Also, if the same doctrine had been preached, believed, and obeyed through the years, then all Christians today would be worshipping the same way. Visit different churches on Sundays and observe how differently from each other they worship, and you will see the point I am making here. Through the centuries men of different sects have created different ways of worshipping God. They have made such rules and laws, which Christ and His apostles never authorised in the New Testament of the Bible for Christian worship. Christ had said that His people would worship in spirit and in truth. God has revealed to us through his Son and His apostles, in the New Testament, what we must do to worship Him and how we must worship Him. But yet people are worshipping Him today through such uninspired books of men which Christ and His Inspired apostles never authorised, such as, The Common Prayer Book, Catechism, Manuel, etc. Evidently then conflicting religious bodies exist today in opposition to God's desire (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; John 17:20-23), because not all have preached and not all are preaching the doctrine of Christ.

What about you? Are you a product of the Word of God, the seed of the kingdom, or a product of human teaching? According to Christ, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted." (Matthew 15:13). He also said, "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs

from thistles? Even so every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them." (Matthew 7:16-20). "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance." (Matthew 3:8).

## The Peace of God

**Ben F. Vick**

Around this terrestrial ball there are constantly wars and rumors of wars. The clouds of altercation are threatening over the Mediterranean Sea at the present time. Gunfire is being exchanged in Central America. Violence runs rampant through airports and major cities in the world. Households are incessantly squabbling. Even within the hearts of many people there is constant turmoil. Yet, in spite of circumstances which surround us, our families, our nation, our world, the apostle Paul holds forth the peace of God for individuals. He wrote, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7).

This "peace of God" spoken about in the Philippian letter is not that which exists between nations or within cities or even between individuals. It is not simply getting along with our neighbors, though it does involve that characteristic as well. But it is the peace which man obtains with God. Sin and worldliness put individuals at enmity with God. (Jas. 4:4). Many today need their feet directed into "the way of peace." (LK. 1:7). The peace Paul describes, which passeth all understanding and keeps our heart is that which reigns when we are obedient to the will of God.

The promise of this peace which Paul describes is found in both Old Testament and New Testament. Every peace offering made under the Old Testament typified the one great offering of Jesus Christ on the cross that brought peace and reconciliation between God and man. (Lev. 3:1-17; 7:11-36; 22:21-25). The prophet Isaiah wrote, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26:3).

The Psalmist said. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." (Psa. 119:165). Speaking principally to his apostles, yet applicable in principle to us, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (Jno. 14:27). And again, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (Jno. 16:33).

Is it, then, any wonder that Jesus is called the Prince of Peace? "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6-7). The angels at his birth announced, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Lk. 2:14). To the Ephesian saints Paul wrote, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one; and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." (Eph. 2:13-17). Peace is the result when two people (whether they be Jew and Gentile or any other people) are brought together in Christ, having obeyed the gospel. Sin by one or both persons in Christ may separate them, but when it is rectified by the blood of Christ through repentance, peace and harmony return.

Since the Prince of Peace came into this world, the preaching of peace is necessary. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matt. 5:9). A peacemaker is a peacepreacher, i.e., one who preaches peace. The peace he proclaims is not that of the world, but that which exists and reigns in the hearts of men when they are reconciled to God. Paul wrote, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his

cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." (Col. 9:19-20). The greatest need in the world today is for there to be peace on earth. This peace comes only as individuals obey the gospel of Christ. Peter, at the household of Cornelius, said, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:). . . ." (Acts 10:36).

How does the Lord look upon his peacepreachers? He says they shall be called the children of God. Christians are to preach the gospel of peace to a sinful world of chaos and confusion. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:13-15). The Lord says that those who "preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" have beautiful feet. This shows his attitude toward those who preach the gospel.

The preaching of peace necessitates the telling of how one procures the peace of God. "Therefore," Paul writes, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1-2). When one has been justified by faith, he then enjoys the peace which surpasses all understanding. "By faith" means not "faith only," but obedience to the gospel. One is justified when he is washed, i.e., baptized. (Acts 22:16; Tit. 3:5.) "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (I Cor. 6:11).

For the child of God to continue to have peace with God, he must follow "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Paul exhorted the saints at Rome to walk after the Spirit and then stated, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom. 8:6).

When men are obedient to the gospel of peace, then "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," because the peace of God shall reign supreme in their hearts. Why not obey the gospel today and experience true peace of mind?

## Scriptural Answers to Twenty Important Questions

Harold E. Hawley

### 1. What Must I Do To Be Saved ?

He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life. John 5:24.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16:31.

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Romans 10:9.

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:15-16.

### 2. What Must We Hear?

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. Matt. 17:5.

For Moses truly said unto the fathers. A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. Acts 3:22.

If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with me. Rev. 3:20.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16.

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17.

God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. Heb. 1:1-2.

All power is given unto me (Jesus) in heaven and in earth. Matt. 28:18.

### **3. What Must we Believe ?**

See Acts 16:31 and Romans 10:17 above.

If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Acts 8:37.

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. John 3:16.

### **4. What Must We Confess?**

See Romans 10:9, Question 1.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. 1 John 4:15.

That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:11.

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. Matt. 10:32.

### **5. Why Must One Be Baptized?**

Repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38.

Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. Acts 22:16.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Gal. 3:27. Read also Romans 6:3.

Wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water (Noah's salvation in the Ark); the like figure whereunto even baptism doth

also now save us. I Pet. 3:20-21.

See also Mark 16:15-16 above.

## **6. What Constitutes Baptism?**

And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, etc. Acts 8:38-39.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Romans 6:5.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead. Col. 2:12.

## **7. Of What Church Should One Be A Member?**

Upon this rock I will build my church (words of Christ). Matt. 16:18.

He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church. Col. 1:18.

The body is of Christ. Col. 2:17.

Feed the Church of God (Paul to the elders). Acts 20:28.

The churches of Christ salute you. Romans 16:16.

## **8. How Many Churches Do We Read Of In The New Testament? How Do We Become Members Of That Church?**

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Eph. 4:4-6.

So we being many are one body in Christ. Romans 12:5.

Read also Scriptures under Question 7,

And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be (were being) saved. Acts 2:47.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John 3:5.

### **9. What Are Christ's Followers Called?**

And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Acts 11:26.

If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. 1 Pet. 4:16.

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints. Rom. 1:7.

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ. Col. 1:2.

### **10. How must Christians Worship?**

God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4:24.

(The things which we are commanded to do in worship are told in answers to the next six questions).

### **11. What Must We Teach (Preach)?**

Preach the word. 2 Tim. 4:2.

This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. Acts 17:3.

And Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. Acts 8:35.

And they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ. Acts 5:42.

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15.

Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you. Matt. 28:19-20. (Words of Christ).

These things teach and exhort. 1 Tim. 6:2.

But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we (the apostles) have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (Repeated in verse 9). Gal. 1:8.

**12. What Kind Of Music Is Commanded In The New Testament? What Is The Purpose Of Such Music?**

Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms. James 5:13.

Speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Eph. 5:19.

Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord. Col. 3:16.

**13. What Exhortations Regarding Prayer Are Found In The New Testament?**

Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. I Thess. 5:17-18.

I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 1 Tim. 2:8.

Confess your fault one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James 5:16.

I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority. 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 5:20.

**14. What Scriptures Should Guide The Christian In Giving Of His Means?**

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. 1 Cor. 16:2.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver.

He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity (liberally). Rom. 12:8.

**15. How Regularly Should Christians Meet And For What Purpose?**

Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. Heb. 10:25.

And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. Acts 20:7.

#### **16. What Exhortation Should Guide The Christian In The Breaking Of Bread?**

(All of the following scriptures taken from 1 Cor., 11th Chapter).

Verse 25. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Verse 26. As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

Verse 27. Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily (in an unworthy manner, American Standard) shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Verse 28. But let a man examine (prove) himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

Verse 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily (in an unworthy manner) eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

#### **17. Can A Christian Sin? If So, What Should He Do?**

For in many things we offend all (all offend). James 3:2.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us. Verse 10.

Verse 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. 1 John 2:1.

Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. Acts 8:22.

#### **18. What Are Some Scriptures Which Will Help The Christian To Live Acceptably To God?**

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,

that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1.

And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, Romans 12:2.

If ye then be risen (raised) with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Col. 3:1.

Keep thyself pure. 1 Tim. 5:22.

Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:58.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. Rom. 13:14,

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Eph. 4:1.

Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Gal. 6:9.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. 1 Pet. 2:11.

### **19. What Are The Christian's Duties Toward His Fellow-men?**

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Gal. 6:10.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matt: 7:12.

Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good. 1 Cor. 10:24.

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matt. 5:16.

Submit yourselves (be subject) to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. 1 Pet 2:13.

Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. Matt. 22:21.

That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without. 1 Thess. 4:12.

## **20. What Promises Are Contained In God's Word For Christians?**

There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God. Heb. 4:9

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

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:2-3.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Tim. 4:8.

# **What Does God Require Of Us ?**

**Don Turnmire**

Every person must be concerned with what God says in His word concerning what He requires of all. There are things stated in the scriptures which instruct man concerning actions toward God. We must follow the instructions to please God.

We must love God, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." Matthew 22:37." According to I John 4:19, "We love him because he first loved us." Remember this, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." I John 4:8

God gave Christ because He loved us. "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." John 3:16 This was done while man was in sin. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

## Romans 5:8

Surely we can understand now why Jesus said that the first and great commandment was to love God with all of our being. God is love. I John 4:7 God showed His love for man in the sending and giving of His Son for the sins of the world. John 1:29

We must show our love for God and His Son. Jesus stated. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:15 John stated, For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments : and his commandments are not grievous." I John 5:3

God requires of us that we love him. The love is shown by doing the things which God instructs us to do. Love for God must manifest itself in action. It is not enough for one to simply say, "I love God" but the love must be shown by the deeds performed.

Any person who loves God must love his brother also. "And this is the commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." I John 4:21 This love is based upon even helping when in need. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?" I John 3:17

What does God require of us ? We must love him with our complete self. When we love God with all of our being, then we will love our brother. We will do good unto him. He will be helped when there is a need. The kingdom will be first and foremost in our lives. The golden rule will be practiced. We will be bearing fruit. God's work will be performed by us.

God manifested His love toward us by action. We must do the same toward Him.

## Why Not Be Just A Christian ?

**Robert G. Dockery**

*"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."*  
(Acts 11:26 b).

### INTRODUCTION

Not long ago, Good Housekeeping Magazine carried a special

article on religion in America which was based on information compiled by J. Gordon Melton in 16 years of research. According to the statistics presented there are presently more than 1,200 distinct and different religious sects in America, ranging from old, well established major denominations to bizarre and outlandish cults specializing in all sorts of strange and outrageous beliefs. (1) There are so many conflicting religious doctrines being preached today that many people don't know what to believe. "Which church is right?" they wonder. "Is one church about as good as another?" Which Church should I become a member of?" The religious world at large is so badly divided and fragmented that many are turned off by Christianity all together! The power of Christianity and its influence for good in the world has been sadly diminished by the divisions which exist. The cost of religious division is staggeringly high: it is paid in the duplication of facilities and the overlapping of effort; it is paid in the jealousy, suspicion, and hatred which exist between rival groups; it is paid in the unbelief of millions who are driven away from Christianity by the scandal of denominational factionalism.

This leads us to ask a question which many have never before seriously considered: "Why not be just a Christian?" That is, why not be simply a follower of Christ without becoming bogged down in the narrow confines of denominational loyalty? It is not necessary to be a hyphenated Christian; it is possible to be a Christian only! Undenominational Christianity is attainable! It is not some unrealistic dream!

I believe the time has come to take a long searching look at the division which exists in the religious world. Where did all of these churches come from? How come we are so badly divided? Is this a situation which is pleasing to God? Is there any way for all the followers of Christ to be united? Above all we need to see how we can be "just Christians" as we seek to serve God.

### **IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THERE WAS ONLY ONE CHURCH**

In describing the New Testament situation, Paul wrote: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God

and father of all, who is above all, and through all," (Ephesians 4:4-6). The one body, Paul had in mind was the church! (Ephesians 1:22-23). Members of that one body were referred to simply as "Christians" in New Testament times! (Acts 11:26). It was the desire of Jesus that His people be United. When He spoke of building His Church, He promised only one. (Matthew 16:18). He prayed fervently for the Unity of His followers; "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. . ." (John 17:21.) Ephesians 2:13-16 notes that Christ reconciles men unto God through the one body which is the church! The inspired writers of the New Testament condemned Division in the strongest possible terms ! Paul said in I Corinthians 1:10—"I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that, ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." The Word of God condemns division as a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:20 and speaks of the "sects of perdition" in II Peter 2:1.

This New Testament concept of the oneness of the Church has far reaching implications :

1. If there is but one church, modern denominationalism stands condemned!
2. If there is but one church, then it is most emphatically NOT true that "one church is as good as another."
3. If there is but one church, then those who had advised that everyone should attend the "church of his choice" are either terribly misguided or completely unconcerned about doing God's will.
4. If there is but one church, then all other religious bodies are counterfeits of the real thing.
5. If there is but one church, then it is essential for men and women to be members of it.

Without malice or bitterness, and in a spirit of love and concern, we need to stress the Biblical picture of the Church as an Undenominational, Christ-centered body of men and women

committed to doing the will of God!

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF DENOMINATIONALISM**

Our present day religious division is rooted in a period in history which is known as the Great Apostasy or falling away. Even during New Testament times there were some who were trying to divide the Church. The Apostles and other inspired writers warned that there were some who would seek to "pervert the Gospel" and would bring "damnable heresies into the Church." (Galatians 1:6-9; II Peter 2:1). In II Thessalonians 2:3, the Apostle Paul warned that after the days of the Apostles there would come a departure from New Testament Christianity as men drifted from the truths which they had received. He calls this departure the "falling away." The Greek word APOSTASIA means a decline, "defection, apostasy." (2) Paul warned the New Testament congregation at Ephesus: "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:20-30).

This period of decline and digression resulted in a gradual loss of the emphasis of the New Testament over a period of two Centuries from about 100 A.D. to approximately 300 A.D. During this period, in one area after another, changes were made from the New Testament Pattern.

1. Changes occurred in Church Government as the independent congregations of New Testament times were gradually replaced by a religious hierarchy of Bishops, Arch-Bishops, and from the 7th Century onward, the Papacy.
2. Changes occurred in doctrine as human traditions were exalted over the Word of God.
3. Changes took place in worship when the simple and devout services of New Testament times gave way to Involved Liturgy, Mass in Latin, The veneration of Images, and Instrumental Music.
4. Changes also took place in the terms of membership in the church with the introduction of Infant Baptism and the Adoption of sprinkling and pouring for Baptism.

The steps of Apostasy can be traced in series of significant dates :

1. 150 A.D. The rise of the Monarchal Bishop.
2. 251 A.D. The first substitution of pouring for Baptism.
3. 405 A.D. The first Use of Images Introduced.
4. 607 A.D. The first real pope.
5. 666 A.D. The first instance of Instrumental Music in the Church.
6. 800 A.D. The unification of Church and State in the time of Charlemagne.
7. 1054 A.D. The division of the Greek and Roman Churches.

With the passing Centuries, departure became so complete and the pattern of digression so fixed, that Christianity was buried under a virtual avalanche of apostasy, worldliness, and corruption. In the 16th Century the attempt to reform these abuses led to the Reformation! Men like John Wycliffe, John Hus, and Jerome Savanorola paved the way for this attempt to get back to the New Testament ideal. They gave their lives in order to say, "The church is corrupt" It is truly inspiring to think of these men standing almost alone against the religious and political powers of their day to say, "We've drifted far from the original pattern." In later generations came Martin Luther, who insisted on the right of every individual to read and study the scriptures for himself without having them strained through any Ecclesiastical authority. Others like Ulrich Zwingli, John calvin, John Knox followed in his wake and carried on the work of digging the church out from under the centuries of digression and innovation which had swept over it. Still later, John Wesley attempted to breathe the life which characterized New Testament Christianity into the lifeless forms and rituals which men were observing.

These were great men; we owe them a great debt; they set a light shining which helped to dispel a great deal of the darkness of Apostasy. But the tragedy is that they did not go far enough! And in the end they set loose the seeds of denominationalism. None of these men started out with the intention of starting new

churches. It was NEVER their intention to contribute to religious division. Unfortunately, their followers rallied around them instead of focusing upon Christ. From there time until this day one denomination has followed another and Christianity has become ever more fragmented. Then teachings of Luther were crystalized into the Luthern Church: the writings of Calvin became the basis for Baptist beliefs : John Knox established the Presbyterian Church : the work of John Wesley led to the formation of the Methodist Church; the Reformation in England produced the Episcopol or Anglican Church. As the years have passed these denominations have divided and subdivided until today more than 1,200 different churches are to be found in America! The Reformation failed because it stopped too soon!

## **THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT**

Near the beginning of the last Century, a great movement began momentum in the United States. It was born out of the sense of disilusion and disappointment which had been created by deno-nationalism with its legacy of factionalism, strife, and bitterness. It sprung from the recognition that the answer was not the creation of another denomination but **THE REJECTION OF DENOMI-NATIONALISM ALL TOGATHER** in favor of a return to New Testamant Christianity ! It had as its aim the complete restoration of the 1st Century Church in all its original glory and purity. The movement spread like a prairie fire in the frontier states of Virginia Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

The movement drew its leaders from many different religious backgrounds; Men who had come from Methodist, Pres-byterian, Baptist, and Episcopalian churches united in an attempt to erase denominational differences in the Restoration of New Testa-ment Christianity.

One of the first leaders in the moment was James O'Kelly a Methodist preacher from North Carolina who separated from the Methodist Church in 1793 to work for New Testament Christianity. Over 5000 others united with him in pleading for the use of the name "Christian" as the only name for believers, and the Bible as the only creed for the church.

UP in New England, two Baptist preachers by the name of Elias Smith and Abnar Jones became disturbed over "sectarian names and creeds" and left them to begin working for New Testament Christianity beginning about 1801.

Out in the state of Kentucky, a presbyterian preacher by the name of Barton W. Stone withdrew from the Springfield Presbytery along with half a dozen other Presbyterian preachers in order to take the Bible as their only creed and to wear the name of Christian only. They published a famous document entitled "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery" in which they said: "We will that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling. . . We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better in to life having one book, than having many be cast into hell." (3) Soon Barton Stone had influenced thousands to renounce denominational ties to become Christians only.

Two of the most influential leaders in the Restriction Movement were Thomas and Alexander Campbell, father and son who migrated to America from Ireland in 1807 and 1809, respectively. The Elder Campbell, a Presbyterian minister, delivered the "Declaration and Address" in 1809 which ended with the famous words: "Where the Bible speaks we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent" He and his son Alexander withdrew from the Presbyterian Church, first to work within the Baptist Church, and later, after, after further study, to plead for New Testament Christianity. Alexander Campbell achieved world-wide fame through his writing and debating and through his influence ten of thousands joined the movement to become Christians only.

Beginning about the year 1832 these various movements, which had arisen without knowledge of one another and were led by men of widely different religious backgrounds joined forces in preaching for the same great principles which have become known as "The Restoration Plea."

1. They urged the unity of all believers in Christ on the Basis of the alone. (I Peter 4:11).
2. They urged the rejection of all man-made creeds. Because of divisive influence of creeds they determined to take the bible only as the their authority in religion.
3. They urged the use of only scriptural names in referring to God's people. They refused to call themselves hyphenated Christians. They were Christians only. They determined to honor only Christ in their name.
4. They urged the recognition of independence and atonomy of each local congregation of the church.
5. They urged a return to the worship and Terms of Membership practiced by the New Testament Church. Believing that the church of the New Testament provided a continuing pattern for the church they called for a careful reproduction of all the particulars of New Testament Christianity. **THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO GO FORWARD WAS TO GO BACKWARD TO THE CHURCH AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING!**

### **CONCLUSION**

Today we continue to cherish the hope that we may be Christians only. In humility we continue to plead for the unity of a divided religious world on the basis of the Bible alone. In pursuit of that objective we urge with all the power we possess that men and women of all religious persuasions re-examine their beliefs and practices with the sincere intention of "Speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where the Bible is silent!"

We do not ask that you go back to Alexander Campbell or Barton Stone, or John Wesley, Martin Luther, or John Calvin, or any other man. We plead instead for all men to go back to Christ! Back to the Bible! Back to the Church of the new Testament! It is our prayer that we may be undenominational in our faith and in our practices.

This is the only real hope for unity in our religious world: it

has worked before, it can work again! Our only hope is for all believers in Christ to walk faithfully in the Old Paths, following in the steps of the Lord. We can be in the 20th century just what Christians were in the 1st Century if we will believe what they believed, obey what they obeyed, and observe what they observed! we must go back in order to go forward! Why not be just a Christian. . ? . . ?

## What Constitutes Scriptural Baptism?

Clifford Dixon

Many people have been through an immersion for baptism that have not been Scripturally baptized. Many people have had a form of baptism over which the preacher said they were being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost but because of the reasons they were being baptized and the the modes of their baptism they have not been Scripturally baptized. Lest anyone of our readers be deceived concerning this we want to notice what constitutes Scriptural baptism.

### Teaching

Scriptural baptism can only be administered to those who have been correctly taught the gospel. God's power of drawing men to Christ is that of teaching (John 6:44,45). Preceding the command to be baptized in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15,16 is the command to teach them the gospel. Therefore the practice to baptize infants is invalid. They have not yet been taught the gospel. They cannot in their infancy believe the gospel. They cannot in their infancy believe the gospel. They have no sins to repent of, neither to capacity the repent. Neither can they confess Christ. All these are prerequisites of baptism. Since men must be taught the gospel, then teaching them doctrines of men will not prepare them for Scriptural baptism. It has well been said that you cannot teach a person wrong and then baptize him right.

### Repentance

Scriptural baptism can only be administered to those who

have repented of their sins. In Acts 2:38 the command to repent precedes the command to be baptized. If a person repents he changes his will about his sinful ways and shows this repentance by a change in conduct. Reformation of life always comes after repentance. If I was a thief and I repented then I would quit stealing. If I was an adulterer and I repented I would quit my adultery. Otherwise there would be no Scriptural baptism unless I repented before baptism.

### **Confession**

Scriptural baptism can only be administered after the proper confession. The confession made in Bible times was the confession of faith in Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:37). In Romans 10:10 we are told that confession is made unto salvation. Jesus made it clear that if He confesses us we must confess him (Mat. 10:32,33). If we are asked to confess that "God for Christ's sake has pardoned our sins," then we couldn't have Scriptural baptism. You can't have the right baptism after the wrong confession because, 1) You would be making a confession that makes baptism unnecessary. You would already be saved before baptism 2). You would not have made the confession unto salvation as required by the Scriptures.

### **Immersion**

Scriptural baptism is an immersion in water. The word baptism means "a dipping, a plunging beneath, a burial," The word in the Greek for sprinkle is "rantizo," never "baptizo." The word in the Greek for pour is "keo" never "baptizo." The word for immerse is always "baptizo." Therefore baptism to be Scriptural must be immersion. This fact is shown to be true in Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12 where we are told that we are "buried" in baptism.

### **Unto Remission**

Scriptural baptism must be "for" meaning "unto" the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It was never administered in Bible times "because of" remission of sins. In Acts 2:38 the word "for" is the Greek word "eis," which according to Thayer means "a preposition governing the accusative, and denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: into, to, towards, for, among" (Thayer,

Page 183). So when Peter told them to be baptized "for" the remission of sins, he was telling them to be baptized into, to, towards the remission of their sins, not because their sins had already been pardoned.

### **Into Christ**

Scriptural baptism is for salvation and puts us into the body of Christ. It does not put us into a denomination of men. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13). Some want to make Holy Spirit baptism that which puts us into the body but they should realize that there is only one baptism (Eph. 4:5). That is baptism by the authority of Christ, which is water baptism (Acts 10:47,48). It would take baptism according to all the Scriptural requirements to put us into the body of Christ. It is important to be in the body of Christ because, He is the Saviour of the body (Eph. 5:23).

If you have not had Scriptural baptism by all means "arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

