

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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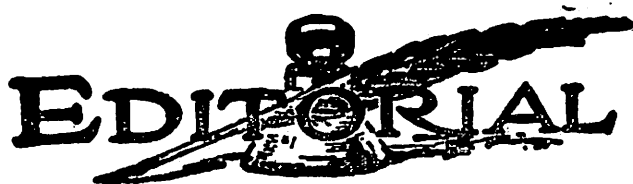
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The Blessing of Choice

Although God is the creator of all, and could force his will on us, but he does not. He made man a free moral agent, that is, with a mind and the ability to think and to reason and to decide for himself what he will do. Remember how that in the long ago, Joshua said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve ! . . ." (Joshua 24 : 15).

There are those who teach that God has determined to save some and condemn others, regardless of their own personal choice in the matter. There are others who say that Satan made them do whatever they did that was wrong. These teachings are false. God does not make one do anything and neither can the evil one so control us that we cannot resist him. Whether we obey God or not, or whether we serve Satan or not, depends entirely on us and what we decide to do.

If one drinks then it means that he has decided to drink. If

he smokes, then it is his decision to smoke. Likewise, one can decide to become a Christian, to worship God each first day of the week, to be faithful to his marriage companion, and so on with hundreds of other things.

There are good decisions and bad decisions, but how blessed we are just to be able to choose for ourselves what we will do or not do. We are even more blessed when we make wise choices and we live by the choices that we have made. For example, when one decides to obey the gospel then he doesn't have to be bothered with that again. When one becomes a Christian then he decides that he is going to worship God each first day of the week, that is, if he is going to be faithful to the Lord. Having made that decision then he is not faced with that matter every Sunday morning. He has already made the decision to worship and so he gets up and goes just like he gets up and goes to work through the weekdays. That becomes as much a part of him as eating and sleeping. If he decides that he is going to give scripturally of his earnings, then he knows what he makes, and so it is easy each Sunday for him to give. He is not faced with the decision of whether he will give or not give. He knows that he is going to give, and he knows how much he is going to give.

Likewise, when a Christian marries then he has made a decision for life. There are many men and women in the world, but the decision has been made to take only one companion and that is for their lifetime. The Christian then is not constantly faced with the decision about another marriage partner.

Although there are many decisions that we will have to continue to make throughout life, still there are others that once made that settles it. Wouldn't it be horrible to have to constantly be faced with some of those matters?

All of this reminds us again of how blessed we are when we decide to obey God, and especially as we remain faithful to him.



Not Enough

We have all heard it said, "There are many ways to heaven." But this is simply not true, if we know what the Bible teaches. The wise man in the book of Proverbs wrote, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (Proverbs 16:25). There is only one God and He has provided for all men to be saved alike and to go to heaven by the same way. Many blindly follow a way just because others are in it. Many are following a family way than the way of the Lord. They think as long as they are in a way then they are going to be alright, they are following their conscience, some very sincerely. Many are going to discover only in hell that the way they were following was wrong. But then it will be too late. We must now strive to know the true way of God. When Thomas, one of the disciples, wanted to know from Christ which was the way, Christ told him, "I am the Way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14 : 6). Christ did not come to show the way, but He is the way. He is the way of God, the way of salvation, and the way of eternal life in heaven. One must believe in Him and must do what He says. "If anyone desires to come after Me," Says He, "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9 : 23). It is not enough just to be religious, but if Christ is the way then one must follow him daily. Paul, the apostle, who wrote almost half of the New Testament Books, was very religious when he used to persecute the church of Christ, he even thought that he was doing a service to God by persecuting Christians. But later in his epistle to the Galatians he wrote, "For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it." (Galatians 1 : 13). Yet he said, "I have lived in all

good conscience before God until this day." (Acts 23 : 1). Paul was then following his conscience as many do today. But he was religiously wrong. Sure, he was in a way; too, he was religious, honest and sincere, but he was wrong. He thought he was right, but he was wrong. He thought he was saved, but he was lost. Therefore, when the Lord sent Ananias to Paul, Ananias told him, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). And the record tells us that Paul did that what he was told to do, because he knew that that was the only right way.

We could also discuss the examples of Eunuch and Cornelius from chapters 8 and 10 of the book of Acts. Morally speaking they were good people, they were religious type of people, and were very sincere and honest as is evident from reading their stories. But they too were in a wrong way. Both, Eunuch and Cornelius as well as his household became believer in Jesus Christ after hearing about him and were baptized for the remission of their sins as the people on the day of Pentecost had done. (Acts 2:38). One must put on Christ by obeying His command to be in Christ and to live in Christ. (Galatians 3:26,27; Mark 16:16).

It is not enough, however, just to believe in Christ and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins, but after obeying this command one must strive to live the Christian life which is patterned after the life of Christ. The apostle Peter explained this in a better way, in his epistle he said, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:21,22). Christ suffered many things for us, so must we suffer if we are going to live the life of a Christian. The scripture says, "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." (Hebrews 5:8). The point is that He was obedient to God in all things. And the very next verse reads, "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." (Verse 9). Many have wrongly understood Mark 16:16 which says, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." One who believes in

Christ and is baptized is assured here that he shall be saved. When? In future. Christ was also baptized. But he didn't quit right there obeying God, He went on obeying God and did all that the Father required of Him. Philippians 2:7-8 says that even though He was in the form of God, yet He made Himself of no reputation, and took the form of a servant, and became a man, and then He humbled Himself to the extent that He became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Those who believe in Him and are baptized shall be saved IF they will be faithful unto Him until death. (Revelation 2:10). It is not enough just to become a Christian, but one must also live the Christian life. Notice what Acts 14:21,22 says, "And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **WE MUST THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**" Christ said, "Not everyone" BUT, "he who does the will of my Father," shall enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 7:21). He warned His disciples, "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." (Luke 13:24). It is not enough to desire only, but one must be willing to strive to go by the narrow way. (Matthew 7:13,14).

Attributes of Christ's Church

John Waddey

Near the city of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus promised his apostles : "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Even his death at the hands of Jews and Romans did not deter him from keeping his word. On the third day he arose triumphant from the tomb and some 49 days later his glorious church came into existence. The birth date of Christ's church was Pentecost Sunday in the 33rd year of his life. The place was Jerusalem. The event is recorded in the Acts of Apostles, chapter 2.

The apostles were gathered together. The Holy Spirit which Christ had promised them came as a Sound (Acts 1:5, 8), of the

rushing of a mighty wind and filled all the house where they were sitting. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

Guided by God's Spirit, the apostles preached the good news of the resurrected Christ. They showed Jesus to be the fulfillment of the ancient Messianic prophecies. Three thousand Jews were convicted of their sins and driven to cry out, "what shall we do?" Peter answered them, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). As many as gladly received his word were baptized and the Lord added unto them about three thousand souls (2:41). From that day forth the church is spoken of as an existing reality. (See Acts 2:47 KJV, 5:11, etc.).

This was no denomination or sect founded by a sinful man, it was the kingdom of God upon the earth. It was not just another great religion that would take its place beside other religions. This was the straight and narrow way that leads to life. (Matt. 7:14). This was God's family of saved children destined to live with him in eternity. (Ephesians 5:23-28).

The Church of Christ is Divine in Origin. It was God's plan from eternity to make his will known to men through the church (Eph. 2:10-11). It was predicted by the Hebrew prophets that his church would be established in the last days of the Jewish state, in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4).

Daniel foresaw a kingdom not made with human hands (i.e., divine in origin) that would become great and fill the whole earth (Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45). Christ made preparation for his church while on the earth. In his death on the cross, he purchased the church with his blood (Acts 20:28). Through his chosen apostles he established it. God appointed his Son "to be head over all things to the church . . ." (Eph. 1:22). Today he reigns as both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) over his church kingdom. He has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18).

Christ's church is universal in its outreach. In Daniel's vision

the kingdom of heaven, which began as a little stone, became as a great mountain that filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2:34-35). God did not ordain different churches for different nations such as the Church of England and Church of Scotland. Rather he planned a church that all nations would flow into. (Isa. 2:2).

On the cross, the Saviour "abolished the enmity . . . that he might create in himself of the two [races, Jew and Gentile] one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross . . ." (Eph. 2:15-16). Now, in Christ's church there must be no social, racial or national distinctions. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek . . . bond nor free . . . nor male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). In his great commission Jesus sent the apostles into "all the world" to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

It is the mission of God's people to tear down the walls of separation, and never to be guilty of building them.

The Lord's church is eternal in durations. Daniel wrote that "the God of heaven [shall] set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . ." (2:44). Earthly kingdoms founded by men bear the seeds of their own demise. They live a few hundred years at best, and then fall. The kingdom of heaven will stand till Jesus comes and delivers it unto God his Father (I Corinthians 15:24). The church revealed in the New Testament is as relevant, vibrant and valid today as in its infancy. It's meaning, message and ministry are as needed today as in that first century. The world is yet lost and in need of salvation. It is her task to take the message of salvation to every creature (Mk. 16:15-16). The poor are still with us in great numbers and it's ministry is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27). The world today languishes in ignorance, error and superstition as two thousand years ago. The church is God's beacon light in the world, holding forth the word of life and hope (Philippians 2:15-16). As long as sin-cursed men inhabit planet earth, so long will there be a need for the church of Christ to enlighten their minds, soften their hearts, refine their conduct, bring them salvation and prepare them for eternity.

The church is two-dimensional. Many folks have been turned off towards the church because of a bad experience with some of her members. This reminds us that the church has two distinctly different sides: the divine and the human. The former is all perfection, without spot or blemish, being the product of the Divine mind. The latter is as weak and fallible as the material of which it is made. A local group of Christians is no better than the sum of its members. While on earth's side of eternity, none of us reaches perfection. Even of God's people it is true that all sin and fall short (Romans 3:23). We are but sinners saved by his grace (Eph. 2:8-9). It is, therefore, impossible to find a perfect congregation. If we should, we would surely spoil it by our imperfect presence.

The church planned by God and established by Christ is perfect in its structure, doctrine and duties. We dare not lift a hand to change one practice or precept (Revelation 22:18-19). We must, like Moses, "Make all things according to the pattern that was showed" him (Hebrews 8:5). Thus, while we are militant to follow exactly that divinely given blueprint for the church, we will be patient with brethren who are struggling to live up to the Christian ideal in their lives and worship.

What a marvelous privilege it is to be invited to be members of "the church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven" (Heb. 12:23). May we never cause offence to the church of God (1 Cor. 10:32) but rather give him "the glory in the church: unto all generations" (Eph. 3:20).

Why is the Word Love not in the Book of Acts?

Dan Billingsly

Much of the teaching and preaching about "love" in the church today doesn't "ring true" to the Bible; it sounds just like denominational preaching. It is shallow, artificial, unscriptural to

those mature in the faith and established in the truth. Their emphasis on "love" moves them from the "truth" of the gospel (II Thessalonians 2:13-15) to the false and emotional level of the denominational world. Such false conceptions and teaching will neither glorify God, save the lost, nor edify the church.

We must teach *true biblical love* as revealed in the Scripture (I John 4:7-18); we must follow in the example of the apostles (I Corinthians 11:1); but we dare not abuse this doctrine before the world or in the church.

One of the most revealing facts of the New Testament is that the word "love" is not used in the book of Acts. This is the book of inspiration and work of the Holy Spirit in the apostles (John 16:13); this is the book of conversions to Christ in the apostles' preaching of the "great commission" (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16); this is the record of God's revealing the truth of Jesus Christ (John 8:32,51): this is the gospel of the establishment of the church (Acts 2:38-47); this is the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:13-26); this is the gospel of faith, repentance, confession, baptism and salvation. This is the testimony of apostolic eye-witnesses (inspired of God), and not *one time* does the record show that they used the word "love" to preach Christ to a lost world!

Love for God, Christ, truth, the church, and the lost, *was the motivating force* behind their efforts (I Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:6; Romans 13:8; I Peter 2:17), but "love" was not the leading, cutting edge, of the apostolic message. Men cannot know of the love of God separate and apart from the gospel; and any preaching that denies the gospel of Acts denies the true love of God!

Today's emotional concept and teaching concerning "love" is not the friend of Jesus or man: it proves to be an unscriptural and damnable heresy (II John 9-11; Romans 16:17-18). Much of today's preaching about "love" is really a cowardly effort of those who are afraid of preaching and defending the doctrinal truth of God which conflicts with both the sinners of the "carnal" world (I John 2:15-17), and the sinners of the "religious" world

(I Timothy 1:18-20; 4:1-16). This immoral preaching of "love" is compromising the truth of the Bible in an effort to make the gospel more palatable to sinners and false teachers. It leads to an attitude which will ultimately deny doctrinal authority (II Timothy 4:1-5), overlook blatant sinfulness (I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21), and lead men to believe that "love" replaces faith and obedience to the truth of God.

Apostolic preaching in the book of Acts (motivated by love) was a message of enlightening truth to men lost in sin (Philippians 2:16). It was preaching: the fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 2:14-36), faith and repentance (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30-31), baptism (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 10:48; 16:31-33; 18:8; 22:16). It was a message about the New Testament church (Acts 2:41,47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:1-4, 12; 20:28). It was a message against the false teaching both among the Jews and the Gentiles (Acts 13:38-52; 15:1-41; 19:1-41). The apostles and their preaching were divinely successful in leading men to salvation in Christ, and maintaining the truth of God in a world of sin and religious error.

Gospel preachers in the past were never accused of not loving God or lost men, and their message echoed the apostles' doctrine in the restoration of New Testament Christianity. However, the modern concept of "love" leads men to believe that they can be *more spiritual* than those who stress "... all things that pertain to life and godliness, *through the knowledge* of him that hath called us to glory and virtue ..." (II Peter 1:3). They believe that they can *walk more closely* to God than those who "... walk in the truth" (III John 4). They contend that "love" *meets the needs* of man better than the doctrine of Christ which is "... able to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17). They maintain that "love" will produce *more unity* and *brotherly kindness*, but the Lord says that unity is produced by men's believing the truth of the apostles' preaching (John 17:20-21), and that brotherly love is produced among those that obey the truth

(I Peter 1:22). Man's "love" does not save him from sin, the gospel does (Romans 1:16); "love" which neutralizes and compromises the truth of God is the work of the Devil (II Corinthians 11:13-15). This modern preaching of "love" is really the gospel of Satan, for it teaches men to hate and rebel against God and his gospel of truth.

True Bible "love" is when man walk after the commandments of God (II John 6). True Bible "faith" is when men love the truth (I John 5:9-13) more than the acceptance of human doctrine or praise of men. Love is the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22), that which is produced in the Christian through the knowledge of the gospel. Men who are *in sin* are the enemies of God (Romans 5:10); they are dead in trespasses and sins; they are children of disobedience and wrath (Ephesians 2:1-7). However, they may learn of the love of God which offers them the gospel of salvation (I Corinthians 15:1-4), and then upon their obedience to God, they may begin to love God as a Christian in the church (I John 4:19). No man can really love God—in the biblical sense—and remain in sin, lost and undone without Christ. Love is the the fruit of the influence of the word of God in the Christian's life. This is why every epistle (Romans-Revelation) to the church speaks of the need for Christians to grow and walk in love of God and the brethren,

The love of God and the gospel law of Christ are synonymous! The mercy and grace of God are synonymous with the truth of the gospel and the law of Christ! The love of God does not negate nor compromise the law of liberty that is in Christ Jesus and which saves the souls of men (James 1:21-25). The gospel of faith and repentance was the cuttingedge of the apostles' doctrine to people lost in sin in the book of Acts, while love was a predominate theme in the epistles to the church.

The apostles truly loved God, the truth, the church, and the lost men and women of the world, when they went forth to preach (Acts 1:6), but love was not the predominate theme of their message. It is really no mystery why the word "love" is just not used in the record of their preaching in the book of Acts, for

the true definition of love (*agape*) was manifest in their obedience to Christ, and their sufferings for his truth and church. True love in the New Testament is not how you "feel" about others, but what you "do" for God and his Cause. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father . . ." (John 14:21-23).

The Christian and Good Works

Edward Anderson

God's elect are to be concerned with good works. God does good. (Acts 14:17). Christ "went about doing good." (Acts 10:38). Those who are children of God and followers of Christ should also do good. (Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 2:21). Christians are to "do good unto all men." (Galatians 6:10).

In his brief epistle to Titus Paul mentions four relationships the Christian should sustain to good works.

(1) Pattern of Good Works. (Titus 2:7). The word "pattern" is from the Greek word *tupos*, meaning type or model. (Young's Analytical-Concordance.) The same word is used in Hebrews 8:5 to describe the God-given pattern for the tabernacle. This concept was emphasized by Christ when he said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." (Matthew 5:16). Does the world see in you "a pattern of good works"?

(2) Zealous of Good Works. (Titus 2:14). To this end Christians have been redeemed. No longer are they to live in sin or serve sin. (Romans 6:1-4, 16-18). "Zeal" is defined by Webster (New World Dictionary, p. 1698) as eager interest and enthusiasm; ardent endeavor or devotion, Paul wrote to the Galatians : "But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing . . ." (Galatians 4:17). Are you as zealous of good works as you are, let's say, of sports, recreation, or some other worldly activity?

(3) Ready to Good Works. (Titus 3:1). The word "ready" is

from the Greek *hetoimos* which, according to Vine's Expository Dictionary, means prepared. The admonition clearly is to be prepared to take quick advantage of every opportunity for good. This speaks of involvement, participation, and a volunteer spirit. The "little-as-I-can-do" syndrome is here forbidden. Christians are to be "ready" to give (2 Corinthians 9:5); "ready" to give answer (1 Peter 3:15); and "ready" for the Lord's return. (Matthew 24:44). Are you "ready to every good work"?

(4) Maintain Good Works. (Titus 3:8). This passage speaks not of a once-in-a-while good deed, but a life of steady, dedicated service. Good works are "good and profitable unto men." Paul declared, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." (Galatians 6:9). A life of good works devoted to serving God and your fellowman will not go unrewarded by the Almighty. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10). Are you maintaining good works?

"No one ever became dizzy from doing too many good turns."

If He is the Christ

Lindell Mitchell

In recent times men have diligently worked to "reinterpret" the identity of the Christ. The Christ of the Bible is considered too unscientific for modern man. The German theologian, Rudolf Bultmann contended that the whole conception of the universe as it is presented in the Lord's preaching is mythological. He concluded that the gospel narratives had to be wrong when they speak of miracles and other things that do not fit the conception of the world developed by science,

This has serious implications for every Christian because Bultmann's radical claims did not sink into the obscurity they so richly deserved. In fact, numerous Christ-denying systems of thinking use his pronouncements as the basis of their own

approach to religion. Further, countless protestant and catholic preachers receive a large dose of Bultmann's thinking in the course of their Seminary training.

The sad result has been that growing numbers of people place greater confidence in their own reason, than in God's revelation of himself. People are easily panicked over rumors of flying saucers and have made a millionaire of those who write books and articles about them. Whenever some guru comes floating out, people flock to him. They reject Christ for claptrap.

Instead of opting for the latest guru, let me suggest that you give some serious consideration to the Christ of the Bible. He didn't deliver religious and philosophical propositions, and leave it at that. He proclaimed himself to be the Son of God, and proceeded to demonstrate it to the multitudes with numerous displays of supernatural power. In fact, he insisted that those who denied him after such proof would be worthy of eternal damnation: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48).

The Christ of the Bible presented more than persuasive myths. He healed, exorcized devils, and preached. It was all part of one package, and not even his enemies could deny his works. On one occasion Jesus healed a man who was deaf, blind, and dumb because of demon possession. The Pharisees couldn't deny the cure so they attributed it to the work of the devil. However, Jesus quickly disarmed that silly argument, by nothing that if he were in league with the devil he certainly would not be giving his forces so much trouble! (Matthew 12:22-31).

His power can't be denied and his authority must be accepted. He is the Christ and must be accepted on his terms and not ours. Men who are serious about their committment to him won't quibble with him concerning his plan of salvation. When he demands faith (John 8:24), they gladly comply. His demand for repentance is not a burden but the natural result of saving faith (Acts 17:30). He who accepts Jesus as Lord will confess him

readily (Romans 10:1,10). When the exalted Lord demands that the believer be baptized for the remission of sins, the man of faith gladly obeys (Acts 2:37-41; Acts 22:1-16).

Has Your Church Left You?

Kojo Acquah Beenyi

Some churches leave people. You may see a difference between what the Bible teaches and what your church is teaching and practicing. We want to know the truth and to please God. Then why do we have this problem of religious differences? There is a temptation in many churches to make religion appealing to the greatest number of people. Sometime in 1981, Brother Ed Mosby discussed with a friend the subject of drumming in churches while he was in Ghana. They both agreed that such a practice was not according to the New Testament teaching. The friend said, "People like drumming in Africa, and it will attract many to come and hear the message." Is not this the real problem, friend? In order for some churches to have large numbers and big contributions, the church will accomodate these people. The Bible refers to these people as those who "want to have their ears tickled." (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

MEN'S DOCTRINE

This is why churches use sprinkling for baptism, instruments of music, divine healing services, clapping and dancing, have women preachers, wet children and call it baptism, pray like hypocrites. People will come, like children cry for food. But where do you stand? Your church has left you. If yours has left you, what can you do? You need to advise yourself as to why you chose this church in the first place. Human institutions, founded by men, are like human beings with feet of clay. They can fail and disappoint us. They can leave us.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

But the church Jesus built is different. It is built on the solid

rock of truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Christ's church is like Jesus Himself, "the same yesterday, and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8). What can you do if your church has left you? You are to return to the original Church of Christ. The people in the Church of Christ are seeking to find what the original church was like and to restore it exactly. Our aim is to take the Bible alone and once again continue "steadfastly in the apostles' teaching." (Acts 2:42). Worship is to be according to the New Testament pattern, and not what may attract the greatest number. Noah's ark did not attract the greatest number, just eight, but it was made according to God's pattern. God was pleased with Noah. (Genesis 9:1). Worship of the first century church included singing, praying, preaching, giving and eating the Lord's Supper. Since God has given "all authority" to Christ (Matthew 28:18), and since He serves as God's spokesman today (Hebrews 1:1-2), it is our conviction that only Christ has the authority to say what His church is and what it should do and teach. Who then is in charge today? When someone tells you that David played instruments in Psalms 150, you ask him, "Who is in charge of the church?" Would they like their church to be called the "Church of David" because they play instruments as well as David played it? Members of the Church of Christ know that only Christ is in charge, and they worship according to His instructions. Read Matthew 26:30; Acts 16:25; Hebrews 13:15.

THE NARROW WAY

Jesus said of His way, "I am the way" (John 14:6) and "few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:14). Churches of Christ are different from those religions which seek to attract the greatest number. Your church may be one that has lost its way and left you on the wrong way, has become burdened down with traditions and doctrines which the synod has approved (doctrine of men) and has failed to be what Christ intended His church to be.

CONCLUSION

Has your church left you? Don't look for another which may also be undependable. Look to Christ Jesus, who will never

leave you. (Matthew 28:20). Look to His church which is His body. (Colossians 1:18). His followers are a people committed to Him and His way and are determined to be the people of God. (1 Peter 2:9). You are invited to attend the services of the Church of Christ nearest you where we do religious things the Bible way.

The Genesis Deluge

John G. Shaver

"And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth, and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. 7:23). The history of the world before the flood is confined to about seven chapters. This includes the account of the creation, the fall, and of the state of things for nearly 2000 years. During this period, sin had dispersed its deadly streams in every direction. Here then; we meet with a pious, dedicated character; but the great mass of humanity had not the fear of God, and were disobedient to the authority of heaven. At length, even the forbearance of God was exhausted, his long-suffering expired; and he said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man . . ." (Gen. 6:3). Then the final warning was given by the preaching of Noah, and the erection of the ark. Then was the threatening of heaven executed; and all flesh, save Noah and his family, perished before him.

Notice first, the Deluge itself. Consider its reality. Those admit the truth of revelation, do not hold the slightest shadow of a doubt as to the reality of the deluge, not only detailed as a matter of history in this book, but as also referred to in several passages in the New Testament. Christ himself refers to this great occurrence (Matt. 24:37). Peter by inspiration uses it as a powerful illustration (II Pet. 2:5; II Pet. 3:3-6). It rests also on the traditions of many nations. Scarcely a people exists who have not some tradition similar to the deluge of Genesis. The Persians, Egyptians, Chinese, and Americans, just to mention a

few. Also, Sir W. Jones discovered that in the oldest books of Indian mythology, there are many records quite similar to the account given by Moses. There are also the natural evidences. It would be impossible for such an event to have taken place without the earth's bearing the abiding evidences of it. Now, do these exist? To this, I must reply, yes, they do. The loftiest mountains at the greatest distance from the sea, abound with the remains of various types of sea life. Marine shells are found imbedded in the mountains some 13 to 14,000 feet above sea level. That the external crust of the earth has been broken is obvious, from animal and vegetable fossils which have been discovered in all depths of the earth that have been examined. The bones of animals; which could only have existed in hot, arid countries, have been dug out of the earth in great variety, in the coldest of regions.

Consider the means by which the deluge was effected. None who believe in a Supreme Almighty power will dispute God's ability to produce such a deluge. The opinions of those who study natural philosophy greatly vary. Some suppose that it was effected by a comet; others, that by one entire revolution of the earth, the sea was moved out of its place, and covered the face of the earth, and that the bed of the ancient sea became our new earth. There is one simple means by which it was effected, viz., the power of Jehovah God.

Next, consider the universality of the deluge; it extended to the whole earth. All mankind, all animal life, except such as live in waters. We have heard of destructive floods, inundations desolating districts of countries; but this swept over the face of the whole world; involved all in one common ruin.

Next, consider the terrific character of this great deluge. Men may suffer great calamities by land or sea, for good men have often thus suffered; but this was the effect of divine indignation; the wrath of God. Here was God, justifying his right and authority. The ruler of the universe summoning the elements of nature to punish his rebellious creatures. Holy Writ records on its divine pages the fearful calamities God has brought on disobedient

persons, and nations, such as the stoning of Achan, the opening of the earth to swallow up Korah and his rebellious followers, the destruction of Pharaoh and his wicked host, and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. But here, a world is arraigned, condemned, and destroyed. A whole race is swept away, except for Noah and his family. There never was anything like it, nor ever shall be except the conflagration of the world by fire at the last day (II Pet. 3:3-12).

Notice secondly, the procuring cause of the Deluge (Gen. 6:5-12). The mind of man was totally alienated from God. His heart filled with evil, and only evil, and that continually. The cup of evil was full; the fruit ripe for destruction. The first cause was universal evil. The second was impious rejection of divine influences (Gen. 6:3). That God did strive with man is manifest. It is obvious that he strove graciously, desiring to save them; and the term includes energy and perseverance. God strove long and hard. The third cause was final impenitency, the last straw. After he had taken the survey, seen the guilt, and determined to punish, God gave 120 years space for repentance; and if there had been a turning from sin, as in Nineveh, doubtless, judgment would have been averted. But these years of grace were all abused, and most likely despised. Final impenitence must bring destruction.

Notice the deliverance of Noah and his family. Now you will see the reasons why God exempted Noah from destruction (Gen. 6:8). If Noah had been like the rest, he would have perished. But Noah, (1) was a godly man. (2) He was a just man. (3) He believed God, and in doing so, feared and obeyed him (Heb. 11:7). Hence, in the day of wrath, God provided for his security, and saved him and his house from destruction.

Let us learn how fearful is the wrath of God (Rom. 11:26). Let us learn how dreadful is a state of carnal presumption and security, May we learn and appreciate the distinctions and rewards which await the righteous. It would be good if what was said of Noah could be said of each of us. "Thus did Noah: according to *all* that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 7:22).

The Language Of Cain

Ancil Jenkins

The arrogance of Cain! It is bad enough to have God question one's conduct, but also to evade the question of God and ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is even worse.

Cain was guilty. He had killed his brother and there was no way to hide it. However, instead of confessing his sin, he tried to evade his responsibility. Cain killed his brother because of jealousy. However, he was guilty of another equally great sin. He failed to understand his relationship with Abel. If he had seen more clearly his responsibility to Abel he might have reconsidered his actions.

WE ARE OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER. We have a responsibility to all men since we are all made in God's image. All men of accountable age and reasonable mental ability are subject to the punishment caused by sin. They can enjoy the benefits of the blood shed on Calvary. We have this in common with all men.

We have a special responsibility to our brothers in Christ. Paul taught us to feed our enemy if he is hungry (Romans 12:20). If we have such an obligation to our enemies, what do we have toward our brothers in Him? This takes precedence over any objection to those not of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10).

WE ARE OUR BROTHER'S BROTHER. The obligations placed on us, being fellow members of the body of Christ, are great. We are bound by many spiritual cords. We are sons of God. We share a common inheritance. Our spiritual goals are the same.

This binding with the cords of brotherhood places great responsibility on us. We cannot harm our brothers as did Cain. Whatever might hurt, physically and especially mentally and emotionally, should be withheld.

We cannot neglect our brothers. To withhold what is needed and necessary is the same as doing them harm.

Matthew Henry made this comment on Genesis 4:9. "They who are unconcerned in the affairs of their brethren, and take no care, when they have opportunity, to prevent their hurt in their bodies, goods, or good name, especially in their souls, do in effect, speak Cain's language"—.

The Power of One Christian

W.A. Holley

Just as one sinner can do great damage both intellectually and morally, even so just one Christian possesses wonderful power to change, for the better, a world lost in sin. (Ecclesiastes 9:17-18; 10:1; Matthew 5:16).

Obviously, one cannot be a Christian unless one first becomes a Christian. Before Saul of Tarsus was converted to Christ, he was a Pharisee; but after he obeyed the gospel of Christ, he became a Christian. (Galatians 1:13-14; Philippians 3:3-9; Acts 11:26).

When Saul/Paul learned that his Pharisaic religion was wrong, he did not remain in disobedience (Acts 26:19). With the greatest possible dispatch, he became obedient to the will of Christ. (Romans 6:3-4).

What did this former Pharisee do to become a Christian? There are some things which he did not do!! Namely, he did not "get religion or get saved" as so many claim to have done today. He was not saved by "faith only" (Romans 5:1-2; 6:3-4, 17-18. Cf. Romans 1:5; 16:26). Again, he did not "pray through to salvation" as is often argued today (Acts 9:8-9; 22:10-16; 26:15-23). Well, what did this man do? He obeyed the gospel of Christ (I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). What does obedience to the gospel of Christ involve? It required Saul to believe that Jesus is the Christ, to repent of his sins, to confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). **LET US NOTICE THE POWER OF ONE CHRISTIAN.**

(1) One Christian can be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). His whole heart and life can be wrapped up in staunch and steadfast service to the great Cause of our Lord. (Matthew 6:33).

(2) One Christian can faithfully perform his duties and meet his responsibilities to Christ and the church despite whatever hardships, persecutions, or trials that might come his way. (Philippians 4:13; Acts 20:22-24; II Corinthians 12:9-10).

(3) One Christian can engage in the preaching or teaching the truth of God to others, regardless of the obstacles or hindrances that may attend one's way (Acts 20:26-27; II Corinthians 11:22-33). Acts 8:1-4 tells of the disciples' being scattered abroad but they "went everywhere preaching the word." If one cannot teach or preach in a public way, one can support others who can. (Cf. Exodus 17:8-13).

(4) One Christian can be a source of encouragement in leading others to help relieve the real needs of the sick, the old-aged, the distressed, and the bereaved. What a great need exists for the services of both men and women to aid those who cannot help themselves! Peter went to the home of Dorcas when her body lay in an upper room surrounded by her sorrowing friends (Acts 9:36-43). Paul raised a special collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 8:1 ff; 9:1ff; Romans 15:25-28). Verily, Christians serve Christ when they serve others. (Matthew 25:31-46).

(5) One Christian can be an instrument through which the work of God is accomplished on earth (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1). Herein lies the greatness of Paul. This man realized that he could be salt, light, and leaven to a world lost in the darkness of sin. You—you—you, as a Christian can follow Paul's wonderful example of living and working and teaching for Christ (I Corinthians 15:10; II Corinthians 11:23ff; 12:15). Our modern world desperately needs your hands, your feet, your mind, and your tongue to be used as instruments of righteousness for the glory of God. (Romans 6:12-13).

(6) One Christian can control the lusts and sinful passions of the flesh (I Corinthians 9:27). One need not follow the examples of the Herods, the Achans, the Jeroboams, Jezebels and Athaliahs, and that of Ananias and Sapphira. Thank God, there are higher aspirations and nobler deeds than these! One human being, through the atoning blood of Christ, can clean himself up, keep himself clean, be faithful unto death, and claim immortal glory in the great after-a-while. No responsible human being is forced to live a dirty, filthy, foul, nasty life. Jesus came to lift man to higher planes and fairer climes. (John 14:1-6; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 22:14).

(7) One Christian can work for peace and harmony among the people of God. How terrible it is when division, fussing, quarreling, and backbiting exist among those who talk much about going to heaven!! How wonderful it is when we take "sweet counsel together, and walk unto the house of God in company" (Psalms 55:14) "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalms 133:1). Christian, be a peacemaker, not a peacebreaker! Try to still troubled waters; never, never stir up a stink!

(8) One Christian can learn to accept things as they are without undue complaint. A disease that cannot be cured must be endured. Change the things you can change; but the things you cannot change, you must somehow learn to live with. You may have a terminal disease, but, remember, life, itself is terminal. Paul, the peerless apostle, whatever his station or lot in life, whether he liked it or not, adjusted his life to that situation. (Philippians 4:1-13).

(9) One Christian can—yes, can—be faithful to Christ and to his worship and service even unto death. You can urge and exhort others to follow your example. If you cannot preach a sermon, or teach a class, or lead in prayer, or serve at the Lord's table, you can be present; you can put yourself on the Lord's side. If others refuse to be faithful, you can still be faithful to the Lord's will and way. (Titus 2:11-12; Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 10:24-25).

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort,

be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (II Corinthians 13:11).

Grace And Law

Raymond Elliott

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). We often use this verse to contrast the old Mosaic Law with the new way of grace and truth through Jesus Christ. We emphasize to our religious neighbors that we are no longer under the law of Moses but under a different system made possible by the death of our Lord. However, we must be careful that we do not leave the wrong impression in the minds of others, that is, the law of Moses was void of God's grace, or that the system of grace excludes law.

The grace of God preceeded the law of Moses and was included in it. Regardless of when a person lived in ages past, there had to be a response to the unmerited favor of God in order to receive the benefits therein. Paul declared in Romans 4:16: "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is father of all." A man was never accepted of God simply because of his race or national origin. He had to possess that faith like unto Abraham in order to be blessed by the grace of God. That type of faith motivated one to obey the commands of God. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..." (Hebrews 11:4). "By faith Noah, being warned of God...prepared an ark to the saving of his house..." (Hebrews 11:7). "By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance..." (Hebrews 11:8). These are just a few examples of faithful men who responded to God's grace as recorded in Hebrews, chapter eleven.

The grace of God was evident in the overthrow of the city of Jericho. "And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand, Jericho..." (Joshua 6:2). Now that's unmerited

favor! Joshua and the people of Israel had not done anything toward capturing the city, yet God said, "I have given into they hand, Jericho." Instructions were given from God and followed by Israel relative to what God wanted them to do. In their faith, the people marched. At the blast of the trumpets and the shout of the people, the walls of Jericho fell. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30). The works performed by Israel did not cause the city walls to fall, rather it was God's grace.

God's grace can also be seen in the curing of Naaman (II Kings 5). This man had leprosy. There was no earthly cure for this terrible disease. However, when Naaman finally obeyed the command of the prophet of God to dip seven times in the river of Jordan, "his flesh became again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (II Kings 5:14). The waters of Jordan did not cleanse him. It was when his faith motivated him to obey the command of God that the grace of the Lord was bestowed upon him.

Throughout the Old Testament the wonderful grace of our heavenly Father is clearly seen. Law does not exclude grace.

In contrast, the system of grace does not exclude law. God is the giver, salvation is the gift, and man is the recipient. No one denies that we are saved by the infinite grace of the Heavenly Father. The apostle Paul had made this truth evident in his writings: "by grace have ye been saved. . ." (Ephesians 2:5). This "grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus 2:11). We learn in Hebrews 2:9 that Christ tasted death for "every man." Does this mean that God saves man without man's having a choice in the matter? Certainly not! Jesus taught in Matthew 7:13,14 that the "many" in contrast with the "few" would be eternally lost, the reason being that man determines whether he will obey or disobey Christ.

But, someone is ready to reply, "if man has a part in his salvation, such works will nullify the grace of God." Not so! That grace of God which has appeared also instructs men to deny "ungodliness and worldly lust" and informs us how to "live

soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-14). Man has to respond to the grace of God by conforming his life to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. In Ephesians 2:8 we learn, "for by grace have ye been saved through faith" Faith is man's part in salvation. "For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace . . ." (Romans 4:16). If there is no response (faith) on the part of man, God's grace will not save. In the great Roman letter, Paul mentions "obedience of the faith" in the beginning and in the ending of this epistle (Romans 1:5; 16:26). Faith is the foundation of obedience. The faith that saves is one that obeys (Hebrews 5:8,9). It is a living, vibrant, obedient faith (James 2:24,26). While the works of the law could not justify anyone, it is a work of God that we believe on his Son (Galatians 2:16; John 6:29). The Lord requires that a man repent of sins, confess his faith in Jesus Christ and be immersed for the remission of sins (Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9;10; Mark 16:16). When, in our faith, we respond to the commands of God, we know that we have not merited salvation. Jesus taught, "Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). It is not a matter who saves but rather when God saves a man.

Paul declared that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Yes, there is law under the system of grace, and the commandments ordained of God for man to obey do not nullify his grace.

Youth and Religion

Pearly David

Youth means adolescence, or the state of being young. It comprises the tenderness and innocence of childhood and the sincerity of adulthood. Youth symbolises newness, freshness, and enthusiasm.

God is the creator of everything including man. The physical newness, freshness, and enthusiasm is the gift of God. He gives

all of this to us so that we could glorify His name through our bodies. This stage is not for pursuing worldly desires, as some have understood. Not the fulfilment of worldly desires, but God's glory should be the purpose of our youthful life.

Today's youth is far away from God and religion. When children enter this stage and become young people they begin to see the world with a different perspective. Till now they were guided by their parents in every aspect. But now young, they step into the world on their own. This is the time when one might get easily tempted by the things of the world and might easily fall prey to worldly desires, and might, therefore, lose all interest in God and religion. Many young people today do not believe in God, they know very little, if at all, about religion. Most think that religion is only for the old folks. Our schools, where the theory of evolution is being taught, are also responsible for this kind of attitude of our youths. It is being taught that all things were created as a result of an accident, which suggests that there is no God, the creator. But this is not true. Because we know that accidents cannot produce beauty and harmony which we see in the world.

The Bible tells us that there is a God who created all things in heaven and in earth. The Bible itself is the greatest evidence that there is a God. Archaeological evidences, and various scientific researches have proved beyond any doubt that the Bible is the word of God. Although the Bible is not a book of history, yet there are things written in the Bible which historically are true.

From the beginning parents should teach their children about God's existence, so that when they grow up, they would be God-fearing men and women. In the Bible we see the example of Timothy. He was taught about God from his childhood by his mother and grandmother. Therefore when he grew up, he was a faithful and God-fearing young man. When he was young, he used to teach God's word.

By following the teaching of God's word it is possible for the young people to resist temptation and the worldly lust. Young

people should so live that their youth might stay undefiled. As young people we should not only think about those things which are of physical nature, but we must also remember that God has made us both physical and spiritual, and therefore we have a soul or the spirit. Youth is the time when God expects young people to start being serious in spiritual matters. This is the time when one should seriously and regularly study God's word, the Bible.

It is easy for the young people to drift away and lose all interest in God and His word. Things that the word offers begin to look attractive, but there is nothing in the world which can save man from the eternal destruction of hell. The concept that the religion is only for the older people is totally wrong. In fact, youth is the right time when one should realize that there is a God and that we are all accountable to Him. That is the time when one needs a guide who can lead the youth in the right direction, and there is none better than, the word of God itself. As young people we need to read and study God's word daily, to be able to grow up as God-fearing and God-following men and women.

How wonderful it would be if we use our youthful freshness and enthusiasm for being eager about exploring the immeasurable treasures of God's word, where we can find in Him a true, helping and trusting friend. If we give ourselves to God in our youth then not only we will be used by God when we are young, but we will grow up to be such men and women in future whom God will use for his glory and for bringing many souls to Him. So let's decide to give ourselves to God now, while we are young.

(This article was written by a fifteen year old girl.—Ed.).