

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL

"The Lord Knoweth Them That Are His"

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Timothy 2:19).

There are many great truths in this verse, but especially note the part that says, "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

It has often been pointed out that one cannot join the church because it is Christ that makes the decision as to whether one has complied with his will or not. If the Lord sees that one has the proper motives, and that he has complied fully with his will, then he saves that person and adds him to his church. On the day of

Pentecost, after the Apostles had preached the gospel to a great gathering of people, the record says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized : and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2 : 41, 42). Concerning the one that added them, we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

The reason that a human being, or a group of human beings, even though they might claim to be Christians, cannot decide whether one can be a member of the church or not, is because all they have to go by are the outward actions of a person. They cannot look into the heart to see whether he believes or not, or if he is really obeying God from the heart. (Romans 6 : 17, 18). For this reason, the Lord has not left it up to man to decide whether one should be accepted or rejected as a member of the church. But the Lord can look into the heart and make a wise decision. (Luke 16 : 15 ; Acts 1 : 24).

Even as children of God we must accept various ones as members of the church, when really they do not belong to the Lord. All we have to go on is their outward acts of obedience, and seemingly they complied with the Lord's wishes, were added to the church, and we fellowship them. But the Lord knows those who are his, and he also knows those that are not his.

Our Father likewise knows who are his when it comes to bestowing his blessings upon his children and in hearing their prayers. As a father does not respond to all children, only his children, the same is true with our Heavenly Father in dealing with people in general. He does not recognize all of them by any means as belonging to him, and therefore he cannot and will not bestow his blessings upon them, and hear and answer their petitions, as he would and does in dealing with his own children. Even with his children, "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1 Peter 3:12).

Speaking of his children the Hebrew writer says, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which Speaketh unto you as unto

children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Hebrews 12 : 5-11).

A physical father does not gather up children that are not his to discipline them. He does, however, discipline his own children and that because he loves them. Even though it may be painful at the time, both for the father and children, still it is for their good. All of this is true of the Heavenly Father as he deals with his children.

But what will finally be the end for those that belong to the Lord and those who do not ? We are told that Christ will come back one day for those who belong to him. Christ himself promised. "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am there ye may be also." (John 14 : 1-3). In picturing how it will be on the great judgment day, Christ said that he will say, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7 : 21-23).

My brethren and friends, on the judgment day, as in this life, the Lord will know those who are his. Those that do not belong to him, or who have not been faithful, will not be able to get lost among the righteous and go on to heaven. The wicked, the unbeliever, the ones who trusted in their goodness, and even the ones who pretended to belong to the Lord, will all be singled out, rejected, and sent away into everlasting punishment. (Matthew 25 : 46).

What about you ? Are you a real, true, and genuine child of God ? Did you believe and obey the Lord from the heart ? (Acts 8 : 37, 38 ; Romans 6 : 17, 18). The Lord knows, but you should also know. If you have not obeyed God, then you need to do so while you still have the time and opportunity. These remarks are directed to those who claim to be members of the church. But if you are an unbeliever, out in the world, a good moral person, or whoever, and yet you have never named the name of Christ, and you have not obeyed the Lord, to be saved by him, and to be added to the church by him, you are encouraged to do so. (Mark 16 : 16 ; Matthew 10 : 32 ; Acts 2 : 38 ; Acts 2 : 47).

There are many who claim to belong to the Lord but they are in churches that we cannot read about in the Bible and they wear the names of men and do many things that are contrary to the scriptures. Be careful how you handle the Lord's word because Christ says that we will be judged by it. (John 12 : 48). Regardless of what man says or teaches, remember that the Lord knows those who are his.



**associate
editorial**

"So Teach Us To Number Our Days"

Another year has gone. Now we have entered in a New Year. How many more years we will live, none of us knows. Life, infact,

ends much sooner than expected. The apostle Peter says, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11). Here on earth we are as sojourners and pilgrims. We are here today, tomorrow we will be gone. God, our Creator, has "appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). The Patriarch Job has said, "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of troubles. He comes forth like a flower and fades away. He flees like a shadow and does not continue." (Job 14:1,2). Then, James wrote, "Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil." (James 4:13-16).

Recently I read the story of a certain man who was told by the doctor that he had only a few more months to live. Last year a young and a faithful member in our congregation died. He was only twenty one years old. Thank God he died a Christian. You see, death is no respecter of a person. All who are born must die one day. Centuries ago Moses in his prayer to God has said, "The days of our lives are seventy years: And if by reason of strength they are eighty years. Yet their boast is only labour and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of your anger? For as the fear of you so is your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:10-12).

What if you come to know that you have only this year to live? WHAT WOULD YOU DO? Would your life style change? Who would you have FIRST in your life? Self or God? Would you continue to live as you want to live or you would change and start living as God wants you to live? Would the way you spend your time be different? Would you read your Bible daily? Would you spend more time daily with God in prayer? Would you attend all services of the church and give more time to hearing of God's word? And what about your attitude toward

others ? Would it change ? You would certainly want to be much humble in dealing with others. You would want to forgive every one. You would be more loving and kind. Wouldn't you? Certainly, you would. Then, also, what about your money or your earthly possessions ? Would you still like to accumulate as you have been doing lately ? Would you like to put your trust in them ? Would you still like to cling to the things that you have accumulated through the years ? Or you would want to give your money for God's work, for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ ? Would you change if you come to know that you have only this year to live ? And, yet, we do not know the time of our departure ! May God give us a heart of wisdom that we might learn to number our days.

Faith

Thomas Premanandam

TRUST, BELIEF and FAITH are synonymous terms.

The traveller puts his trust in the driver for his safe conduct to the destination : hence the word TRUST expresses reliance and confidence. Trust is also the language of the Old Testament. 'Trust in the Lord' was the exhortation frequently given to Israel by the prophets.

Belief expresses the act of the mind or intellect and is the language of the New Testament. This word describes the initial reaction of a man who recognises Christ as the Son of God and man's Saviour. The miracles wrought by Jesus have this human belief as the basis.

FAITH is the indubitable and unquestioning confidence, the full signification of which is brought out by the Biblical definition : "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11 : 1).

Christianity is not a system of moral rules nor of speculative and ideal doctrines but a system of faith. This cannot be experimentally demonstrated nor can it be proved by mathematical calculation. The belief in the existence of heaven, hell and angels is based upon faith. Again the belief in the teaching of the

Apostles regarding the birth, ministry, crucifixion resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the redemption and eternal inheritance promised by HIM and the promise of His coming again-all these facts points to the historic faith in His teaching and promises.

As such FAITH is to believe what we do not see and the reward of this faith is the ability to see what we believe. This is the unique privilege of a Christian. Implicit obedience to the testimony of the Apostles and men of God strengthens this Faith in His promises.

In our study of the subject, we come across three categories of men possessing three different measures (degrees) of faith. At the early stage of Christian experience, we have a tendency to believe only when we have a sign or manifestation of feeling. We desire to feel our fleece like Gideon and if it is wet, we are willing to lay our trust in God.

This measure of faith is imperfect and weak. In the absence of favourable emotions or an answer to a prayer fervently made, it is possible for this faith to weaken further because it is not rooted in the word of God. (Rom 10 : 17). It is usually the case with the new converts to Christianity who may be compared to the seed that fell on the rocky ground and they donot seem to realise that without faith they cannot please God. (Heb. 11 : 6).

The second measure (degree) of faith is the FAITH that exists even in the absence of any feeling and remains unperturbed as long as life is normal and smooth and when affluence and opulence embrace the man of this Faith. They may be called sunny-weather Christians whose lukewarm faith turns cold when problems of life, trials and temptations assail their life. Instead of exercising faith, they lose hold on the promises of God and forget that Faith deals with supernaturals turning the impossibles into possibles. That God can open up a path through the Red Sea when there is no human way out, is no longer a matter of faith with them. At this juncture, the balance is lost : they have not the stability enough to walk by faith. Since their life of faith is shipwrecked, they drift away rudderless along the current of the world ultimately falling from the grace of God.

The third measure (degree) of faith is the faith of one that takes God at His word. This unshakeable faith which may be called the Faith of Adherence, establishes an unbreakable bond between human frailty and the divine might. This faith remains steady and steadfast even when the circumstances, emotions and reasons urge to the contrary. It lives and grows when joy has fled and all else is cold and dead. Again when life passes through excruciating experience, this faith of adherence assumes the dimensions of a heroic faith and shields the soul from the onslaughts discouragement and despair and interprets the dark clouds as emblems of God's grace.

Church history provides a multitude of examples of heroic faith. Polycarp who lived in the second century was bound to a stake to be burnt to death. The Roman Governor promised release on condition of his renouncing allegiance to Jesus and accepting the lordship of Caesar, the Emperor of Rome. But the threats of fire could not break the 86 years old man's unshakeable faith in Jesus. In the midst of consuming flames, he cried aloud. "Jesus, my Saviour and Lord, I am a Christian." This is the living example of a crowning faith of heroism.

The writer of this article has had the privilege of experiencing negative blessings including the loss of dear ones. He accepted them as challenges to his faith in God and as invitations to undergo a further course in the school of divine discipline. His faith is the faith of optimism held by Habakkuk in the midst of gloom and despair that after destruction by Babylon Judah would have glorious future although it may be a long way off.

Faith may also be defined as "the sinner's acceptance of a position of total and unconditional dependance upon the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ and on nothing else now and for eternity."

Abraham's faith involved absolute and total dependance on God—a courageous faith that took God at His word in the midst of impossibilities. Every step of his, in the long march from his native village was directed by faith of dependance. In other words Abraham walked by faith. Faith demands continued, total

dependence on the grace of God irrespective of vicissitudes of life and one who has this faith turns failures into victories and marches along from victory to victory in his pilgrimage to the city of God.

It is for each one of us to examine whether we have the Faith of total dependence on God which finally blossoms into a Faith of perfect adherence unto HIM. We boast of decades of Christian culture with a status in society and a place of recognition in the church. But if we are not in Faith of adherence, we are but pictures and we stir not a whit. We seem to grow in bulk like a banian tree, old and sere, ultimately to fall a log to be consumed by fire. We live but our life is not fruitful: we preach but our witness is not effective: we serve but our service is not sealed with the divine approval: we give but the giving is not prompted by heartfelt gratitude. Our faith is hardly demonstrated in acts of love: hence that faith is counted as dead. (James 2:17).

Apostle Paul had this faith of adherence: he declared that neither the ill-winds of the world nor the power above could cut asunder the children of God from His eternal and marvellous love. (Rom. 8:35,38,39).

We confess that faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ saved us, saves us and will save us. Since salvation is a process, not static but dynamic, the Faith of Adherence must also be living, progressive and operative and we need to turn this Faith of Adherence to appropriating Faith which appropriates the word of God as our possession and the kingdom of God as our inheritance.

Some one has said, When faith goes to the market, it always takes with it a basket.

The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ!

Dillard Thurman

Of all the characters moving and speaking in literature, Jesus of Nazareth, who is Christ, the Son of God, stands all alone! He is unique and incomparable! Those men sent to apprehend Jesus returned to report: "Never man spake like this man." (Jno. 7:46).

After Jesus finished His sermon on the mount, "the people were astonished at his doctrine : for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Mt. 7:28). As the Son of God, He knew what should be said on every occasion! He came from God to speak His Word, and there was never an indecision! Never one time did Jesus Christ express an opinion. Never, did He say, "This is my considered judgment." He never took a poll to see which was the right side to choose! Rather, He often said, "Ye have heard that it was said . . . But I say unto you," and gave no higher authority than Himself! He did not argue the point. He stated truth plainly and forcefully, then passed on to other matters just as important in revealing God unto man !

Jesus Christ Unique in Authority!

Jesus was unique as a prophet for God had so decreed. Even to Moses, God had promised : "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. 18:18). There is no room to doubt of whom this was spoken, for the Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter, applied these words to Christ (Acts 3:22-23). John the Baptist also attested to this in saying, "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God : for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (Jno. 3:34). Jesus, having the Spirit of God without measure, could speak definitively and authoritatively on all things spiritual! Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, said to Him : "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou does except God be with him." (Jno. 3-2). God bare witness of His approval!

Jesus Unique as God's Prophet !

Jesus claimed this relationship with the Father : "I speak that which I have seen with my Father", and "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself : but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (Jno. 8:38; 14:10). And again, "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (Jno. 7:16). Jesus Christ could speak authoritatively of things both in heaven and in earth; and projected His words

into the future when all men must face them again : "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (Jno. 12:48-49). No other holds such power [authority]; but He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Mt. 28:18). He retains that power till He returns : "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father : when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (1 Cor. 15:24-25).

Jesus Unique in Fulfilled Prophecy !

Jesus was unique in His claims of fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. To the Jews, He said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of me." And then He added : "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me." (Jno. 5:39, 46). How audacious for one to make such claim; that Moses had written of Him hundreds of year before; but not for Him who was the Son of God! Where had Moses written of Him? Check back even to Gen. 3:15, where you find the first prophecy concerning Him; Or in Gen. 12:3; 22:18; then turn to read this fulfilled : "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. 3:16). Further, He quoted Isa. 6:1 when He spake in the synagogue at His home in Nazareth, showing the wondrous things He was doing (Lk. 4:16-19). Then to show that He fulfilled this prophecy, He concluded : "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Lk. 4:21). Peter also recognized His fulfillment of prophecy on preaching to the Jews. (Acts 3:22).

Unique in Power to Give Life !

Jesus said, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," but this life was not forced on any who did not believe in Him! His indictment was, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (Jno. 5:36, 40). Again He said, "For the bread of God is he which cometh

down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." But lest they should misunderstand, He plainly told them : "I am the bread of life." (Jno. 6:33, 48). That was His mission to the world : "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (Jno. 10:10). Jesus told Martha before raising Lazarus : "I am the resurrection and the life." (Jno. 11:25). And then demonstrated His power in saying, "Lazarus, come forth!" After telling His disciples of mansions awaiting them, He then assured them : "I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jno. 14:6). The life-giving power is epitomized in Paul's statement, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20). Read the glorious summation in Col. 3:1-4! What an assurance is given in these words, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life. (1 Jno. 5:11).

Unique Assurance in Resurrection !

Jesus was unique in that He alone has come forth from death by internal power! By this He "was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:4). Jesus was unique in that He foretold His death, and promised to live again! For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." (Mk. 9:31). This His disciples didn't understand, and were afraid to ask Him (v. 32). Earlier Jesus had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again." The Jews didn't understand this at all, "But he spake of the temple of his body." (Jno. 2:19, 21). Even though the Jews failed to understand, they did not forget! This one statement was remembered by them till the time of His crucifixion. (Mt. 26:61; 27:40; Mk. 14:58; 15:29). Jesus was unique in that He claimed this power : "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (Jno. 10:17-18). Paul proclaimed this truth. (Acts 17:3).

Jesus Unique in His Coming Again !

The Lord spake of His return in no uncertain terms : "Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (Jno. 5:28-29). Consider the unique claim of One who says He will return after death, burial, resurrection, and His going to the Father! He painted this picture of the end of the world : "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Mt. 13:41-42). Jesus promised to return "from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Paul's words in 2 Thes. 1:7-8). It will be when He returns that Jesus will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But He will then say to the lost, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt. 25:34, 41). Friend, are you ready for the unique event : the Lord's return ? We must strive to be prepared to meet Him ! "Therefore be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Mt. 24:44).

The Fruits Of Alcoholism

W. A. Holley

Who hath woe ? who hath sorrow ?
who hath contentions ?

Who hath complaining ? who hath
wounds without cause ?

Who hath redness of eyes ?

They that tarry long at the wine;

They that go to seek out mixed wine.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,

When it sparklet in the cup,
 When it goeth down smoothly :
 At the last it biteth like a serpent,
 And stingeth like an adder.
 Thine eyes shall behold strange things,
 And thy heart shall utter perverse things.
 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down
 in the midst of the sea,
 Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
 They have stricken me, shalt thou say,
 and I was not hurt;
 They have beaten me, and I felt it not :
 When shall I awake ? I will seek it
 yet again.

—Proverbs 23:29-35, ASV.

Alcoholism is one of our greatest dangers today. Millions upon millions of dollars are spent each year to promote its consumption : Liquor, wine and beer. The breweries and distilleries cannot sell enough of their mind-wrecking and health-destroying products. These sellers of alcohol are now using beautiful girls and handsome young men in their advertisements as if these young people represented the end result of a life given over to alcoholic drunkenness. If one would see the true picture of what drinking alcohol does to people, whether young or old, let one look into the homes of alcoholics and see frightened children, battered husbands or wives, and the true picture will begin to emerge. Let one look further along skid-row and see all the human wreckage, degradation, and demoralization exhibited in the consumers of alcohol. Let one look in the jails and penitentiaries where countless thousands are there because of crimes committed through the influence of alcohol.

One woman said, My husband is an alcoholic. So are two of his brothers. And a grandfather. I know the odds are against my daughter," who is now only four years of age ! The alcoholic influence is so strong in some homes it is almost impossible to shield our children from it." Another mother remembers that the first words ever spoken by her son were : "Mommy," "Daddy," and "whiskey." It is well-know that the children of alcoholics are

subjected to great violence, nerve-wracking tensions instability, and unpredictability in their homes. There can be no greater measure of child abuse!!

Is the danger real? It certainly is! The statistics are indeed grim. Sons of alcoholics are four times more likely to become alcoholics than sons of non-alcoholics; daughters are three times more likely, we are informed. And daughters of alcoholics are more likely to marry alcoholics, according to the latest information.

Many parents refuse to admit that alcohol is a problem in their homes. But parents need to remember that their children learn by example. When parents keep alcohol—wine—beer—whiskey—in their homes, they can expect their children to follow their example. It would be unreasonable to think otherwise. In fact, thousands of children suffer from alcoholism which they learned from their parents in their own homes. It is a myth to think they are too young to know, since they are living with it every day. Many children recognize its danger. One little girl said, "I poured out Mommy's wine."

But the liquor industry is unhappy with its sales. The liquor distillers cannot sell enough of their product to satisfy them. They claim that raising the drinking age, the passage of tough drunken-driving laws in several countries and states, the scrapping of "happy hours," by many bars and restaurants, and stepped-up road-checks by police seeking to spot intoxicated drivers cuts too deeply into their sales. The liquor distillers also complain that a reduction in the hours during which alcoholic beverages can be sold, plus a planned increase in taxes limits unfairly their profits. Thus, greed, cupidity and covetousness, characterize the alcoholic beverage distillers. They are little concerned with what harm is done to the consumers of their products. If it were within their power, they would happily double (or quadruple!) the consumption of liquor; wine, and beer, even if the whole nation should become drunken!

To prove our contention, we shall quote from an American newspaper article printed in *The Birmingham News*, July 5, 1985.

"The distillers say that the measures taken are part of a growing anti-alcohol climate that has caused U.S. per capita consumption to fall from a peak of 2 gallons in 1979 to 1.8 gallons last year. Distillers also are suffering a decline in their share of alcoholic beverage sales."

The article continues : "According to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, liquor sales between 1969 and 1983 slipped from 50.5 per cent to 34.1 per cent of total retail spending for alcoholic beverages. During the period, wine sales grew from 6.5 per cent to 12.3 per cent of the total, and beer sales grew from 43 per cent to 53.6 per cent."

Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, the nation's largest distiller, has become so alarmed over its declining sales, it has decided to spend \$5 million for the purposes of "image-enhancement." What is needed is not better "image-enhancement," but the complete cessation of the production of all alcoholic beverages! Only then can the great harm through drinking of alcoholic beverages be stopped!!

The truth is : Alcohol is alcohol. "A 12-ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine (12 per cent alcohol by volume), and a 1^{1/2} ounce shot of 80-proof spirits are all about equally intoxicating" (Consumer Reports, July, 1983).

Think of the cost of alcoholic advertising! Who pays the bill ? Well, the consumer does!! Think of it! "Advertising in almost all media (money spent) rose from \$92.7 million in 1972 to \$406.5 million in 1982—an increase of 338 per cent." (Ibid).

We understand that pouring millions of dollars into advertising to convince people to buy a product is as American as apple pie. But alcoholic beverages are not apple pie, or soap, or toothpaste. Alcoholic beverages can and do harm those who drink, and countless thousands who suffer the consequences of those who become drunken.

Like cigarette advertisers, alcohol advertisers are quick to protest that their increased spending is merely intended to introduce new products or to gain a larger share of the market. The

alcohol apologists say that the ads do not encourage young people to start drinking. Who can believe it? We know that advertising does increase and encourage drinking. If it were otherwise, why would General Motors, or Ford, or Chrysler, spend millions to advertise their products??

BUT, Dear Reader, do not be deceived by deceptive, delusory, and fallacious advertising. Alcoholic beverages do not make one a successful athlete, or business-person, or the like. Drunkenness is drunkenness—regardless of by what name it is called! Those who think that drinking alcohol is a deserved reward for a hard day's work are foolish indeed!

The Saving Name

W. Edwin Kearley

In Peter's defense before the supreme court of the Jews, he said, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, where-by we must be saved." (Acts 4:11-12). This "stone," which they had set aside, is Christ. Peter was saying their accusers had set aside their only hope of salvation. They could expect no higher authority than Christ Jesus.

The Psalmist makes a prophetic statement about THE STONE. He wrote, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner" (Psalm. 118:22). We have seen in Peter's statement (above) the fulfillment of this prophetic statement. The Jews were the builders. They were erecting the building of their national life. When they came to Jesus, they found no place for him.

They rejected all which Jesus in mercy offered them. Jesus said, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, BECAUSE MY WORD HATH NO PLACE IN YOU" (John 8:37). The same rejection today keeps many from the salvation found in Christ. They rejected his reign. They looked for an earthly reign, and he offered a spiritual reign. He pleaded, "O

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" (Luke 13:34). Jesus offered the abundant life. He said, "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus said of their response, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5:40).

Christ is A CHOSEN STONE and "was made the head of corner" (Acts 4:11). The blunder of the Jewish builders did not hinder the plan of the Almighty. Christ was and is the living stone (I Peter 2:4, 16). Angels sang at his birth (Luke 2:14). He was shielded in His infancy (Matthew 2:13-23). He was acknowledged by the Father (Matthew 3:13-17). He was approved by his miracles (Acts 2:22). He was transfigured on the "Holy Mount" (Matthew 17:1-8). He was raised from the sealed tomb (Romans 1:4). He was laid in Zion for a foundation (Isaiah 26:16).

He is the STONE OF SALVATION. In "none other name" is there salvation (Acts 4:12). 1. He is our example to guide us (I Peter 2 : 21-23). He is our high priest to atone for us (Hebrews 9:24). 3. He is our advocate to intercede for us (I John 2:1-2). 4. He is our mediator to stand between us and God (I Timothy 2:5). 5. It is through him alone that we have certainty of a happy immortality, (II Timothy. 1:10).

Those who are building upon the sand have need of this stone. He offers security no other can provide. He only has the power to give eternal salvation.

Unto all who live in obedience to his word, he is the author of eternal salvation. (Hebrews 5:8-9).

"Let There be no Denominations"

Clem Thurman

When the apostle Paul came to Corinth, he found a most unique city : a commercial seaport, a "melting pot" of humanity

of that era, a people diverse in both background and interests. When the gospel was preached there, "Many of the Corinthians, hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). Thus the church of the Lord was begun in Corinth, and Paul stayed about two years to strengthen and build up the church. But after the apostle's departure, a number of problems arose, one of the first, and most serious was division. "Each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (I Cor. 1:12). Believers began to divide into "groups" and denominated themselves after Paul, Apollos or Peter (I Cor. 1:12) — a situation much like this is found in the religious world today.

No, I know that I Cor. 1:10 doesn't read exactly like our title, but the meaning is there; "Now I beseech you brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." These were denominations, in any sense of that word. Thus God, by the apostle Paul, is addressing a condition that might be found in your city today. Had you asked any of those who said, "I am of Paul," I am sure they would have said that they were Christians—but they were Christians of "this particular faith," or they were "this kind of Christian." They were divided and denominated themselves, and it is in this context that they were told, "Let there be no divisions among you." (I Cor. 1:10).

Because of this denominational condition in Corinth, Paul asks three questions that strike at the heart of such division. These questions were designed to bring all of these believers out of the sectarian, denominational spirit and back into the unity of the one body of Christ. They are found in I Cor. 1:13.

"Is Christ Divided?"

Jesus prayed for unity of all believers, "That they may all be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John 17:20-21). The Lord never planned, nor desired, that His people should be divided. He forcefully taught, "Every kingdom divided against itself is, brought to desolation" (Matt. 12:25).

The apostles likewise taught the necessity of unity in Christ. (Eph. 4:1-6; Jude 3; etc.). It was much later in human history than man conceived the idea that division didn't matter and that it was fine for each to have "the church of his choice." Look around you. On nearly any corner is found a group that claims to follow Christ, yet is different from all other groups who make the same claim—in doctrine, faith, organization, worship, etc. And to separate themselves from those others, they "denominate" (or "name") themselves with a designation whose purpose is to separate and divide them from others.

But, "Is Christ divided?" The whole system of denominationalism is based on the idea that Christ is divided, and that He is with each of these denominations. But can anyone honestly believe that Christ is with one denomination teaching one thing, and is in another denomination teaching the exact opposite? Is Christ opposing Himself (Matt. 12:25) by participations that oppose each other? That is the very point Paul makes when he asks, "Is Christ divided? It deserves an answer from every person who believes denominationalism is approved of Christ.

Some in Corinth could have protested, "We are not dividing Christ, we are only dividing ourselves." But they knew better. Christ and His church are one (Eph. 5:22-23), and what is done in the church is done to Christ. When Saul was persecuting the church (Acts 8:3), Jesus asked him, "Why persecutest thou me?" To seek to divide the church is to divide Christ. I believe that his question, honestly faced by all, would forever destroy denominationalism. It is clear that Christ cannot be divided. Believers may depart from Christ, but they cannot divide Him and make Him oppose Himself.

"Was Paul Crucified for You?"

It was announced before His birth, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from sins" (Matt. 1:21). He became the means of our salvation by His death on the cross (Heb. 2:9; Heb. 9:22; Col. 1:18-22), and the apostles said of Him: "In none other is there salvation" (Heb. 4:12). They preached "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (Acts 2:22-24, 36; I Cor. 2:1-2), for there is no other Savior. Yet here in Corinth believers were

calling themselves after the name of Paul; So Paul asked them, "Was Paul crucified for you? The implication is clear. Only Christ died for you, only Christ can save. Therefore all should follow Christ and honor Christ by wearing the name of Christ.

The principle of following only Christ is everywhere taught in the word of God. Peter and John said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye . . . For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).

They told the rulers, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:28). The apostle John declared that "we have not God" when we go beyond the teaching of Christ (2 John 9). And later in his letter to Corinth, Paul wrote, "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sake; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written" (I Cor. 4:6). Don't follow anyone who was not crucified for you. Don't wear the name of anyone who didn't die to save you.

"Were You Baptized Into The Name of Paul?"

The apostles never knew "there is nothing in a name," as many today declare. In fact, they knew better! The "name of Jesus Christ" denotes His authority, so that whatever we do is to be authorized by Christ: "In word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). When believers on Pentecost cried out, "What shall we do?" they were told, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). The household of Cornelius was commanded "to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:48). And when Paul found some who had been baptized with the baptism of John the Baptist, he taught them of Christ and His authority, and "they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). It would have been difficult to convince any of those people that there is nothing in a name!

The implications of this question show the importance of

baptism. Baptism is essentially into a name. And you don't have the right to wear a name unless you were baptized into it. When people were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, they were called "Christians" (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). But, Paul argues, they have no right to wear Paul's name. The "one baptism" (Acts 8:36-38; Eph. 4:5) made them one with Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26-27), and it was the name of Christ that then was to be worn to glorify God. (I Peter 4:16).

To show the need for unity, Paul speaks of baptism. Why? Believers are "baptized into the death of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:3), in order that the blood of Jesus should "wash away" their sins (Acts 22:16). This same baptism is "into Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), where we are made one in Him (Eph. 2:14-16). Thus, all who are "baptized into the name of Jesus" (Acts 19:5) are "baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13), which is the church. (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). To show their relationship with Christ and with other Christians, Paul uses baptism in the name of Jesus. That should show the importance of both baptism and unity in Christ.

"Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?" These are three great questions. The Lord never intended that believers in Him should be divided into four hundred different groups. Denominationalism today is no more right than it was in Corinth 1900 years ago. It was wrong then, it is wrong now. Let us determine to lay aside all denominational loyalties and be one with Christ and with all those who believe in Christ. Let us reject every human creed, every human name and every human doctrine that separates us. Let us determine to be a member of the one body, the church, that we read about in the Bible, and be members of no other. Then, and only then, can we be united "in the same mind and in the judgment" (I Cor. 1:10).

Are you in the Light or in Darkness?

Basil Overton

There is a sort of introduction to the New Testament book

called John in its first chapter. In that prologue, Jesus is presented as "the light that shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:5) Comprehended of this passage is from Greek *katelaben* which is also translated *overtook*.

In reading the book of John it can be clearly seen that the darkness of ignorance, unbelief, and sin did not overtake, or extinguish the light that shone into it. The power of darkness seemed to triumph over Jesus the light, when his corpse was laid in the Arimathean counselor's tomb. But, soon the sealed tomb yielded up the body of Jesus when God raised him from the dead, and the light burst brilliantly into the darkness again.

HE THAT DOETH TRUTH COMETH TO THE LIGHT

In chapter three of his book, John affirmed again that Jesus the light came into the world, when he wrote, "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest that they are wrought in God." (John 3:19-21).

Truth as defined in the New Testament is that system of teaching which is equated with the gospel. Paul calls it "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." (Ephesians 1:13). It follows that "he that doeth truth" is he that doeth the gospel! Or, obeying the truth is the same as obeying the gospel.

Peter wrote of this when he wrote to Christians, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with the pure heart fervently. (1 Peter 1:22). He that obeys the truth is he that doeth truth. He that doeth truth cometh to the light. Therefore he that obeys the truth is he that cometh to the light. Jesus is that light, so he that obeys the truth is he that comes to Jesus!

OBEYING THE TRUTH AND BEING BORN AGAIN

After Peter reminded Christians they had their souls purified by obeying the truth, he continued the sentence by writing. "... being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1:23).

This verse equates being born again by the word of God with having souls purified by "obeying the truth through the Spirit" of the previous verse. The truth was given through men who spoke as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, and Peter was one of them. (John 16:12, 13; Acts 2:1-4). The truth is the word of God (John 17:17), so this all means that when one obeys the truth to become a Christian, or to have his soul purified, he is born again of the incorruptible seed which is the word of God !

THE SAME THING STATED THREE WAYS

From what has been stated above it is obvious that doing the truth to come to the light and being born again of the word of God are the same. This is in perfect harmony with Jesus saying in John 3:5 that in order to be born again one must be born of water and the Spirit. It follows also that believing in Christ as stated in John 3:16 embraces obeying the truth, and being born of water and the Spirit.

Being born of water and the Spirit obviously refers to being baptized in water as the Spirit directs in the truth. This is why Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . ." (Mark 16:16.) It is also why a man who spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance (Acts 2:4) told convicted sinners who believed the truth about Christ to "repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38).

Those who had their souls purified by the Lord by their obeying the truth (1 Peter 1:22) were saved by baptism. (1 Peter

3:21). Obviously, Peter did not mean they were not saved by Jesus when they obeyed him by being baptized. Baptism saved them in the sense that in order for them to be saved by Jesus they had to be baptized in obedience to him.

YOU CAN HAVE "THE LIGHT OF LIFE"

If one follows, or obeys Jesus, he shall have the light of life. "Then spoke Jesus unto them saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12).

Regardless of how much one knows and think he is in the light, he is really in darkness if he does not follow Jesus. Following Jesus in order to have the light of life is a way of saying one must obey Jesus to be in spiritual light instead of in spiritual darkness.

THE MAN WHO HAD NOT SEEN LIGHT

In John chapter nine is the story of a man blind from his birth. He had not seen literal light in all his life. Jesus demonstrated that he was able to give spiritual light by enabling that blind man to see literal light. He said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:5). The next two verses say, "When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

This does not mean there was power in the water of the pool of Siloam to open blind eyes. It does mean Jesus had power to open blind eyes. He opened the blind man's eyes when the blind man did what he told him to do.

NO POWER IN THE WATER OF BAPTISM EITHER

When one is baptized in water in obedience to Christ, he

receives remission or forgiveness of his sins. However, there is no power in the water of baptism to remove sins. But, when one is obedient to Christ by being baptized as he says, Christ forgives all his sins.

What the blind man did in obedience to Christ in order to receive sight was not meritorious. He did not earn having his eyes opened by his obedience. Even so, in our obedience to Christ we do not earn salvation from sin, but he gives us salvation when we are obedient. It is not possible for us to do enough to earn salvation from our sins, and a home in heaven, but to have salvation and to go to heaven we must be obedient to God.

THE TRUTH IS PRECIOUS

The truth that saves is a perfectly harmonious system of doctrine. The truth is precious indeed. Study the Bible and learn more and more about it. If you have not obeyed it in order to have your soul purified, or in other words to be born again, you should hasten to do so !

The Bible — There it Stands !

Edsel Burleson

No book has influenced the lives of more people, small and great, as has the Bible. Sir Isaac Newton once said : "There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history."

Many people today reject the Bible as being merely the product of men seeking to find God and the meaning of life. In spite of relentless attacks of atheism, infidelity and materialism, the Bible continues its triumphant march.

Isaac Taylor wrote : "The deathless book has survived three great dangers : the negligence of its friends; the false systems built around it; and the warfare of those who have hated it."

Well did the prophet say, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of God shall stand forever." (Isaiah 40:8.) The Master assured us, "Heaven and earth shall pass away" but my words shall not pass away (Matthew 24:35).

LOOK magazine, December 22, 1959, contained an article by Dr. Nelson Glueck, outstanding archaeologist, entitled, "The Untold Story of Christ's World." In it he wrote, "In exploring the ancient sites and civilizations of the Negev during the past Several years, I have always gone with Bible in hand, and with utter confidence in its historical descriptions and clues. My unvarying experience has been that the statements in the Bible, when properly understood and evaluated, are absolutely reliable, although their shorthand is sometimes perplexing and another times still incomprehensible. Firm belief in the validity of the Bible has led me from one astonishing discovery to another . . .

Time and time again, in my own experience and that of others, Biblical descriptions or hints, contained often in seemingly legendary accounts, have been confirmed by archaeological discoveries or have led to them."

A.Z. Conrad paid this tribute to the Bible :

Century follows century — There it stands.

Empires rise and fall and are forgotten — There it stands.

Dynasty follows dynasty — There it stands.

Kings are crowned and uncrowned — There it stands.

Despised and torn to pieces — There it stands.

Storms of hate swirl about it — There it stands.

Atheists rail against it — There it stands.

Agnostics smile cynically — There it stands.

Profane punsters caricature it — There it stands.

Unbelief abandons it — There it stands.

Higher critics deny its inspiration — There it stands.

Thunderbolts of wrath smite it — There it stands.

An anvil that has broken a million hammers —
There it stands.

The flames are kindled about it — There it stands.

The arrows of hate are discharged against it —
There it stands.

Radicalism rants and raves against it — There it stands.

Fogs of sophistry conceal it temporarily — There it stands.

The tooth of time gnaws but makes no dints in it —
There it stands.

Infidels predict its abandonment — There it stands.

Modernism tries to explain it away — There it stands.

Well did Moncrief say :

"The Book of God will stand secure
When sun and stars decline;

Its ageless truths will still endure
To prove its Source divine."

