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EDITORIAL

What is Your Choice?

Yet another year has passed and a new year has been added to this fast vanishing century. Time is a great blessing to each one of us. So a new year in our lives is a blessing. But with every blessing comes the responsibility also. Now that God has given us more time, how are we going to spend it? From the beginning God has given man the power of choice. Each one of us can choose or make a choice. At Galatians 6:7 & 8 the apostle Paul wrote this warning: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." The day will come when time, as we know of, will cease to exist and will vanish away into eternity. That day will be the day of the Lord and the day of reckoning and the day of reaping. We will reap then what we are sowing now. Jesus pointed out, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (John 5:28, 29).

The most important choice that one can make any time in life is the choice of giving one's life to Christ; accepting Him as the Lord of life. This means then that if you are going to choose to follow Christ, then you will give God the first place in your life as Christ did; you are going to love others as He did; forgive others as He did, and live your life on earth to glorify God as Christ lived. By turning our lives over to Jesus and by accepting Him as the Lord of our lives, we become a new

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creation in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christ helps us, as we try to emulate His life, to bear the fruit of the Spirit and thus to live lives acceptable to God. What we do with Christ in our lives makes a great difference. We can choose to reject Him, or we can choose to accept and follow Him. Each one of us must make that choice individually in this life. Hear: "I am the way, the truth, and the life," said Jesus, "No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6). So if we want to choose to go to the Father in heaven after this life of earth is over then there is no other choice besides Jesus.

With another year leaving us, we have come more closer to the reality of death and judgment. For many this is going to be the last year of their existence on earth. And, surely, none of us can boast about tomorrow, for we do not know what a day may bring forth. But we do have a kind and loving God, who is longsuffering and is not willing that any should perish in sin but that all should come to repentance, as Peter wrote at 2nd Peter 3:9. Thanks be to Him for this another new year. And let us use it wisely, making the right choice. Sincerely, wishing you a happy New Year.

What It Means to Be Lost

J.C. CHOATE

Have you ever been lost? I mean physically lost. If you have, you know it is a terrible feeling. Or have you ever seen a child lost from his parents? You can just see the fear in his eyes and hear sobbing cries for help. But as bad as all of that may be, it is nothing like being lost spiritually. Of course if one is not aware of his lost condition then at least for the time being he may feel quite content and happy. But imagine what it would be to realize later in life that you are lost. At least, though, you would be in position to take action and prepare to meet God. But the saddest case of all is that one who learns only at the judgment that he is eternally lost, and at that point there is no escape.

To help us realize what it means to be lost, we want to think about one's lost condition, what the lost person is giving up, or what he will miss, and the consequences that will have to be endured because of his decision. Surely after one gives these matters fully consideration, he will have second thoughts about remaining in such a state.

When one is lost, or unsaved, it means that he is in sin. Are people born as sinners, or in sin? No. On reaching the age of accountability, of

knowing right from wrong, one becomes a sinner. The Apostle John tells us that all unrighteousness is sin. (1 John 5:17). He also says sin is of the devil (1 John 3:8) and that sin is the transgression of the law. (1 John 3:4). A sinner, then, is a law breaker, one who does those bad things that we read about in the Bible: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21). But what about the one who is living a good moral life? He, too, is a sinner because no human is perfect. The good moral person is trusting in his own goodness to save him, rather than turning to God, but such goodness will not take away his sins. No man is *good enough* to save himself.

To be lost means that one is in darkness. Darkness is mentioned many times in the scriptures to represent sin and all that is bad and evil. It is contrasted with light. But imagine being in literal darkness for all of one's life. Think of the many beautiful and wonderful things that would be missed. But what about spiritual darkness? How terrible to live one's entire life in spiritual darkness, and finally to be cast into outer darkness eternally. (Ephesians 5:11; 1 John 2:9; 2 Peter 2:4). That is what it means to be lost!

When one is spiritually lost he is without God. Isaiah said, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened; that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:1,2). Peter said, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." (1 Peter 3:12). What a terrible thought to be without God for even one second in one's life. How could one live like that? But think about the possibility of dying without God. How tragic!

If one is lost, it is because he is without Christ, outside of Christ. This means that he is rejecting the one who came to save him, the one who died to cleanse him from his sins. It means that one is still in his sins, that he is deprived of all of the spiritual blessings that are in Christ. The Lord said, "And ye will not come to me, that you might have life." (John 5:40). That statement sums up the whole matter of being lost. When one refuses to come to Christ, he cannot be saved.

No sinner can be saved as long as he refuses to obey the gospel

of Christ. Jesus commanded the apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16). There are many who claim to be saved even though they have not obeyed the gospel, but Jesus says they are not saved. No one can be saved without submitting to the Lord in obedience.

Being outside of the church is equal to being without Christ and salvation, which means that the person is lost. Paul says, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." (Ephesians 5:23). Note that the scripture says that Christ is the saviour of the body, but what is the body? The same writer says that it is the church. (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18). This means that regardless of what people say about the church, in order to be saved one must be a part of it—a part of the body of which Christ is the saviour. If one is not a member, he is lost. Christ will return one day to receive his kingdom or church, and then he will deliver it up to God. (Ephesians 5:27; 1 Corinthians 15:24). What will happen if one is not a part of the church or kingdom at that time? The scriptures are saying that being left out, he will be eternally lost.

When one is lost he is without hope. He cannot save himself and neither can any man or man-made system save him. As one lives in an unsaved state, he is lost, and then if he dies in that lost condition he will be without hope eternally. There will not be any second chance or any way of escape. He will live with Satan and all of the wicked in hell for all eternity. We read, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8). Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians that at one time they had been without hope and without God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12). Can we even begin to imagine what that would be like? I believe if we could, we would not want to go on living that way for another second.

What has been said here is actually just a small glimpse of what it is like to be lost. If you are living in that condition, how we pray that you will make a change immediately. As you are, you have everything to lose and nothing to gain. But how easy it would be to reverse your situation if you will only believe in the Lord and obey his will. He will save you, add you to his church, or family, and give you the hope of eternal life. We pray that you will do this while you still have the time and opportunity. Remember that tomorrow may be too late.

"Children Need Teachers"

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

Since the beginning of Jesus' church, Christians have met regularly each first day of the week—Sunday—to worship God. We read, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42).

Of course, the first purpose of the assembly is to worship and praise God. Secondly, it is a time of study and encouragement for Christians. We are commanded, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Colossians 3:16).

We also read that when Paul the apostle visited the church at Troas, ". . . when the disciples came together to break bread [the communion of the Lord's Supper], Paul . . . spoke to them and continued his speech until midnight." (Acts 20:7).

So it is very important for Christians to be able to study—and in a language they can understand—so that they can be properly nourished, spiritually.

Children—the church of tomorrow—also need to be taught God's word regularly so they can grow up with the guidance for their lives. Of course, parents should have daily Bible study with their children at home. There are many children's choruses and songs that emphasize Bible message, and these can be included in the home study. This is the ideal time for helping little ones to learn how to pray about their own special concerns. They should also be taught to thank God for their food. Allowing them to word the prayer before meals is good training.

A lesson from the Bible can be read, and difficult thoughts can be explained on the child's level. There should be time for talking about the lesson, and for seeing how the examples and truth guide us in our daily life.

Regular memory work is also important, with verses assigned and practiced. Each verse can be written in the child's notebook. Competitive games can be made of reviews among the children (or all members of the family): speed competitions to be the first to locate and

read the verse called out, or challenges to see which child can say perfectly the greater number of memory verses. Each child could be called on to quote a verse before going off to school or before the evening meal, as a daily routine of practice.

Besides these times of special teaching, parents should look for occasions in daily life to explain the application of a Biblical principle, in contrast to worldly ways and thinking. Perhaps a friend has lied or cheated. This is the time to say, "God wants Christians to be honest so that people will say of us, 'He will never cheat you. If he says a thing, it will be the truth. You can depend on him.'"

God's word teaches us, "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth." (James 3:13,14). Explain words and concepts to the children in their own language, so they will understand that God's book is designed to help us with daily problems, decisions, and behaviour.

A great part of the training of a child is through the example he sees in his parents. If the father teaches, "Do not lie" but then the children hear him lie to others, what will they learn to do? They may lose confidence altogether in Christianity, seeing that their father claims to believe it but doesn't practice it. Or they may grow up to be hypocrites themselves. But parents must remember that what they themselves do teaches much stronger lessons than what they say. Their children's eternal welfare depends on their own integrity in living the Christian life before them.

Children also need to be taught at the weekly assembly of the church. A class time, perhaps an hour before the time of worship, should be set aside to study on the different age levels. Just as adults have difficulty in understanding anything taught in a language they have not studied well, children have difficulty in learning the Bible when it is taught to them only in adult language.

But to bring all the children together in their own classes is a wonderful way for them to study and grow, both in knowledge and in love for each other. Perhaps there will be space enough, children enough, and teachers enough for several classes: pre-school, school-age, teen-age, young men's training class, women's class, adult class, etc. All of these classes can be planned for specific lessons and types of training.

God's word says of the young preacher Timothy, ". . . from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make

you wise for salvation. . ."

Though men are to teach adults, women may teach women and children: ". . . the older women likewise . . . teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children . . ." (Titus 2:3,4) "Nevertheless she (the woman) will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." (1 Timothy 2:15).

Buy The Truth And Sell It Not

T. PIERCE BROWN

To the superficial mind, the question might be raised, "How could a person buy something if no one sold?" But the thing of which Solomon spoke in Proverbs 23:23 is not a commercial venture. Our liberty was bought with the blood of our forefathers, and our Christian heritage was bought with the blood of the martyrs, but no person sold it to us.

The importance of that precept seems increasingly important as we see a number of men who at one time seemed to exalt truth, but who have sold out for some reason or another.

When Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32), he expressed a principle of the widest application. Knowledge of historic truth can make us free from various things, but especially from having to repeat the same mistakes over and over. Knowledge of scientific truth can make us free from superstition in those areas, and free to explore in all sorts of areas heretofore unaccessible. Economic truths can make us free from poverty. Medical truth can make us free from various kinds of diseases. Moral and ethical truths can make us free from many of the social ills that plague our nation. Religious truth can make us free from the love, practice, guilt, burden, stain and the punishment of sin. But when Jesus used the word "shall", he did not mean in either case that it was an automatic or predetermined reality. That is, "Ye shall know the truth" in no way means you are forced to know it. And "The truth shall make you free" in any of all of the areas mentioned above, or any other, only if it is applied or acted upon.

There is no authority that can cause man to respond with the proper attitude but that which comes to him in the guise of truth. To seek the truth wherever it may be found, to follow it wherever it may lead, and to practice it whatever the consequences is one of the highest duties of man.

If we think of truth in man's normal relationships with man, we can immediately see the value of Paul's admonition, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor" (Ephesians 4:25). An orderly society, even in the Communist world, cannot exist in the absence of truth. The disorder in all societies is largely the result of the failure to recognize the value of truth. Whether one goes to the gas tank and expects to see the true number of gallons delivered, or takes a bank draft from another, or goes to the grocery store and gets a bag labeled "Sugar", or does any other thing in his social relationships, the truth must be respected, or chaos results.

In the philosophical or scientific area, the same kind of thing is true. For example, the acceptance of the false doctrine of evolution and its related corollaries has brought untold damage to humanity. It includes such things as the murder of millions of unborn babies, Hitler's atrocities (many of which were based on the idea of "the survival of the fittest"). Including selective breeding, and the murder of the "Unfit", and many other examples of man's inhumanity to man. There is nothing at all philosophically or scientifically sound about the theory.

One of the most remarkable things in the history of scientific thought is that thousands of persons who know that absolute scientific, demonstrable truth is necessary for us to even begin to explore, much less conquer, outer space, try to explore and conquer inner space with no apparent regard for either scientific or philosophical truth. The wisest philosopher and the greatest scientist cannot even answer the simplest questions concerning this "inner space" because they have no regard for truth. For example, you may ask, "From whence did man come?" "What is his purpose?" "What is his destiny?" The only answers you get from those who have no regard for truth in those areas, that is, facts that can be philosophically demonstrated as reasonable, or scientifically proven as facts, are simply wild guesses.

Then, beyond those kinds of truth, there is moral, religious, or spiritual truth. Probably Solomon had this kind primarily in mind. It would be humorous. If not so pathetic, to hear Congressmen, news commentators and others speaking of the ethics of certain things, such as getting drunk or committing adultery. They seem to equate it with the ethics of killing seals, whales or crocodiles. But I have never heard any of them give the slightest hint as to what they think makes a thing unethical or immoral. If God is not a sovereign God, the source of all moral and spiritual truth, and man is not a mortal, moral, accountable being, made in his image, bound by nature and law to live in accord with that truth or suffer the consequences, then any talk of ethics and

morality is so much foolishness.

To "buy the truth", then, is to assiduously assert its reality, painstakingly persevere its acquisition, and deliberately devote oneself to its practice. Prejudice and pride must be put aside. Sin and self will must be sacrificed.

To "sell it not" means never to lose the disposition of mind that causes you to value it above all else. It means never to betray it through any selfish, sordid motive. A preacher who preaches some false doctrine through the desire for money, prestige or power has sold the truth. But the preacher who does not preach false doctrine but fails to preach the truth for the same reasons, or any other, has also sold it.

I heard Marshall Keeble give an exegesis of Paul's statement in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season." He said, 'In season' means 'when they like it'; 'out of season' means 'when they don't'.

I still remember reading half a century ago from Hamlet, "This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow as night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." Inasmuch as no society can function with disregard for truth, no noble or worthwhile activity that is not based on truth can be carried to successful fruition, our freedom in any area is based on truth, and our sanctification and eternal salvation are as a result of truth, let us buy the truth and sell it not. Let us sacrifice all, even life if need be, on the altar of truth.

So Thick, It Could Be Felt

EDDY GILPIN

The Bible is unique among all books in many ways. One such way is its use of typology. Many items of the Old Testament are used as types, or shadows, of the true substances to be found in the New Testament (Heb. 8:5; 9:1-17; 10:1). When one compares such items as the Passover lamb (Ex. 12:43-13:10) and Christ, the true passover (Jn. 19:36), he can readily see how the former points to the latter. (Also compare Numbers 21:8, 9 with John 3:14,15). Close examinations of such instances reveal many lessons. This article will centre around one such instance, the ninth plague upon the land of Egypt.

Exodus 7-12 records the miraculous endeavors by God upon the nation of Egypt in order that His people might be set free. This series of plagues is one of the most intriguing of all Old Testament accounts of

history. Each of these plagues was aimed at one or more of the Egyptian idols. For example, the Egyptians worshipped the Nile River (and its god, Hapi), so God proceeded to turn it, as well as all Egyptian waters, into blood (Ex. 7:14-25). Thus, the plagues served well not only in delivering the Israelites from bondage, but also in revealing to all mankind the futility of serving impotent idols. This was a lesson that neither Israel nor modern man has learned.

The ninth plague in this series brought upon Egypt is overwhelming in its power, significant in its magnitude and revealing in its scope. Exodus 10:21-29 reveals that the Lord, through Moses, brought "a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days." It was described as "darkness which may be felt" (vs. 21). Yet, in the land of Goshen, the dwelling place of Israel, the Bible reveals there was light (vs. 23). Here, then, was a distinct line of demarcation. On the one side lay Egypt, the idolatrous. On the other lay Israel, the chosen. On the one side was complete darkness. On the other side, there was light.

The apostle Paul penned through inspiration his desire that the Colossians be "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:11-14). Here again, light and darkness are placed in contrast. Darkness has always symbolized that which is perverse and evil, in contrast to light, which represents good. I John 1:5 states: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." It stands to reason, then, that when a plague of darkness was brought upon the ungodly people of Egypt that light would be present among God's people.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). John penned, "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:6, 7). Jude revealed the despair that darkness represents when he spoke of the destiny of the angels that sinned. He wrote, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). Again he stated, "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame-wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness

for ever" (Jude 13). Numerous other passages could be cited which reveal the standing contrast between light and darkness in the spiritual realm. However, these are sufficient to establish the basis of a study of the aforementioned passage from Colossians 1:11-14.

One can readily see in this passage the contrasting kingdoms of light and darkness. Contained in the kingdom of light is the "glorious power" of God (vs. 11). Conversely, the kingdom of darkness has been made powerless (Heb. 2:1-4). It is also noted that through the power of God man can be made "meet (suitable) to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light" (vs. 12). On the other hand, Satan can only deliver a portion of his inheritance, which is "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41). It is also seen as a place of "outer darkness" (Mt. 25:30).

Verse 13 reveals that Christians have been delivered from "the power of darkness." Not only that, but they have also been "translated into the kingdom of his dear Son." Thus, as with Egypt and Israel of old, the line of demarcation is clearly drawn. On the one side are those who, like Egypt, are not in fellowship with God and are, hence, in darkness. On the other side are those who have been delivered from that particular kingdom with its power, and have been redeemed "through his blood", thus obtaining "the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).

It must have been an awesome sight to behold a portion of land in which there was no light (indeed, in which there was darkness so thick it could be felt), and then see another portion of that same land in which there was light! Only the power of God could have accomplished such. It is just as amazing to note that there is such a distinction in the spiritual realm as well. However, just as there were those whose hearts were like Pharaoh's, who would rather stumble in darkness than submit to God, there are those who would rather grope in spiritual darkness than to yield to God's will and enjoy the glorious light. Why would anyone in ancient Egypt prefer absolute darkness and that which was powerless to light and He who has all power? But, then again, why do modern men desire spiritual wickedness and ignorance with its darkness over the lamp unto their feet, and the light unto their path (Ps 119:105)? "And have NO FELLOWSHIP WITH the unfruitful works of DARKNESS . . . (Eph. 5:11).

I've Got The Cure For Aids

BILL BRANDSTATTER

According to the news media the A.I.D.S. virus has reached epidemic proportions. Yet statistics continually reveal that 90% of the A.I.D.S. cases fall into two categories: homosexuals and intravenous drug users. To lessen the number of people in each of these categories would be to decrease the number of A.I.D.S. cases substantially. If such were the case this disease would no longer be considered "epidemic".

God never has been, nor will He ever be pleased with homosexual activity. It was even wrong for Ham to see his father Noah naked (Gen. 9:22ff). Throughout the ages the principle set forth in Gal. 6:7 has applied: "Whatever man soweth, that shall he also reap." People that lead such life-styles are "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:27, 32). Sodom and Gomorrah were engaged in activities of this sort. God condemned them. "making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly" (II Pet. 2:6). People who live this "alternate lifestyle" according to the Bible "shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven (I Cor. 6:9, 10). The first step in curing A.I.D.S. is to get back to the Bible teaching of one man married to one woman for life. Then, sexual activities are to be confined to that marriage (I Cor. 7:2,4,9; Rom. 7:2).

People that use drugs are violating a number of scriptures. In I Cor. 3:16ff Paul indicates the body is a temple of God and must be kept holy. This text has reference specifically to the Christian. However Eccl. 12:13 states: "Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man." Surely no one can say that God is pleased with an individual who is a drug user. Two verses of scripture could be used to summarize how to cure A.I.D.S. First is Phil. 4:8. Although written to Christians primarily, mankind in general needs to heed the words in that passage: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Also Col. 3:17 states: "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Since there is no authority in scripture for either of the major causes of A.I.D.S. both are wrong and therefore sinful (I Jno. 3:4).

If individuals would follow the above mentioned scriptures and heed the words of the Bible, and become a Christian and "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteous, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12) the threat of A.I.D.S. would be eliminated.

Too Busy

A business man, harrassed and discouraged from overwork took his problem to a psychiatrist who promptly told him to do less work. "Furthermore," prescribed the doctor, "I want you to spend an hour each week in the cemetery." "What on earth do you want me to do that for? What should I do in the cemetery?" "Not much. Take it easy and look around. Get acquainted with some of the men already in there permanently and remember that they didn't finish their work either. Nobody does, you know."

Well, it's so, isn't it? Perhaps many of us become involved in so many responsibilities and affairs of life that we feel we have no time to give to faithful worship of God. . . No time to study and meditate upon the word of life. . . No time for anything but "making a living." We just can't take off from our regular routine. YES YOU CAN. And furthermore, you will some day and permanently. And the world will go right on without you just as it has done with countless thousands of people who, like you, thought they just had to attend a multiplicity of matters before they met their obligations to God. Think it over.

Where God Put Water

ROY J. HEARN

If one is a professed believer and follower of Christ, he is obligated to obey the Lord's every command without question, for Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18) and to reject His word is to disrespect and reject Him (John 12:48). We too often try to please ourselves instead of God. Though God has given an unalterable plan of salvation (Revelation 22:18, 19) we are inclined to change or set aside His laws and expect Him to save us anyway. The Bible teaches that only the obedient have any promise of salvation. Therefore, it is imperative we obey God's laws implicitly.

There is much opposition to water in the plan of salvation. Why say so much about water? It is a most important item. Without it physical life could not exist. In the Bible God connects it with all kinds of purification. Peoples' minds have been disturbed and perverted about it, thus need to be taught the truth concerning water in God's plan. The

New Testament teaches there is no salvation without it. Study the Bible to learn what God says about it. In this study the reader will note that God placed water *between* man and certain blessings, and the blessings were not received until the water was crossed. We agree that one is saved by God's power; but how does God exercise this power? God exercises His power through His will, His word, His law of covenant. Consider the following examples, note *where God put water* and when the blessing was received.

1. *Between Noah and the purified world, or salvation.* It is true Noah was saved by faith (Hebrews 11:7), an active faith that led him to obey God's commands (Genesis 6:9, 20). If Noah had not obeyed and built the ark he would have also been destroyed. He was also saved by water (1 Peter 3:20). The flood stood between him and the purified state. He was lifted by the water, which destroyed the sinful people, and by it was transported to the purified world. Thus the sinner is now saved by baptism, in which his sins are destroyed by the blood of Christ, and he is transported by baptism into Christ, or the purified state (1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:27).

2. *Between Israel and deliverance from bondage.* The Israelites were in Egypt, typical of sin. They were pursued by Pharaoh, typical of the devil. They came to the Red Sea, but salvation from Egyptian bondage was beyond the sea. The Red Sea is typical of baptism (1 Corinthians 10:1,2). The people were not delivered from bondage until they crossed the sea. Just so now, the sinner is not purified of sin until he crosses the water of baptism, which brings him into Christ where salvation is (Romans 6:3, 4; Ephesians 1:7).

3. *Water placed between Naaman and cleansing* (2 Kings 5). Naaman had leprosy. God placed water between him and healing of this dread disease. Naaman didn't like it. He is typical of those who now reject God's remedy (Isaiah 55:8, 9). Naaman wanted to do it his way, instead of God's; but the Lord did not change His word to please Naaman; he had to obey whether or not it suited him. Leprosy is typical of sin. Just as Naaman had to dip in obedience to God's command to be healed, so the sinner must "dip," or be baptized as God commands to be saved from sin. Was the power of cleansing in the water? No, but with God, who cleanses and forgives when we obey His command to be baptized.

4. *Christ put water between the blind man and sight* (John 9). Could not Christ have given this man sight without having him wash his eyes in Siloam? Certainly, but He tested the man's faith by the command to go wash his eyes in the pool. The man obeyed and sight

came after the washing. So God today tests our faith by the command to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

5. *Water was between Saul of Tarsus and sins washed away.* Christ appeared to Saul to qualify him as an apostle, not to save him. He was told to go into Damascus and there he would be told what to do. Ananias was sent to him and told Saul to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of Lord" (Acts 22:16).

6. *Water is placed between the sinner and righteousness.* Christ is our example (1 Peter 2:21). He was baptized to fulfil all righteousness (Matthew 3:14). In order to be acceptable to God we also must work righteousness (Acts 10:34, 35). This includes all of God's commands (Psalm 119:172). Baptism is a command of God, therefore, baptism stands between the sinner and righteousness.

7. *Water stands between the sinner and forgiveness* (Acts 2:38). "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Can one be saved without repentance? No? Well, in this passage baptism is coordinated with, equal to, repentance. Therefore, God put water baptism between the sinner and remission of sins.

8. *God put water between the sinner and Christ.* In order to be saved one must be in Christ. To get into Christ one must be baptized. "For as many of you as have been baptized INTO Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

9. *Water stands between the sinner and the blood of Christ.* Christ shed His blood in His death, and water came with it (John 19:34). These two elements are inseparable (1 John 5:8). None can be saved without the blood, but how contact it? Since Christ shed His blood in His death we must be baptized into His death to contact the blood (Romans 6:3, 4). Thus we see the importance of baptism here: it is the medium by which we are brought into contact with the blood, which cleanses our sins. This being true, one does not have salvation until he is baptized to reach the blood.

10. *Water is between the sinner and new life.* Life comes after birth. The new birth includes baptism (John 3:3-5). One is a new creature when he enters Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). One has new life after baptism (Romans 6:4) and gets into Christ by baptism (Galatians 3:27).

11. **GOD PUT WATER BETWEEN THE SINNER AND SALVATION!** "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Christ here put baptism between faith and salvation. This is the Lord's doings, not mine. It is too clear for any to misunderstand. Though

baptism may seem foolish to us, remember that God chose the foolish things to put to shame the worldly-wise (1 Corinthians 1:18-27). Let us follow the Lord's ways and be blessed, for, as in the examples above, we see that the blessings received depends upon our compliance with the conditions imposed by Jehovah.

Rainbows In The Gutter

BOBBY DOCKERY

A preacher walking through the slums of a great city noticed two small children standing on the sidewalk staring intently into the gutter. "What did you lose," he asked. "Mister, we ain't lost nuthin'," the little girl answered. "Me and brother have found something." "What have you found, then," the preacher wanted to know. The little girl smiled and said, "A rainbow. See it?" Sure enough the oil from a near-by filling station, floating on the surface of the water was refracting the sun's light in glorious rainbow colours. The children were right. They had found a rainbow in the gutter!

Often in life we find glory in unexpected places. The Bible speaks of some rainbows which can be seen in the gutter. . .

1) God's Love Is A Rainbow In The Gutter Of Human Rebellion. God has never quit loving us. When man had rebelled against Him, turned away from Him, responded to Him with nothing but indifference and neglect, God still continued to love (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). The marvel of God's love is celebrated in the words of an old hymn:

*"There's a rainbow of love,
Pointing to heaven above;
Shining through ev'ry cloud,
There's a rainbow of love."*

2) The Cross Is A Rainbow In The Gutter Of Man's Lost Sinfulness. Jesus tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). He paid a debt He did not owe to cancel a debt we could not pay! (John 19:30). A rainbow unites heaven and earth; its ends are on the earth but its arch is in the sky. The cross of Christ is God's rainbow, spanning heaven and earth and uniting God and man

together. By His cross Christ bridged the gap that separated us from God!

3) The Church Is A Rainbow In The Gutter Of This Wicked World. This world is a bleak, inhospitable place to grace. Evil surrounds us. We often seem to be living in some modern Pergamum, "where Satan's throne is" (Revelation 2:13). We find ourselves in a grim, ceaseless struggle against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places! But our God has given us a fortress. . . a place of refuge. The church is a place of hope and help and warm fellowship! It is a place where we can find grace to help in time of need. The gates of hell will never prevail against it and all spiritual blessings are in it! (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:3, 20, 22). The church is another of God's rainbows.

I am thankful that we serve a God who deals in rainbows. In the long ago He said, "*I set my bow in the cloud and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between me and earth . . .*" (Genesis 9:13). Now He wants us to open our eyes to see the rainbows—to learn to walk by faith and not by sight! If your life is in the gutter—apart from God, lost, burdened by guilt—there's rainbow of hope for you! The grace of God has appeared to all men! (Titus 2:11). You need to open your life to it—surrender to grace in obedient faith and come to God! (Romans 6:3-4, 17).

Do you have faith to see the rainbow of God's love and respond to it?

What Will Become Of The Wicked?

BOBBY KEY

I have before me a letter from a very angry man. His last two sentences read, "How can you put your faith in a man named Jesus, an out-and-out homosexual, to save you? Right now I wish I believed in hell, so I could tell you where to go." A well-known editor wrote, "Hell has gone out of style. Not many preachers preach about it any more and not many people really believe in it. This writer is included. The idea of an all-knowing God deliberately creating faulty human beings so that he might roast them forever in lakes of fire seems very strange. There isn't any road to hell."

Our liberal editor of the above statements is speaking for the majority of people today. Preachers are not doing much to help a bad situation. Some go out of their way to get everybody to like them and say, "peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). The fear of punishment has largely been removed from our preaching. Because of this, people continue to sin (Ecclesiastes 8:11); and there is no fear of God before their eyes. If hell does not exist, the devil certainly is a fool! The Lord was also mistaken, for He talked a great deal about a place called hell and advised everybody to stay out of it. He asked, "Ye serpents ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell (Gehenna)" (Matthew 23:33).

The following passages tell the fate of the wicked:

(1) "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17).

(2) "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

(3) "Begone from me, with the curse resting upon you, into the fire of the ages (aionion—eternal fire) which has been prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41—Weymouth's Translation). Notice, friend, the wicked go to a place prepared for the devil and his angels. They did the devil's will, became partakers of his nature, and they must share his destiny!

(4) "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna)" (Matthew 10:28).

(5) "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Every responsible person on earth who walks in his own willful and stubborn way refusing to obey God will suffer eternal punishment—will be eternally banished from the presence of God; having forfeited eternal life. The state of the wicked will be eternal. God help us to stay out of such a place.

Good Advice

KEN TYLER

James said, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:19-20). In this passage James gives three qualities that all of us should possess as Christians. Let us study each one.

1. **"Swift to hear."** Many of us are not very good listeners. We should strive to develop a fast and attentive mind, a disposition ready to listen. We cannot remember names because we do not listen when people introduce themselves to us. Sometimes we form wrong opinions of others and cause trouble because we do not properly listen. We should listen to our children, mates, bosses and our fellowman in general. There are a lot of people who just need someone to talk to. May we be individuals that are "swift to hear."

2. **"Slow to speak."** James is simply saying. "Be a good listener and then think before you speak". Hasty words get so many of us into trouble. Solomon said, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Do not SAY everything you THINK! Bring your thoughts into subjection to Christ before you speak. We all need to work at being "slow to speak."

3. **"Slow to wrath."** This is the result of being "swift to hear" and "slow to speak." We listen and think carefully before we act. It's easy to make some serious mistakes when we act hastily in the heat of a moment. We must never forget that we are Christians. We must also understand the harm and hurt we can do if we get out of control. Anger is one of the great tools the Devil uses to destroy homes and churches. Remember, James said, ". . . the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Let us be "slow to wrath."

I pray the thoughts of this article will help us be better children of God. This is a challenging passage that requires discipline on our part. It is easy to say and do things that we later deeply regret. Being "swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath" will solve many of our problems. Why not resolve to make these qualities rules for your life?

How To Live The Christian Life

W.A. HOLLEY

One must begin with a genuine conversion to Christ Jesus and his way. Conversion to Christ involves faith, repentance, confession, and baptism as taught in your Bible (John 3:16; Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 13:3, 5; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38). It is impossible for one to live a Christian life if one is not a Christian. For example, one cannot live the life of a married person if he/she is not married.

The fruits of a Christian life must be apparent to all (Titus 2:11-12). One's entire body must be devoted to the service of Christ (Romans 12:1-3). It involves service to the less fortunate (James 1:27). We must love, not in word, but in deed and in truth (I John 3:17-18). There must be no hypocrisy involved. What does this word mean? It is defined: "A feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). All pretentiousness is outlawed by Almighty God.

We shall suggest a few guidelines which can aid you in living the Christian life:

(1) Endeavor to develop a wholesome attitude. Anyone can make a career of finding fault with everything and everybody (Matthew 7:1-5). Of course, others are not perfect, but neither are you! Learn to look on the bright side of life. There is far too much darkness already. One can look up and see the stars or one can look down and see the mud. It will help to possess a warm and friendly disposition. Kind and gentle words win friends and influence people. Keep a cemetery in your back yard in which to bury the faults of your friends.

(2) One needs to understand that there are some "Thou shalt nots" (Exodus 20:1-17). No one is living a Christian life while committing sin (Galatians 5:19-21). The rich young ruler asked Jesus, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" What was Jesus' answer? We read, "Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother: and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 19:16-22). Imagine what healing would take place in our nation if these commands were honored today (Proverbs 14:34).

(3) Remember that there are some "Thou Shalts." Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). The apostle John wrote, "Blessed are they that do his

commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

You must obey the Lord's commands to believe, repent of your sins, confess Jesus' name before men, and to be baptized in his name for remission of sins (John 3:16; Acts 17:30-31; 8:37; 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

Following these primary commands, there are other commands addressed to children of God which must be obeyed. What are some of these? Well, the Lord requires his people to assemble upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25), to engage in worship as prescribed by Him (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 5:19), and to follow "in spirit and in truth," as commanded by Him who died for us (John 4:23-24).

Although there are many distractions, all Christians must work for unity, peace, and harmony of the church which Jesus Christ so dearly loves (Ephesians 5:22-24).

Do not sow discord (Proverbs 6:16-19). Honor the elders, deacons, preachers, song leaders, Bible class teachers and one another (Romans 13:6-10). Make certain that you set a Christian example (I Timothy 4:12).

(4) Learn to be loyal and faithful to God at all cost. Some elder, preacher, or other Christian may seem unworthy of your support, but keep on serving the Lord for he never changes (Hebrews 13:8). You can be saved if others are and you can be saved if others are not. In apostolic times there were many false teachers and profligate church members, but Paul never allowed them to turn him aside from his duties (I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Timothy 4:10-18).

In many places where the church of Christ exists, there are many drifters, wanderers, floaters, who are constantly going from one congregation to another, seeking something they will never find—perfection. Such members refuse to serve the Lord under the eldership, not wanting any responsibility, they become lost (?) to their duty and responsibility as Christians. Such a practice is always sinful. This scribe has lived in cities where there were many local churches and, with his own eyes, he has seen members of the church who never had a church home, always drifting from one congregation to another. Such a practice robs the church in many ways!!

Jesus Christ wants his followers to be "rooted and grounded" in his will and way. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17). Christians must be "grounded and settled," not drifting from pillar to post (Colossians

1:23). Furthermore, we are to be "rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Colossians 2:7).

Any plant must grow down before it can grow up. Isaiah knew well the principle involved when he wrote, "And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward" (Isaiah 37:31).

Why do we have so many crybabies, whiners complainers, fault finders, unhappy members? Can it be because of the lack of being "rooted and grounded" in the basic principles of God's holy word? Is it not time for us to grow up and begin obeying the word God has given unto us?

The Judgment

WINFRED CLARK

Most people who read their Bibles are well aware of the term, "Judgment." The Hebrew writer speaks of the fact that, "it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). What then can we learn from the Bible concerning the judgment?

I. There is the SURENESS of the judgment

Go back to the verse in Hebrews noted above. None of us doubt the sureness of death. That is dramatized before our eyes from time to time. We have no doubts of it's sureness. Neither should there be any doubt about the fact of the judgment for these are tied together in this verse. Yes, it is sure. It will occur.

We show ourselves foolish indeed when we ignore this fact. It will come and we must be there.

II. There will be a STANDARD by which we will be judged.

James 2:12 "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." Paul would say, "he will judge the world in righteousness" Acts 17:32. This being the case we would do well to walk in total harmony with the standards God has set in his word. That means one should set aside his feelings or fancies and be governed by the will of the Lord.

God has been good to us in allowing us to know what to expect.

3. There is the FINALITY of the judgment.

One might appeal a conviction of the court of our land. This appeal may be heard and the conviction overcome. Not so at the final

judgment. The Lord will have the last word (Matthew 25:31-46). When he says, "come" this will be final, when he says "depart" this will be final. There is no appeal to the word of the Lord (John 12:48).

Procedure Is Usually Short Of Potential

EDSEL BURLESON

What do we see when we look at an eight ounce glass containing four ounces of milk? Do we say it is half empty? or half full? Both estimates are factual, but there is a world of difference in the point of view. We can concentrate on our lacks, our fears, our doubts and dry up spirituality. Jesus taught us to take the positive view—this is the view of faith. It involves trust in God and trust in his power to fulfill his promises if we trust and obey. It involves trust in our fellow man—believing that with God's help he can do better.

An interesting article appeared in Bulletin Digest which emphasized the difference in what is often done and what could be done.

"A hundred years ago a good cow would give about 600 pounds of milk a year. In 1972 there was a cow whose name was Hattie who gave 44,000 pounds of milk.

"The ordinary wild bird lays six eggs a year. Did you know that experts have produced a hen that lays 365 eggs a year!

"God built into the cow and the hen unbelievable capacity for expansion. If God did that for the cow and the hen, think of what He has built into you. Your capacity to produce a victory for God is marvelous. Why not allow it to come forth as you seek to: live faithfully; encourage your Christian brothers and sisters; do something deliberate in leading another to Jesus."

Charles Clodfelter once wrote that "Albert Einstein is reported to have said no man has used as much as 10% of his brain. An article from the Personal Motivation Institute, Inc., reports, 'research indicates that by using only half his brain, anyone is capable of:

Memorizing an entire encyclopedia from A to Z. Learning over forty different languages.

Completing the required courses of dozens of Universities.

Sensing projections of one 1/25,000 of an inch of an apparently

smooth surface.

Detecting one part quinine in two million parts of water.

Differentiating between over 10,000 different odors.

The article concludes "recent studies at UCLA have concluded that the potential of the human mind is virtually infinite'."

When we are planning the use of our own potential, do we see the glass half full? Then we can add to the contents of the glass. Let us challenge ourselves to step out in faith in attempting to do more for the Lord! "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12).

An unknown author said it well in these lines entitled "We Need More Like Him:"

"He couldn't speak before the crowd,

He couldn't teach a class,

But everytime he came to church

He brought the folk 'en masse.'

"He couldn't sing to save his life,

In public, he couldn't pray,

But his jalopy was always crammed

Every single Lord's Day.

"And though he could not sing, nor teach,

Nor lead in public prayer,

He listened well; he had a smile,

And he was always there.

"And all the others he had brought,

Who lived both near and far,

And God's work greatly prospered

Because of his consecrated car."