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EDITORIAL

The Story of Man

Man is a created, and not an evolved, being. The Bible states: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27). Man is a dual being, that is, he is both physical and spiritual. Genesis 2:7 says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." Christ taught, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." (Luke 4:4). Speaking about the two distinct personalities of man, at 2 Corinthians 4:16, Paul, the apostle, said, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." Our outward man is physical outside; our inward man is spiritual inside. The outward is perishing, as we grow old and weak; but the inward is being renewed, as we try to live in Christ each day by contemplating on the things eternal which are not seen.

Man exists on earth in the state of sin, by not walking according to the laws of God. (1 John 3:4). "For all have sinned," says the Bible at Romans 3:23, "and fall short of the glory of God." Notice, that it says, "have sinned", babies are not born with sin; they are sinless; and therefore are qualified to enter and live in heaven; if they die before maturity or before the age of accountability. (Matthew 18:3 & 19:14).

The Creator of man, God has "appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). Death means separation. Through death man's body and soul or spirit get separated.

(Ecclesiastes 12:7).

In a sense, in sin, man is dead spiritually. Not that his spirit is dead, but the separation of soul from God's fellowship because of sin is the state of death. (Ephesians 2:1). Just as Adam and Eve had died in the beginning when they had violated God's command. (Genesis 2:17). Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you."

Jesus Christ is man's saviour. The Word, who was with God and was God, in heaven, assumed man's flesh, became a man. Just as He became man by the power of God; He was, by the power and foreknowledge of God, allowed to die on the cross for all humanity, taking upon Himself all sins of the world. We read, from 2 Corinthians 5:15-21, "And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again . . . Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation . . . Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ . . . that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them . . . For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Thus, when man dies physically, he dies either in Christ, in the saved state, or in sin, in the lost state. In Luke 16th chapter, Christ portrayed the two states of man after death. There is the story of the rich man and Lazarus, both of them, after their death, had gone into Hades; yet in different sections of Hades. While the lost rich man was in the tormenting section of the Hades, Lazarus, on the other hand, was in Abraham's bosom or in Paradise, where the righteous souls go. Christ too, after His death, had entered Hades, according to Acts 2:27 & 31. Also see Matthew 16:18. But since He was without sin, that is, He Himself had never committed any sin (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), He went into Paradise. (Luke 23:43). In Hades, according to Luke 16:26, a great gulf is fixed so that no one can pass over to the other side from one side.

God has appointed for all men once to die and then face Him in judgment. The apostle preached, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10). The day of the judgment is called the day of the Lord (1 Peter 3:10). Christ will appear as the Judge to judge the whole world for their righteousness. (Acts 17:30, 31). The day of the judgment will also be the day of the resurrection of all. "Do not marvel at this," said Christ in Matthew 24:28, 29, "for the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs 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." Bodies, not souls, will be resurrected. "But someone will say how are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" "Foolish one," says the Apostle Paul, "what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. . . . so also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-44).

According to Matthew 10:28, Christ taught, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." While in Hades only souls go, but in hell there will be both soul and body, and the same will be true of heaven. As on the judgment day, when the bodies will be resurrected from the earth, Hades will deliver up the dead which are in them (Revelation 20:13). Thus the complete man, both soul and body, will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, either on His right side in the company of the saved and righteous, or with the multitude of the lost in sin on His left, to receive the final and eternal reward, where the words of Christ will come to pass, "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:46).

Man, who was created in the image of eternal God, will live forever in eternity, either in hell or in heaven. Just as we cannot escape death and judgment, we will not be able to escape eternity, the unending existence of the immortals. Therefore, as a man the greatest and the utmost important thing that I can do on earth is to make sure that I am found in Christ. The Bible teaches that by faith and being baptized into Christ one gets into Christ or put Him on (Galatians 3:26,27); and by following His steps, one lives in Him daily (1 Peter 2:21). And, finally, it says, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them." (Revelation 14:13).

The Judgment Day

J.C. CHOATE

When Christ returns one of the great things that will take place will

be the judgment day. This will be the final day, the last day, the day in which the Lord will judge all of mankind. It will be payday, the day in which the Lord will determine whether one will be saved or lost. It will be the day that all have heard of, that the masses have dreaded, but it will be a reality. It will be a day that none can escape, a day that will not be postponed, a day that will determine where one and all will spend eternity.

The Hebrew writer tells us, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). Paul says, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ . . . So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:10,12).

Again, Paul says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10). After Paul said that God commands all men everywhere to repent, he continues by saying, "Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:31).

Peter reminds us, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:1-7). In other words, at the judgment the Lord will save his people, the church, but those who have not obeyed the gospel will be lost. Paul said that the Lord is coming to take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. (1 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Unbelievers then, along with those who fail to obey the gospel, will be lost on the day of judgment.

Who will judge us? Christ answers that by saying, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). That means then that we know how the Lord will judge us, if we will but read and study his word, because we will be judged according to those things written in his word. Do we believe what the Lord has said? Are we doing what the Lord has taught in his word? If we believe the Lord's word and obey it, then that word will pronounce a blessing on us at the judgment. If we refuse to believe it, or fail to do what it teaches, then it will condemn us at the judgment. It will judge us honestly and truthfully and without partiality. Furthermore, it will be final.

Concerning that day, Christ said, "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). That means then that many religious people will be lost at the judgment because they have failed to do the Lord's will.

The good, the bad, the young, the old, the believer, the unbeliever, the religious, the non-religious, the member of the church, and the one who is not a member; and all nationalities and all tribal groups will be there; all of these, and all others will be there on the day of judgment to be judged.

In Matthew 25 Christ gives a picture of the judgment and he says, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." (Matthew 25:31-33). The record continues and shows how he judges them and then we read concerning the wicked and the righteous, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matthew 25:46).

My friend, are you ready to stand before the Lord at the judgment? Are you prepared to hear the verdict? Where will you spend eternity? Listen, time is running out. Prepare now to meet God.

Especially For Women

Worship

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

"On the first day of the week, let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2).

"I will declare Your name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to You" (Hebrews 2:12).

"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:19,20).

"But why do we worship on Sunday?" Aseema asked as the family sat down to eat lunch after they had come home from worship. "Some people worship on Fridays, some on just any day. Why is Sunday special to us?"

"In the law of Moses, God had given the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, the day of rest for everyone," Papa answered. "Do you remember what happened on the first 'seventh' day?"

"I know!" answered James. "The creation! That was when everything had been made and God rested."

"That's right," Papa said. "In Exodus 20:18 God said, 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.' But when Jesus was resurrected, it was early on the first day of the week, the day that the world calls 'Sunday.' On that day the disciples had gathered in one place, and He appeared to them (Mt. 16:2; Jn. 20:19). The church was also begun on the first day of the week, because Pentecost came on that day (Acts 2:1). Then the Christians regularly assembled on that day. Once when Paul was in Troas he waited a whole week in order to be able to worship with the church. We know that this worship day was of importance because Paul went on his journey the next morning, even though he had preached and talked with the Christians all through the night! But even though he was in a hurry, he had stayed over for *seven* days—right through the Sabbath day when the people of God had previously worshipped under the law of Moses, and he had waited to assemble with the Christians to break bread on the *first* day of the week. That was the day on which they ate the supper in memory of Jesus' death (Acts 20:7). It was also the day on which Paul told the Christians in the city of Corinth to make their contributions for the work of God (1 Cor. 16:2). Under the law of Christ, God wants to be *first* in our hearts, so perhaps that is why He chose the *first* day of the week instead of the last as the one to be called 'the Lord's day' (Rev. 1:10).

"Through the centuries there have been many people who made changes in worship. Some have changed the day. Some have added things to worship—the burning of candles, the counting of beads, praying to people instead of to God. Some have added bands or singing

groups, some have added all kinds of musical instruments. Others have left off things which were a part of the worship of the early church. They don't have the Supper of Jesus each week. They may not sing, and some do very little studying of God's word—the apostles' doctrine."

"But to change the worship of God is a very serious thing. No human has the right to do that, or to decide, 'I like this way better. It doesn't really matter.' Everything God's word says is important and we must obey Him. In the Old Testament, there were two young priests who thought it didn't matter if they didn't follow every detail of what God had said. Leviticus 10:1,2 tells us: 'Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.'

"So, for Nadab and Abihu, it was a very serious thing to obey God strictly concerning every part of worship. We have no right, either, to change anything about worship. As sinful humans, we don't belong in God's presence, but He is kind and forgiving to us, and allows us to bow before him along with His holy angels. We can only come, though, with humble and obedient hearts, wanting more than anything to please Him. (Rev. 4, 2, 3; 5:11)."

Value Of The Second Effort!

DILLARD THURMAN

The football player received the ball on the six yard line, was immediately tackled by an opponent, then another, and with a third man also hanging on, he struggled on backward, dragging three players over the goal line for the winning touch-down! And for days, the press extolled the value of *his second effort!* For without his heroic effort, the crucial game would have been lost! He had turned an apparent defeat into victory! His first lunge had fallen short; however, he was not willing to quit until he had crossed the goal line! His second effort saved the game! The annals of history are replete with stirring examples where the *second effort* paid off in rich dividends, and secured the victory!

An Example of the Second Effort!

One great example was shown by a lad who was severely burned in a fire. His life was saved, but the doctor confided to his mother that he would never be able to walk again! But that small boy had other ideas!

On receiving that bad news, his reply was: "I will not only walk, but I will run!" Well, run he did!! Glenn Cunningham broke all records for the mile run, and was acclaimed the greatest runner in the world! He refused to accept defeat! Over the great tragedy of the fire, he built an enviable reputation, receiving honors few athletes have known!

Paul Also Ran with Second Effort!

Paul's early religious life opposed Christ and His church. But after he was called by the Lord to preach the gospel, Paul served God with renewed energy and vigor. His *second effort* was likened to a race also. *"Know ye not that they which run, in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. . . I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Paul's *second effort* exceeded that of any contemporary! His whole life was thrust into an all-out effort to proclaim Christ to all unsaved men! He knew he was unworthy, yet declared: *"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."* (1 Cor. 15:10). The Christian race stretched on before, but there came the close; and Paul could then write: *"I have finished my course."* (2 Tim. 4:7) A *second effort* had won the prize for Paul!

Example From the Man of Faith

We tend to forget that the "Father of the Faithful" also had cause to call on the *second effort* in serving God. Though "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. 4:20), still there came the time when he failed! He obeyed with alacrity when God told him: *"Get thee out of thy country . . . unto a land that I will shew thee."* (Gen. 12:1). However, in following God's directive, he faced a situation in Egypt where he thought his life was in danger; and to dodge a threatening situation, he told a lie about Sarai, his wife, saying she was his sister (Gen. 12:10-12). This showed lack of faith in God and trust in His word, for He had promised him protection. Yet God allowed Abram's faith to be renewed, and he still walked with God.

You would think Abram would have learned his lesson by this time. God had renewed His promise when Abram was ninety-nine years old, changed his name to Abraham, given the rite of circumcision, promised the whole of Caanan, and promised a son to Sarai (Gen. 17:1-19). But

less than a year after, Abraham told the same lie to Abimelech he had told in Egypt, and then tried to minimize the falsehood (Gen. 20:1-18). But Abraham's *second effort* was to place him in the gallery of God's heroes of faith, with glowing words of tribute to his obedience (Read Heb. 11:8-19). Multiplied millions were to laud the faithfulness of "Father Abraham."

An Example from the Preacher Jonah

One of the best examples of the *second effort* is found in the book of Jonah! The Lord told him: "*Arise, go to Ninevah, that great wicked city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*" (1:2). The charge was plain and simple; and Jonah understood. But he was unwilling to obey! Rather, he caught a ship for Tarshish, at the far end of the sea! He paid his fare, boarded the ship, but didn't complete the journey. The Lord sent stormy weather, and Jonah took a three-day submarine voyage in the belly of the whale. He prayed to God, and felt blessed to walk on dry land again!

The conclusion? "*And the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time.*" (3:1). Jonah's *second effort* was in complete obedience to God! His preaching was such that the entire city believed, and repented toward God in sackcloth and ashes. Jonah's preaching saved a city of more than 120,000 innocent people (4:11)! How about that for a *second effort*? This can happen when we turn in obedience to God!

The Cowardice of Elijah the Tishbite

The bold and courageous Elijah was another who needed a second chance! Fearlessly he faced the wicked Ahab, and proclaimed: "*As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*" (1 Kgs. 17:1). Boldly he pronounced the sentence; and as God directed, went forth to confront four hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. At the end of the contest, he cried, "*Take the prophets of Baal; let not one escape.*" (1 Kgs. 18). But the word came from wicked Jezebel, "*So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as one of them by tomorrow about this time.*" (1 Kgs. 19:2). A raging woman was too much for even the fearless prophet! He took immediate leave of the country, fleeing to Beer-sheba, leaving his servant, and going into the wilderness to hide under a juniper tree, begged to die! Where was his courage? Where was his trust in God? However, the Lord appeared unto him at the cave in Horeb; and Elijah was ready for his *second effort*! He returned to choose Elisha as his successor, and saw the destruction of both Ahab and Jezebel before his glorious ascension in a

chariot in a whirlwind! His *second effort* paid off in rich dividends!

Recall Peter's Second Effort!

Peter was always listed first among Christ's apostles, was selected to be in the inner circle during His personal ministry, and was chosen to preach the gospel first to both the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2:14; 15:7). When Jesus warned that some would be offended in Him, Peter's reply was: *"Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."* But Jesus told him that he would deny the Lord; and his reply was, *"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."* (Mt. 26:31-35). Peter was too self-confident! He did deny his Lord, even to swearing that he knew him not! All his bitter tears could not undo what he had done (Mt. 26:69-75). Peter had shown his weakness!

But the Lord had foreseen Peter's downfall, and had made provision for it. He told Peter, *"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* (Lk. 22:32). Yes, Peter was converted from weakness to show forth power in the preaching of Christ! He strengthened his brethren, who looked to him for leadership. He was a tower of strength in the early church. The weakness he had shown before the world was not to occur again! His *second effort* would be a living testimony for His Lord! But don't get the idea that Peter "had reached sinless perfection."

Paul exposed another weakness, for he wrote: *"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."* He revealed that Peter *"withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision . . . inasmuch that Barnabas also was carried away with this dissimulation."* For this, Paul had to deal with Peter's actions with open opposition. (Gal. 2:11-16). Peter was in the wrong, and Paul corrected him! But did Peter harbor ill-feelings toward Paul? Not in the least! Later he was to write, *"Even as our beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you"* (2 Pet. 3:15). Peter's *second effort* was to accept truth even when it exposed him error, and he yet served God faithfully. If Peter could sin, be forgiven, and serve God unselfishly, surely it is a lesson to us to rise over failures, and try again!

A Lesson from John Mark

Another valuable lesson comes from John Mark. As a nephew to Barnabas, he accompanied Barnabas and Saul (Paul) on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:14). However, when they turned north from Paphos into the dangerous regions of Pamphylia, John, Mark turned

back to his mother in Jerusalem! Later, after completing that first missionary trip, Paul suggested that they return to revisit those churches in Asia Minor. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along again; but Paul vetoed the idea. The *"contention was so sharp between them, that they parted asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas."* (Acts 15:36-41). So far as we can learn, Paul and Barnabas never worked together again—all because Paul thought Mark was unworthy! But John Mark also was given a second effort with Paul, for Paul rescinded the letters he had written to churches about him, saying, *"And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him.)"* (Col. 4:10). And later from prison he wrote, *"Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me in the ministry."* (2 Tim. 4:11). Mark had used his *second effort* well, and had become a profitable servant of Christ and helper of Paul's.

Not All Make the Second Effort!

Sad to say, not all really make the second effort that is afforded them. What an opportunity was given to serve with the great apostle Paul; and yet he lamented: *"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."* (1 Tim. 4:10). There is no indication that Demas ever returned! And such cases abound about us today, as thousands of disciples have turned to the lure of the world, and have forsaken Christ! We have an obligation in this matter: *"Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."* (Gal. 6:1). James has this word for us: *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."* (Jas. 5:19-20). There are many who have left the way of the Lord that could be restored by our action; and could have a great spiritual life by a *second effort*! Remember that every sinner this side of hell is a challenge to every saint this side of heaven! We must awaken to the challenge of getting them to make *the second effort*!

The Lord's Conditions Of Salvation

W.A. HOLLEY

Salvation is a gift of God but it is a conditional gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). Bread is a gift of God but it also is a conditional gift (Matthew 6:11;

James 1:17; II Thessalonians 3:10-12). For example, God feeds the birds but they must forage for themselves.

What Are These Conditions?

(1) Hearing the word of God is one condition of salvation (John 6:44-45). It is in this way one is taught of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:11). The faith that saves comes by hearing the word of the gospel (Romans 10:17). One can understand what God has commanded (Ephesians 3:3-4; 6:17).

(2) Faith in Christ is another condition of salvation. If one does not believe one dies in his sins (John 8:21, 24). It is not faith only, but a faith that works (Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26; I Thessalonians 1:3). Faith without works is a dead faith!

(3) Repentance is another condition of salvation. Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke 13:3-5, ASV). God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31).

What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin in godly sorrow (II Corinthians 7:8-10). Jesus said that the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah (Matthew 12:41), but what did the men of Nineveh do when they repented? We shall permit the Bible to answer: "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way . . ." (Jonah 3:10). It is in this manner that the sinner demonstrates the fruit of repentance in his life (Matthew 3:8).

If the sinner is saved by faith only, repentance is excluded. If one steals a horse, repents and is baptized for remission of sins, how long can he keep the horse?

(4) Another condition of salvation is confessing the sweet name of Jesus Christ before men. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I CONFESS before my father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). Paul taught that the mouth is involved in confessing Christ (Romans 10:9-10). To confess is to openly acknowledge one's faith in the authority of Jesus Christ, or the sins of which one has been guilty (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 17:1-4). The eunuch, before he was baptized, confessed the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:26-39).

(5) Baptism also is one of the Lord's conditions of salvation. Thousands of religious people deny this truth, but it is the truth nevertheless (Mark 16:15-16).

That baptism is a command of God can be seen from reading Acts 10:48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," are the words of the inspired Peter. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16, ASV).

Baptism is a command of God addressed to the alien sinner but not to the child of God. Baptism is a test of love for Christ. Jesus taught that if we love Him we will keep His commandments (John 14:15, 23; I John 5:3).

To be "born again, born of water and the Spirit" refers to "baptism for the remission of sins" (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38). When 3,000 were baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," they were "born again, born of water and the Spirit." We have been told that "things equal to the same thing are equal to each other." Thus, "the new birth" equal salvation or conversion (I Peter 3:20-21; Acts 3:19).

One cannot enter the kingdom of God without baptism (John 3:3, 5; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). When one reads the Scripture one learns that salvation from past sins is promised after baptism, not before baptism, (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16).

The Book of Acts is God's book of conversions. What is written therein is not opinion. There are at least eight cases of conversion found recorded therein. We sincerely ask our readers to read this book to learn how sinners were converted to Christ in the apostolic age. What was taught then should be taught now. The word of God has not changed, the seed (which is the word of God) remains the same, and the human heart has not changed (Luke 8:4-15).

In each case of conversion in the Book of Acts, the preacher was always present, the gospel of Christ was always preached, and those who were persuaded to obey the Lord were always baptized. There is no exception! We suggest that you read how the Pentecostians were saved (Acts 2:36-38, 47), how the Samaritans were saved (Acts 8:9-13), how the eunuch was saved (Acts 8:26-39), how Saul of Tarsus was saved (Acts 9:3-6, 9; 22:16), how Lydia was saved (Acts 16:13-15), how the Philippian Jailor was saved (Acts 16:29-33), and how the Corinthians were saved (Acts 18:4, 8).

Dear reader, you can know the truth (John 8:30-32). You can believe it and obey it. You can become a New Testament Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16). Do it today!

Full Grown Sin

GLENN COLLEY

Isaiah describes sin as a separator. That is, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He 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). Sin will not only separate a man from His God, it will separate him from many important things.

For example, sin will separate a man from his freedom. This fact is seen obviously in our overflowing prison system. These incarcerated individuals have chosen to live in a way unacceptable to a civilized society. Therefore they have been separated from society, AND from their freedom.

But sin separates a man from his freedom in other ways too. A man who exercises his freedom to drink beverage alcohol, and continues in this choice, eventually loses his freedom to choose NOT to drink. The same can be said for a man who exercises his freedom to choose to gamble, or commit adultery, or lie, etc.

In the King James translation of the Bible, James 1:15, we read, "... and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." In the American Standard translation, the verse reads, "... sin, when it is FULL GROWN ..." For something to be *full grown* demonstrates that it sustains a growing process. Do you see? Sin grows! What once shocked us, gradually becomes familiar. What once became familiar, becomes appealing. What once became appealing, becomes an object of experimentation. From there, sin, gone unchecked, grows until it produces death. This should be a source of concern for every Christian and every person. Have we lost our ability to be shocked? Have we become familiar and even sometimes passively accepting of sinful behaviour?

Although we know that heinous sins have been committed from the early days of time, they haven't always been considered acceptable behaviour. And in the world, we are viewing an acceptance of sin unlike any other time in our history.

Recently, in a small Alabama town, a high school teacher explained to her class that homosexuality was not what a person DOES, but rather what a person IS. This is how God made them, and therefore we are cruel to suggest that they are sinful and should change! Here's

the shocker: Most of the teenage class agreed.

The Proverb writer had a wretched scene in mind when he penned, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Proverbs 5:22). Those who continue to take sin lightly will one day find it controlling them.

Never forget the words of John when he looked to see the Master coming, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29) May God help us to see sin through His eyes instead of through the devil's eyes, and may we ever grow in love and devotion to the only One who can take away sin.

Worrying Over Worrying

ALLEN WEBSTER

It is remarkable and unfortunate that Christians are not immune to this disorder. They have been known to be just as insecure as those whose feet have never stood on the Rock of Ages, whose eyes have not looked to the hills from whence cometh their help, and whose minds are not set on things above. Most saints know that they ought not to worry, so they end up worrying about worrying. What does the Owner's Manual say to do about this malfunction?

Jesus discusses the Christian and anxiety in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:25-34). He says, "Take no thought" (merimnao) for life (6:25), food (6:31), and tomorrow (6:34). This does not mean not to plan tomorrow's menu, buy winter clothes in the summer, or purchase home or health insurance (cf. II Thessalonians 3:16, 17; I Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 30:25). It means that we are not to "be anxious" for these things. Note His four reasons Christians are not to worry.

CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE BIRDS (6:26). Whoever said that "worrying is for the birds" was off the mark. Birds do not worry. Who ever heard of a bird taking ulcer medication, committing suicide because his stocks crashed, or killing over with a heart attack? Birds are not concerned with the future, yet they form no lines at soup kitchens or welfare offices. God takes care of them.

Surely, God could not be charged with watching out for sparrows and neglecting His own children! We are made in the image of God and infused with a soul from the Father (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:7; Hebrews 12:9). Birds are not. Thus, if God cares for them, He cares more for us (Matthew 10:29-31; cf. Romans 8:32).

CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE CUBIT (6:27). Who ever heard of a short man worrying himself into a larger size? Or has it ever been reported that worrying lengthened someone's life? No! Worry is useless. The word stature (*helikia*) indicates "a stage of growth whether measured by age or stature" (Abbott-Smith). Thus Jesus is saying worry will not make you taller or older (though it may make you appear so!). "Worry never climbed a hill; worry never paid a bill; worry never dried a tear; worry never darned a heel; worry never cooked a meal; worry never composed a song to sing; actually, worry never did a worthwhile thing." "Worry is like a rocking chair, it keeps you busy, but gets you nowhere."

No one can lengthen his life by worrying, but there is evidence that worry can shorten it. When it comes to long life, what we are eating is important, but what is eating us is more important! Studies indicate that 70% of all illnesses are psychosomatic ("of, relating to, involving, or concerned with bodily symptoms caused by mental or emotional disturbance").

Worry has been listed as a leading cause of heart trouble, high blood pressure, stomach disorders and respiratory ailments. "I have never known a man to die from hard work, but many who have died from doubt" (Dr. Charles Mayo). The old English root from which we get worry means "to strangle," and people are strangling their lives with anxiety. If for no other reason, we should not worry because it is destructive to the Spirit's temple (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Worry falls into three classes. (1) *Things that have already happened*. Why worry? Eggs cannot be unscrambled and toothpaste cannot be put back in the tube. "Most worries are reruns" (Reader's Digest). Paul learned to put the past behind him (Philippians 3:13-14). If sin is involved, we should cleanse it in Christ's blood (Acts 22:16; Acts 8:22; John 1:7), and go on.

(2) *Things which must happen*. All the worry in the world cannot change some things, for they will happen anyway. We are going to die (Hebrews 9:27), so why worry about it? Prepare and let it come (Philippians 1:21).

(3) *Things which will never happen*. "It is not the tornadoes that get us, but the termites." It is said that 85 per cent of what we worry over never happens. Why should we waste our time (Ephesians 5:16)? Time should be invested in working. The ant wastes no time worrying about the future. Instead, it constantly works to prepare for the future (Proverbs 6:6-8). "Go to the ant."

CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE FATHER. It is sinful to worry because it says, in effect, "I do not trust my Father to take care of me." Worry is praying to the wrong god and is therefore an insult to Jehovah (cf. Psalms 37:1; Proverbs 3:5; 6; Philippians 4:6, 7).

Problems become smaller when they are seen in God's shadow. Martha was troubled about many things; but Mary was sitting at Jesus feet (Luke 10:38-42). Guess which one was content! "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). Our coins say, "In God We Trust," and so should our hearts (Proverbs 3:5; Psalm 9:10).

God is unlimited in what He can do (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:19), so my problems are not very big to Him. It is much like a child who becomes frustrated with a knotted shoestring. To him it is a major problem and an unsolvable dilemma. He may even deem it worth several tears. Daddy smiles to himself and quickly unties it. The difference is a matter of perspective. Our major difficulties are only knotted shoestrings to Almighty God. Why get so upset?

A minute of prayer is better than an hour of worrying (Philippians 4:6). We read where Jesus spent an entire night in prayer, but never where He spent one second in worry. His example is worthy of imitation. (1 Peter 2:21-22).

CHRISTIANS OUGHT NOT TO WORRY BECAUSE OF THE PROMISE. God made us a promise, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (6:33). He will keep it for He cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). If we worry about physical things after He said He would take care of them, we are telling Him that we think He is a liar or incapable of keeping His word. If we will faithfully worship Him, live right, work diligently in His vineyard, and put Him ahead of everything else, we will not miss any meals or die of exposure.

Jesus closes this section of His famous sermon by saying, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34). Each day has sufficient problems to solve without borrowing any from tomorrow. William Tyndale translated it, "For the day present hath ever enough of its own trouble."

We must learn to concentrate on today instead of yesterday and tomorrow. Philippians 3:13 teaches us to forget the things of the past. Matthew 6:34 teaches that each day has enough trouble of its own.

Yesterday is a cancelled check, tomorrow is a promissory note, only today is cash. God wants us to walk in the light He gives us, and not worry about the darkness beyond. When we get there, His light and help will make it clear. When we drive our cars at night, the headlights do not shine all the way to our destinations. They shine just a few feet in front of the car, but as we move forward, they keep ahead of us. God's light works the same way. The Master says, "Live one day at a time."

Love One Another

NEAL POLLARD

When people refused Jesus, John was one of two brothers who asked Jesus, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:54). Jesus rebuked him. The Lord explained that His mission was not to destroy lives.

In the garden at that dark hour of betrayal, Peter drew his sword, "and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear . . ." (John 18:10). Again, Christ called His apostle down and made a gesture of peace.

A treacherous Saul, "yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord . . ." (Acts 9:1), was confronted by Jesus regarding the Benjamite's brutality. Christ asked, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest . . ." (Acts 9:4, 5). Christ wanted His chosen man to end the destruction.

Jesus taught His disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). At another gathering, He said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Later in the same chapter, He added, "These things I command you, that you love one another."

Jesus came to this earth to teach His disciples courage, conviction, spiritual strength, and righteous judgment. This He did by deed and by word (cf. Acts 1:1). But, He also brought His followers a fuller understanding of compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and love through what He did and taught. One did not outweigh the other; rather, every trait complemented the others. The Bible reveals that His apostles and other disciples were listening to Him.

Paul teaches the source of this command. In I Thessalonians

four, he warns the church of the Thessalonians not to transgress and defraud their brethren in any situation (verse 6). Paul further teaches that one who rejects his fellow man in reality rejects God (verse 8). Then, he writes, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (verse 9). God says, "love one another" (John 13:34; 15:12).

Peter teaches the spirit of this command. Peter encourages Christians suffering fierce persecutions from without with divine incentives. First, he tells them that their faith in Christ, which has prompted them to love Him (I Peter 1:8), would lead to their salvation (1:9). Also, he reminds those Christians of how much Christ loved them (1:18-21). Then, Peter writes, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto *unfeigned love of the brethren*, see that ye *love one another with a pure heart fervently*" (1:22). Their brotherly love was to be sincere and intense. Brotherly love cannot be passive. It demonstrates its concern and care.

John teaches the strength of this command. Time declares the strength of the command, for it came "from the beginning" (I John 3:11; II John 5). Teaching from Christ declares the strength of the command (I John 3:23). Treasures declare the strength of the command because "if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love has been perfected in us" (I John 4:12). What benefits!

From whom does the command come? God! How do we obey it? Sincerely and earnestly! Why should we obey it? To please God; strengthen one another, and improve ourselves!

Some are hurting. Others are rejoicing. Many are unfaithful to their Lord. All of us need the blessings which come from giving and receiving brotherly love. Let us say with the Hebrews writer, "Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1)!

Providence And Worry

JOHNNY RAMSEY

Whoever said "worry saps the energy of life" was absolutely correct. Nothing so shackles mankind as do the fetters of care and the bondage of concern over matters we cannot control. Folk who have not learned to trust in God and His providential power are truly to be pitied. Such people are bereft of the guidance of the Almighty and the serenity of a life surrounded by the blessings of Christianity. In 1850 Charles

Dickens, in jest, wrote these words:

"Without Providence, what would become of the undertakers?"

There are cynics in every age who only ascribe death and suffering to God but never give Him credit for life and peace. Two centuries ago Cowper left penetrating words for us fellows to ponder:

"Behind a frowning providence

He hides a smiling face and works His sovereign will."

There is a passage in Psalms 97 that mightily contributes to our study concerning the vivid contrast between trusting in God and in being overwhelmed with worry. Let us notice the component parts of this rich section of the Old Testament.

No chapter of the Bible is any grander to emphasize the sovereignty of Jehovah and the twin attributes that grace His name—righteousness and justice. These are truly landmarks for living that should produce gladness in our hearts. In two verses that precede our study of Psalms 97 we rejoice in these comforting thoughts:

"That men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth" and "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

These pungent words of Psalm 83:18 and 84:12 remind us of the all-seeing eye of God, who alone can properly direct our faltering steps. Earth's temporal problems and difficulties cannot compare to eternal verities overseen by the One who is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalms 90:2). W.E. Brightwell beautifully wrote:

"The future beckons and I bow My God removes the care Behold,
He goes before me now And will my way prepare. He's here, and there,
and everywhere

In all the ways I've trod,

I've never passed beyond the sphere

Of the providence of God."

When we, as the creatures, glorify our Creator, the best of heaven and earth mesh in a rainbow of hope and beauty. But, when men do not like to retain God in their knowledge only chaos and ruin abide (Romans 1:28). The proper attitude for us is contained in the marvelous words of another Psalm:

"O Come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker."

There are basically three major points in the last part of Psalm 97 that ought to be emblazoned upon our hearts:

(1) If we love the Lord we must also hate evil.

(2) God preserves our souls.

(3) We should rejoice at the remembrance of His holiness.

We learn from these verses that God's providence and man's personal surrender to heaven's will go hand in hand. We cannot expect the benevolent mercy of the Father to sustain us if we war against the mandates of glory. He is able to guide us with unerring counsel and even receive us ultimately to that supernal realm but we can cancel such wondrous appointments with lives that are stubborn and rebellious (Matthew 23:37; John 1:11). One of the Bible's most encouraging verses is Psalms 97:11 for faithful followers of Jehovah:

"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

C.M. Wilson sets forth an anthem of praise for saints who deeply trust in the providence of God:

"Sing on, ye youful pilgrims While here on earth we stay, Let songs of home and Jesus Beguile each fleeting day; Sing on the grand old story Of His redeeming love, The everlasting chorus That fills the realms above!"

Verily, relying upon the providence of a gracious Creator ought to dissolve the weighty load of worry so many mortals carry with them daily. Let us trust in the Lord and lean not upon our own wisdom (Proverbs 3:5-7).

Attitudes Toward The Bible

JERRI MANASCO

"Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Proverbs 13:13). Modern reviewers would reverse the order of this great text by having Solomon say, "The word is of no consequence; all one must do is love God and his fellow man, abstain from 'law religion' and all will be well with him." The modern rejection of Solomon's observation also makes void the repeated admonitions in other passages in the Bible concerning fidelity to the word! God has magnified his word (Psalm 138:2). To despise the word is to despise the God who gave it! Certain destruction befalls those who reduce the Bible to nothing more than an advice column.

The people of Judah learned by experience that "every

transgression and disobedience received a just recompence or reward" (Hebrews 2:2). Though God had sent his prophets time and again to these people, offering them peace and pardon, "they mocked the messengers of God, and **DESPISED HIS WORDS**, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of God arose against his people, till there was no remedy. **THEREFORE** he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young men or maidens, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave all into his hand" (II Chronicles 36: 16, 17). Yes, "whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed."

There is despite shown today toward the word of God. To despise means to show contempt or disdain for something; thus, to despise the word of God is to show contempt for it! Some people unintentionally show despite for the word while others do so in open defiance of what God has said. Despite for the Bible is shown in many ways.

By rewriting what God has revealed some people show their contempt for the Bible. This rewriting can be in the form of a "new translation," which often proves to be no more than a personal interpretation! Our land proliferates with these now.

Some of the more frequent "rewrites" have nothing to do with the actual text of the Bible. Many people who would never think of rewriting the Bible text change the teaching of the Bible in practical application (or misapplication) of it. It is as bad to practically revise the Biblical statements and teachings as it is to physically alter the text. After all, what is the **REAL DIFFERENCE** in one who rewrites the Bible itself and one who simply neglects to obey the Bible as it is written?

The serpent in Eden is a good example of what we are talking about. The serpent revised the "text" and Eve revised the application! God said, "Thou shalt surely die." The serpent said, "Thou shalt not surely die." (Genesis 3:4). The serpent convinced Eve that a textual error had occurred and that what she heard is not at all what God meant to say! Things have not changed much since that time.

The controversy among brethren over the use of instruments of music in worship revolves around what God said and did not say! The Bible instruction is simply stated: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). The words **speaking, singing, and making melody in your heart** are enough to settle the matter, but someone has to come along and supply the phrase, "and add some instrument." This is tampering with the word of God, i.e., showing

despite for what God has said and is dangerous. Heed the last clause in Proverbs 13:13!

Others despise the Bible teaching on Christian deportment. While the Bible insists on modesty and proper influence, some insist that this doesn't apply in their case or that the times have changed and so have the rules. The Bible, however, still contains 1 Timothy 2:9, 10! Many members of the church will agree in the Bible class over certain issues, and then they revise their beliefs Monday through Saturday! This shows practical neglect of the word of God.

Taking Bible passages out of context is another way that some have of demonstrating despite for the revealed will. Many "teachers" abound who use Bible passages in ways not intended by the inspired writers. The devil is an expert at this art(?) of pseudo-application. He proved his expertise when he approached Jesus with misapplied scriptures, "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If you be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Matthew 4:5, 6; quoted from Psalm 91:11). The quotation was accurate, but the application was not. Jesus was not sent to do foolish things at the insistence of his arch-enemy! The Lord replied with another quotation, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7).

This is not a case of one scripture contradicting another, but of one scripture qualifying another. There are unscrupulous (or self-deceived men, perhaps) who quote verse after verse to entice unsuspecting souls to send sums of money to fill the coffers of some "ministry." How long will it be before the Lord's church will be defiled by this technique? (Or it is already in some places).

When one chooses to live in error he will show contempt for the Bible by rejecting what the Bible says. Jehoiakim physically mutilated a revealed text of scripture (Jeremiah 36). Though others may not have done as Jehoiakim did, their disdain for the sacred revelation is shown in their attitude toward what God has revealed.

Amaziah the false priest ordered Amos the true prophet to cease preaching in Samaria: "Prophecy not any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court" (Amos 7:10-13). Amaziah apparently supposed that if he didn't have to be bothered by the divine judgment that followed from disobedience. The people of Jerusalem thought that if the prophets would just quit preaching about judgment, then it would not come to pass (Isaiah 30:8-10). The fact is that you

cannot erase the word of God by refusal to listen to it! Rejecting truth will not release us from its demands.

Retaining tradition when that tradition is contrary to the Bible shows despite for the Bible. While not openly denying the Bible, those who uphold the preciousness of human tradition are compelled to read into the scripture text something that will justify their error. The doctrine of infant baptism is lamely defended on the ground of "household baptism" that one must insert into the text in Acts 16:14, 15, 33-34. The doctrine of proxy baptism is based on an abuse of 1 Corinthians 15:29. The doctrines of the rapture, premillennialism, impossibility of apostasy, and many other such traditions are defended through perversions of scripture. Such mishandling of the Bible makes it of none effect (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:9).

When imagination is exalted over revelation, the Bible falls into the bin of contempt. For example, Bible prophecies have been pushed into every scheme that human minds can concoct. Latter day "prophets" have applied the Book of Revelation to just about every conceivable historical event! The Book of Daniel has been abused by the sensationalists. Imaginations have run wild in the last few years as some religious charlatans have claimed to have the special "key" to Bible prophecy. Infidels have likewise had a field day in pointing out these failed prophecies. The fact is THESE PROPHECIES HAVE FAILED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT BIBLE PROPHECIES BUT ARE THE SPECULATIONS OF OVER-ACTIVE MINDS!!!

One who loves the truth will not despise the Bible. The word of God is the delight of all who want to know God's will (Psalm 119:105; 1:1; 119:97). People who love the Bible are content to discover and obey the truth revealed in the sacred scriptures.

The rich man in Luke 16:15-31 learned all too late that the revealed word is the only word God has provided. After asking that Lazarus be allowed to return from the dead to his brothers, the rich man was told, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." IF ONE DESPISED THE LIVING WORD, HE WILL NOT BE MOVED BY THE APPEARANCE OF ONE FROM THE DEAD! Sign seekers have no faith at all in the word that has been confirmed (Hebrews 2:3, 4; Mark 16:20).

Destruction is inevitable for those who despise the word of God. But the positive side is that "he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded" (Proverbs 13:13). Fearing the commandment means to take it for what it says, believe it for what it is, practice it for what it teaches, and lay hold on the hope that it offers.