

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Published by Church of Christ, Box 3815,
New Delhi-110049

Pleading For The Restoration Of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 16

June 1985

No. 2

EDITORIAL



The Sayings Of Jesus And The Words Of The New Testament Writers

When we go out to talk to people about the Bible then we come across all kinds of ideas towards the scriptures. One of the most prominent one is that there are those who seem to think there is a difference in what Jesus said and what the other writers said. Such is to say, they accept the words of Jesus as being the inspired will of God, but want to reject what Paul, Peter, and others had to say. If a quotation is given by Paul, then they may come back with this statement, "Yes, but Jesus did not say that." When it is pointed out that Paul and all of the other writers of the New Testament were inspired of God to say and write down what we have recorded in the New Testament, they still want to take exception. Although one can take the actual words of Jesus and teach the sinner what he should do to be saved, the church that he should be a member of, the way he should live, and many other things, still there is a reason for the other writings, and they ought to be accepted. Many times the rest of the scriptures are

rejected because of some false idea that has been developed over the years, or as a result of trying to get around some truth as stated by one of the New Testament writers.

Our task in this case is not to prove that Jesus spoke the truth, since that is accepted already, but to show that all of the New Testament is inspired of God, and therefore, what the different writers said must be equally accepted as being the truth of God.

Let us begin by showing the relationship that Jesus had with the Apostles. He had chosen them and called them to follow him. (Matthew 4:18-25). We read of all of their names in Matthew 10. But he called them to train them and to prepare them to carry on his work after his departure. Although Christ was the Son of God, and they were but fallible men, still he had to depend on them to do the work that needed to be done. To be sure that they taught only the truth, and made no mistakes, then he promised to send them the Comforter, or the Holy Spirit, to guide them into all truth. Christ said to them, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7). Going on, he says, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : and he will shew you things to come." (John 16:13). Again, he said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26). In Acts 1:8, after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and just before his return to the Father in heaven, he said to the Apostles, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." In Acts 2 we have the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when Jews had come together from all over the world to celebrate this feast day, and the record tells us how the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, was

poured out upon the Apostles, and as evidenced of them being filled with the Spirit, it says that they began to speak in tongues or in the languages of those assembled on that day. Then after they had preached the gospel to this large assembly, and some three thousand had obeyed the Lord and were added to the church, we are told, "And fear came upon every soul : and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." (Acts 2:43). Now let us note some things here :

1. Christ was going to send the Comforter or the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, which he did.
2. He would call to their remembrance all the things that Christ had taught them, which he did.
3. He would guide them into all truth, which he did.
4. He would enable them to speak in other languages or the languages of the people that they were teaching, and he did.
5. He would enable them to perform miracles to prove that they were sent from God to proclaim his will, which he did.

Keeping that in mind, let us go on and notice some other things that relates to all of this. After Peter and the Apostles had confessed Christ as the Son of God, then he said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:18, 19). Now observe that Christ explained to Peter that upon the confession that he had made, that is, that Christ was the Son of God, that upon that rock or upon that confession, that he would build his church. He then said that he would give to them the keys of the kingdom of heaven, or the authority to teach what one would have to do to become a member of the kingdom or church, and therefore by that authority, whatever they taught would be bound in heaven and whatever they loosed, or the things that they did not require, would not be bound or required in heaven. Such was to say that

what they taught, being guided and directed by the Holy Spirit, would be just as binding as what he had said or might say.

In the Great Commission, Christ said to the Apostles, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:18-20). Again, he said, "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). Now note what Jesus said. He said that all power or authority belonged to him in heaven and in earth. Then he commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He further instructed them to teach their converts all the things that he had taught them. But when we read of the things they taught, and then we explain that that is what one must do, then who are you or anyone else to reject that by saying that Jesus didn't say it ? Of course Jesus said it. He said it to the Apostles, and then he commanded them to teach it, and to be sure that no mistake was made, then he had the Holy Spirit to guide them in saying it, and in writing it down. Therefore when we read what they said, then we must accept it as the truth, because it is the truth.

Now listen to these words by Jesus, as he spoke to the Apostles, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also." (John 15:20). Now did you hear what Jesus said ? He said that "if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also." In other words, he was saying that if they obeyed his teaching then they would likewise obey their teaching. Why ? Because Christ had authorized the Apostles to speak on his behalf, that is, as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. Now the opposite of that would be that if they rejected the words of the Apostles then they would likewise reject the words of Christ.

Paul declared that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Peter said that "the prophecy came

not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21). The Hebrew writer said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will ?" (Hebrews 2:1-4). Who was that ? The Apostles.

The Apostle Paul declared that he had preached the one pure gospel of Christ. Then he said that should he or even an angel come along and preach a different gospel, then the curse of the Lord would be upon him. Finally, he said, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:12).

The Apostle John wrote, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19).

Without going further, I think we must conclude then that whatever the writers of the New Testament said is inspired of God, and for one to accept it then that is equal to that of accepting what Christ said, but to reject it is also to reject what Christ said. Another way of putting it, to accept the one is to accept the other, to reject the one is to reject the other. You either accept both or reject both. You cannot have one without the other. You do not honor Christ when you say that you will accept what he says but you will not accept what the New Testament writers said. To reject their word is to reject the Holy Spirit and to reject Christ who sent the Holy Spirit to inspire them to write what they did.

Please think about these things, and read the scriptures, believe them, and obey them. Accept all of them, not just a small part of them. Remember that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God.



**associate
editorial**

Secret Of Happiness

Man, wants to be happy, but he is not happy, in fact. Some think that if they have lots of money they would be happy. But they are wrong, because man cannot find true and lasting happiness in money. Money can buy houses, beautiful clothes, electronic gadgets, and other things of the world for which man craves, but man cannot find the true joy and peace in them. And the undeniable fact is this that whosoever increases his wealth and possessions also at the same time heaps upon himself worries and anxieties, because with the increase of man's wealth or possessions his responsibilities also increase, resulting in worries and anxieties.

Then there are some who want to seek happiness in drugs and liquor, and in other works of the flesh. But this, too, is impossible because the kind of happiness—if it could be called happiness—man obtains in drugs and liquor and revelries, etcetera, is short lived. It is momentary or for a little while, and the consequences of such things are always bad. In fact, there is nothing in the world through which man can have true and lasting joy. Yes, man can accumulate on earth many possessions and can become very rich; he can also become a great and famous scholar or an artist; he can have fame honour and glory on earth among men. But, the fact is, all these things will be with him only as long as he breaths in this world. Death is no respecter of persons. All must die, small and great, rich and poor. And when man

dies, death not only separates his soul from his body but it also separates him from all earthly things for ever.

Jesus once gave a parable and said, "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this : I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.' And he said, 'I will say to my soul, Soul you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink and be merry.' But when he was yet thinking upon these things, suddenly he heard a voice, this was the voice of God, who said to him : 'You Fool ! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have accumulated ?' "

How true are these words ! We can accumulate money and possessions of the world and become rich; we can get the best education and become great scholars; we can become great artists; and politically we might become great leaders, but when our souls are required by God or when the soul leaves this earthly body and goes away, then of what use will all of these things be ? After death where we will go and live in eternity ? Will we be able to derive any pleasure out of those things in that spiritual world too ? If in this life a man gains even the whole world, Jesus has said once, and yet loses his soul in that spiritual world, what will he be profited ?

There is nothing in this world through which man can obtain true and eternal joy. The secret of true happiness, however, lies in the fact that one must surely know that the moment his soul is required, he is ready to enter God's heaven to have eternal life. And this assurance comes to man only when he knows that God has forgiven him all his sins, and he has been reconciled to God, and he is living his life according to God's will. How can man know this ?

Only God can tell us about this. God's book, the Bible, tells us that God loves every person, and that He is not willing that any should perish in hell because of sin. He wants all to be saved from their sins and enter His heaven to live with him. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ, God's Son, through his death is

the propitiation for the sins of the world. The Bible also says, that Christ by the will of God, suffered and died on the cross. There, through his sacrificial death, he paid the debt for every individual, because he died for all. Through his death we are justified before God, because Christ, God's Son, by His grace has taken upon Himself our punishment. Remember, His death was for the sins of the world. He died for you, and for me, and for all. This is the Good News, of the Bible.

It is therefore, the Bible that teaches that Christ is the propitiation for man's sins also teaches that if man will believe in Jesus Christ with all his heart and will repent of his sins or will quit sinning, and will be baptised (immersed in water) for the forgiveness of sins, and then if he will live the kind of life God wants him to live through Christ, then because of the death of Christ, and being in Him, that person stands justified before God. How wonderful is this !

The true happiness and the real joy are found only in this fact that man should know that God has forgiven him all his sins, and when through death he will leave this world he will enter God's heaven to live with him forevermore.

It does not matter how much money you have, or how much education you have, or how much power you have. Because the Bible says, "All that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of God but is of the world, and the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

Are you willing to do what God says ?

She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

Busybodies

Sometimes children play a game. They sit in a circle and the leader whispers something to the friend next to her. She turns and whispers what she hears to the next person. The message

travels around the circle until it comes back to the leader. Then she stands and states what she whispered originally and what was whispered back to her at the last. There is a big laugh when the group hears how the message changed as it traveled quickly from mouth to mouth.

The game the children play is called "gossip", and it tells us something. When people begin to gossip and to pass messages from one friend to another, the story changes drastically as it travels along. But, unlike the game, gossip in real life is no joke and usually it is intended to hurt someone.

The scriptures have something to say about gossip. They speak of some women who "... learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not." 1 Timothy 5:13.

So the Christian woman cannot afford to be guilty of gossiping. We must watch carefully what passes through our lips. There is a good test we should give before we say anything about anyone.

(1) Is it true? If the "news" is only something I have heard but do not know for a fact to be true, then I should not repeat it.

(2) Is it kind? Even if the news I have heard is true, will I be doing a kindness to the person if I repeat it? If so, if it is good news, a good thing, then I will want to tell everyone. But if it would hurt someone, then I should not be scattering it abroad, even though it may be true.

(3) Is it necessary? Sometimes bad news is true and sometimes it must be told to particular people for their welfare or guidance. Only in such a case would the Christian woman talk of what she knows, and even then her attitude should be one of regret and sorrow, not of relishing some juicy morsel of gossip.

James 3:2-10 says: "For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot

desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles ! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."

Christian women, keep close guard on your tongues !

How To Have GROWING CHURCHES

by Steve Williams

Everyone wants to see the church grow. The question we all face is how to get the church to grow. Let us compare this to human growth. Basically the more we eat, the more weight we will gain. There are other factors to consider such as health and exercise, but the more calories and vitamins we take in, the more weight we will gain. In order to see the church grow, though, there must likewise be a feeding of the meat of the word of God to hungry souls. The more the word of God is fed, the more the church will grow.

The next question, though, is more difficult to answer. What are the most efficient methods of feeding people with the word of God. Some methods work better than others. Some very good methods were used in the first century church because they grew very rapidly. At first three thousand were baptized. (Acts 2:41). The rest of the book of Acts is the story of this amazing growth of the early church. How can we imitate them ? Is there any clue as to their methods which brought about their success ? There is—in Acts.

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (Acts 5:32). If we are going

to see the Lord's church grow, first we must teach *daily*. We can not teach only on Sunday morning or on Wednesday night. If you fed your human body only once a week, it would not grow. You would begin to lose weight and would become ill. Likewise we cannot feed God's word only once a week and expect to see results.

Second, if we are going to see the church grow, we must teach in *every place*. The early church did not confine their teaching only to church buildings or meeting houses. They taught in the synagogues, in the market places, and in houses. (Acts 5:42; 14:1). Meeting in houses is a very effective way to experience church growth. Many people will not attend religious services at a church meeting house. They might walk a block to a friend's house, drink a cup of tea, and then sing and listen to a brief lesson from the Bible. One church can even carry on several such meetings on evenings during the week, allowing capable men in each church to teach. If one church has four such meetings, then four teachers would be needed. These four would only have to prepare one lesson each month and then teach it four times, once at each meeting. The early church had such meetings and they grew very rapidly. (Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phile. 2).

Third, if we are going to see the church grow, we must attempt to teach *every person*. We are to teach "all nations" (Mt. 28:19), "every creature" (Mk. 16:15), or "all nations". (Lk. 24:27). No person is to be untouchable with the gospel. God is not a respecter of persons and he desires that all would be saved. We should imitate him in this way.

Fourth, if we are going to see the church grow, we need *every member* to teach non-Christians the gospel. Jesus trained twelve. These twelve could not do it alone so they trained others. Once Paul trained Timothy to preach, he knew Timothy could not do his work alone, so he told him that he should commit the gospel "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2). Every member of the church can teach. We need men who will teach other men. We need women who will teach other women. We need teenagers who will teach other teenagers,

In order to have growing churches we need every member of the church teaching every person every day in every place. This means we must do more than have religious services once a week. Let us do more so that we can have growing churches.

Cannot Sin

Ben F. Vick

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (I John. 3:9).

John, the apostle of love, often mentioned by inspiration the subject of sin. Out of the 105 verses of I John, sin, as either a verb or noun, is mentioned 27 times. In this short article I want to give some attention to I John 3:9, which is a difficult passage for some.

The word *sin* means to miss the mark. The inspired record defines sin in the following ways : "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law : for sin is the transgression of the law." (I Jno. 3:4). "All unrighteousness is sin : and there is a sin not unto death." (I Jno. 5:17). "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (Jas. 4:17). "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith : for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23). Thus, to sin is to miss the mark, to transgress the law, to commit unrighteousness, a failure to do good when we know better, and that which is not of faith.

It was Addison who said, "The most natural division of all offenses is into those of omission and those of commission." Sins of omission are simply omitting to do that which is right. He who is guilty of a sin of omission is one who omits to do that which is right. One who is guilty of sins of commission is one who does those things which are wrong. James 4:17 deals with sins of omission. The "presumptuous sins" mentioned by the Psalmist could be categorized under sins of commission, (Psa. 19:13).

But what did John mean when he stated that whosoever is born (begotten, ASV) of God "doth not commit sin"? "Commit" in the Greek New Testament is in the present tense, which expresses continual and habitual action. Thus, it carries the idea of continually committing or practicing sin.

The words "he cannot sin" in Berry's Interlinear *Greek-English New Testament* translates the original with "he is not able to sin." "To sin" is an infinitive in the present tense. Thus, it means he is not able to keep on sinning, as the present tense would indicate.

Even without a smattering of knowledge of the original language, one can be assured that I John 3:9 does not teach that the child of God can live a life of sinless perfection. John, in earlier verses, plainly declared that those to whom he wrote (children of God, brethren) do sin: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (I Jno. 1:8-10). One of the purposes for which John wrote was to prevent Christians from sinning. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that [in order that] ye sin not." (I Jno. 2:1). Why would John even pen such a letter for this purpose if it be not possible for children of God to sin? But I John 3:9 is dealing with being a slave to sin. (Jno. 8:34; Rom. 6:11-17).

It should also be remembered that "cannot" does not always mean impossible. When Joseph's brethren stood before him, Judah spoke in behalf of Benjamin. He said, "The lad cannot leave his father . . ." (Gen. 44:22). But as the Genesis record tells us, Benjamin did leave his father to go down into Egypt with his brethren. Jesus, in teaching on answered prayer, relates the story of the one who calls on his friend at midnight, requesting three loaves of bread. The friend says, "Trouble me not: . . . I cannot [emphasis mine, BFV] rise and give thee." (Lk. 11:7). However, the Lord says, "Though he *will* not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he *will* rise and give him as many as he needeth." (Lk. 11:8, emphasis

mine, BFV). It wasn't that he was physically unable to rise and fulfill his request, but he did not will to rise and give to him. The Lord said "he will rise." The man who excused himself from the great supper on the grounds he had married a wife said, "I cannot come." (Lk. 14:20). It was not that he was physically unable: he just chose not to attend. "Cannot sin" does not mean that the child of God cannot help but refrain from sin or the practice of it. If "he cannot sin" means it is impossible for one born again to sin, then, what about Simon the sorcerer? Under the sound of Philip's preaching concerning "the kingdom of God" and "the name of Jesus Christ," he believed and was baptized as the other Samaritans did. (Acts 8:11, 12). To deny he was a child of God is a plain rejection of what the Bible says. But he yielded to the temptation of wanting the power that only the apostles had (i.e., to impart spiritual gifts) and tried to purchase it with money. In this he sinned. Peter, for his actions, was rebuked before all by Paul for discriminating against the Gentiles. (Gal. 2:11-14). Brethren can err from the truth and must be converted. (Jas. 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1). Therefore, these examples show that "cannot sin" does not mean impossible.

The reason the child of God doth not commit sin is because "his seed," the word of God (1k. 8:11) remains in him. The Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psa. 119:11). When the word of God becomes engrafted (implanted) into our lives, then we, as Jesus, can meet the temptations of the devil with, "It is written," and overcome his attacks. (Matt. 4:1-11; Jas. 1:21).

Abel's Faithful Offering

Gary C. Hampton

Hebrews 11 could well be called Faith's Hall of Fame. In verse 2, the writer tells us, "For by it the elders obtained a good report." One of those who obtained a good report was Abel. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God

testifying of his gifts : and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” (verse 4). Abel’s faithful offering teaches us several lessons today.

First, we note that God was pleased with Abel’s offering. “And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering : But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.” (Genesis 4:3-5). The only difference in these sacrifices according to the Hebrew writer is that Abel offered by faith. We can see that it was a working faith because the text says he offered. John describes that offering as a work. (1 John 3:11-12). We need, like Abel, to hear what God says and do the things he asks. James tells us, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2:17). Earlier he had written, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only deceiving your own selves.” (James 1:22).

Second, we can see that God witnessed Abel’s sacrifice and its rightness. The words “witness” and “testifying” come from the same Greek word meaning give a good report of. The word “righteous” tells us that Abel had followed the divine law. We therefore assume God had given some directions. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17). It may be that God had commanded that they offer animal sacrifices. Or it may be that God wanted the first and the best. Remember, in the Genesis account we learn that Cain offered of the “fruit of the ground” and there is no comment as to the quality. However, concerning Abel’s sacrifice it is said that he offered “firstlings of his flock” and “of the fat thereof.” Certainly we know that God wanted obedience and not just sacrifice. (1 Samuel 15:22). We should be assured that God will see our gifts just as surely as he did theirs and he will reward us if we are faithful in the doing of his will. (Matthew 6:1-4, 5-6 and 16-18).

Third, Abel is dead, but still speaks. Of course, he speaks in that his blood calls for vengeance. (Hebrews 12:24; Genesis 4:10). However, it also seems that he speaks through his example of obedient faith that has been recorded for all time in the pages of

God's inspired word. His example reminds us that God's favour is always upon those who obey His will. (Matthew 7:21).

We need Abel's faith today. God will be pleased with our obedient service, testify in a favorable way concerning our service and Christ's witness concerning our efforts in His cause will speak louder than anything we might have men say about us in this life. (Matthew 25:21).

Jesus' Beatitudes vs Satan's Beatitudes

By W. A. Holley

It is suggested that Matthew 5:1-12 be read and committed to memory. Those who follow Jesus' instruction are happy because their lives are given to him.

Jesus and Satan are competitors. Jesus is the head of his army. Satan is the head of his army. It should be recognized that the battle between right and wrong has been going on since Eden. (Gen. 3:1-19; Jno. 8:44; I Jno. 3:10).

Jesus offers his followers peace and happiness, but not without persecution, hardship and toil. While claiming to offer mankind the best of everything, Satan really gives his disciples the reverse of everything promised by Jesus Christ.

That our readers might appreciate this point, we offer for your consideration a stark contrast drawn from the text above.

(1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit : for their's is the kingdom of heaven." Satan says, "Blessed are those who feel they have no need of God; you can get along without him."

(2) "Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted." Satan says, "Blessed are they who are cruel and hard hearted."

(3) "Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth." But Satan says, "Blessed are they who are filled with pride, and arrogance and haughtiness,".

(4) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled." Satan says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after wickedness, worldliness, and pornographic lewdness, for they shall have minds filled with garbage."

(5) "Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy." But Satan says, "Blessed are the merciless, pitiless, and the ruthless : for such shall show how hard they are."

(6) "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God." But Satan says, "Blessed are those who are corrupt, defiled, and polluted in heart and life : for they shall turn the earth into a hell."

(7) "Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God." But, Satan says, "Blessed are the peace-breakers, troublemakers, and the disturbers of harmony and unity for they shall be my children."

(8) "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." But, Satan says, "Blessed are those who persecute Christians, blackening their names, and seek to destroy their holy influence : for they are faithful servants in my kingdom."

(9) "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." But, Satan, says, "Blessed are ye when you will endure persecution and hardships unto death : for ye have shown that your allegiance to Jesus Christ is not very strong."

(10) "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." "Rejoice, ye servants of mine," says Satan, "and be glad because you killed the prophets, the servants of God : for their voice should not be heard throughout the earth."

The Love Chapter

Bob Duncan

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians has been called, and properly so, the *love* chapter. The Greek word *agape*, translated "charity" in the king James Version, is a noun form of the same word which is translated "love" in such passages as John 3:16 For God so *loved* the world . . ." and *Matthew 5:44 "Love your enemies . . ."* It denotes a feeling of care and concern for the welfare of its object. It has been described by some as active good will. It leads to the doing of that which will be beneficial to its object. Love, mind you, is not the doing of good deeds, but it is that feeling of care and concern which prompts the doing of good deeds.

It is interesting to observe that the doing of good may be prompted by motives other than love. This chapter mentions the possibility that one might bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and even give his body to be burned, and yet be prompted by some motive other than love.

The subject of love seems to have been introduced in the letter to the Corinthians to impress upon them the fact that there was something far more important in the early church than possessing miraculous gifts. "But covet earnestly the best gifts : and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way," said Paul. (I Corinthians 12:31). It was then that he pointed out to them that possessing the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, the gift of knowledge, etc. were all unprofitable, unless they were accompanied by love.

When the apostle said, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind," did he not mean for those who were bickering over the use of their spiritual gifts to see that their spiritual gifts had not made them patient and kind ? When he said, "charity envieth not," was he not alluding to the fact that, though they had an abundance of spiritual gifts, they were still envious and jealous of one another ? When he said charity "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," did he not refer to the fact that their spiritual gifts

had been allowed to make them proud and egotistical ? When he said charity "doth not behave itself unseemly," was he not calling attention to their discourteous behavior in connection with the use of the spiritual gifts ? When he said charity "seeketh not her own," did not every Corinthian who had acted selfishly in the use of his spiritual gift feel rebuked ? It is not hard to see why love (charity) is called "a more excellent way."

But it is a more excellent way also because of its permanent nature, as contrasted with the temporary nature of the miraculous gifts. This is the reason the apostle said, "Charity never faileth : but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away". (13:8). Prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are here mentioned as illustrative of all miraculous gifts. They were temporary; they would fail, cease, vanish away. Even that miraculous knowledge of the first century was said to be "in part" (13:9), and was to be done away. (verse 10). When was it to be done away ? Paul said, "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away". (verse 10). That which was "in part" was in the process of being completed or perfected. The New Testament is the completed or perfected revelation of the will of God. Miraculous gifts were given to effect its perfect revelation and confirmation. When such had been effected, the miraculous gifts would no longer be needed.

Love is called a more excellent way also because it pertains to the church in its mature state, while the miraculous gifts pertained only to the infant state of the church. Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things". (I corinthians 13:11). Could the Corinthian Christians not see that the spiritual gifts, upon which they placed such emphasis, pertained only to the infant stage of the church ? Did they not realize the church would outgrow its need for miraculous gifts as it grew into maturity, and as the New Testament grew near its completion ? But the need for love would never be outgrown. It never has been, and it never will be.

In the closing verse of chapter thirteen the writer mentions three great things which would remain after the miraculous gifts were done away : faith , hope and love. Then without any reluctance or any apology, he placed love at the top of the heap. May we never lose sight of its greatness or the greatness of our need for it in our own age !

The Drinking Problem

Dalton Key

One study has shown one out of every four American teenagers to be either an alcoholic or a problem drinker. The alcohol business currently brings in 30 billion dollars each year in advertising. It comes as no surprise, then, to learn that as of the late 1970's, 71% of American adults drank alcoholic beverages regularly. And, that being true, we can easily believe the statistics which reveal that one half of all fatal automobile accidents involve the use of alcohol.

"Show me in the Bible where it says you can't take a little drink now and then !" A reader issues this stern challenge. It is not unusual. Most all who preach or teach the Bible face similar challenges regularly.

Many Bible passages teach the folly of drinking and drunkenness (and the two are mighty hard to separate). Solomon warns, "Wine isa mocker, strong drink is raging : and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise". (Proverbs 20:1). Again, the wise man compares the danger of strong drink to the bite of a serpent and the sting of an adder. (Proverbs 23:32). Drunkenness is condemned in I Corinthians 6:10 and is listed as one of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:21. Paul gives this warning : "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God". (Galatians 5:21).

Yet one of the severest death knells to drinking comes packaged in a passage which doesn't even mention the drinking problem as such. Paul writes, "Prove all things; hold fast that

which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil". (I Thesalonians 5:21, 22). If that were as close as God's Word got to treating the drinking problem, it would be close enough for us. Just these two verses alone would make the consumption of alcohol wrong. The word of God, the educated conscience, and just good "horse sense" all agree that, abstinence is good and drunkenness is evil. The evils of strong drink can clearly be seen all about us : in the morgue; on the drawn, sometimes battered faces of the drinker's friends and family; in the drinker's wasted life; and in the gutter, where his nauseous stomach has been only partially and temporarily relieved, and in which he finally collapses from his sickening stupor.

Drinking has the "appearance of evil." It also carries with it the taste of evil, the feeling of evil, the sounds of evil, and the smell of evil ! One good smell of the "liquor breath" stench should convince anyone of drinking's evil ! If our young people had the opportunity to take a good sniff down skid row before taking their first drink, they just might never take it.

What does the Bible say about drinking ? The Bible reveals drinking as dreadfully dangerous and woefully wrong ! The Bible's underlying admonition is think—don't drink.

"Keep Thyself Pure"

Raymond Elliot

The apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, gave this young man some timely advice which is sorely needed in this 20th century. In I Timothy 5:22, we read, "Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other man's sins : keep thyself pure." It is the last statement of that verse that we want to emphasize presently. Jesus taught in Matthew 5:8 : "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Christians are exhorted in Hebrews 12:14 to "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification [holiness] without which no man shall see the Lord." We conclude from these latter two passages that a pure heart and a pure life are essential in order to see the Lord God. A pure life is the outgrowth

of a pure heart. Solomon declared : "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he." (Proverbs 23:7). It is impossible to think evil and live a good life; likewise it is impossible to think pure and live an impure life.

It is important that we understand that our thought process controls our actions. That is why Paul instructed the Philippian brethren to think on things that are pure, true, lovely, honorable, of good report and things that would be worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8). To do such would prevent evil thoughts and evil deeds. Jesus taught : "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings : these are the things which defile the man..." (Matthew 15:18,19). Our thoughts are influenced by what we see, what we hear, what we read and by our association with other people. Scenes on television and on movie screens which portray nudity, sexual acts, etc. cause one to think impure thoughts. This is also true with pornographic literature. Even scantily attired women can contribute to men's thinking lustful thoughts. Jesus taught in Matthew 5:27,28 : "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery : but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Some men, of course, have "eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin." (II Peter 2:14). However, women professing godlines should be very careful in their actions and dress not to encourage evil thoughts in the hearts of men. Christian ladies are instructed by Paul to "adorn themselves in modest apparel. (I Timothy 2:9). When women wear apparel that reveals 80 percent of their bodies, such could hardly be called "modest".

Christian young people should avoid places and people which would encourage impure thoughts. Movies and television programs that are filled with illicit sex, suggestive remarks and dirty jokes will eventually pollute the mind. Petting on dates contributes often to the sin of fornication. It is difficult for one to keep pure in this sexually oriented society, but the requirement is still to be heeded which was given over nineteen hundred years ago, and that is to "Keep thyself pure." By the strength of the Lord, it is possible.

Honest ? Honest ?

Ancil Jenkins

Are you disturbed by the lack of honesty in our society ? We often hear of the accusations against some of our Government officials that they have taken bribes. We are constantly reminded that people are not honest. It becomes more real to us when we lock our cars, or we hide our valuables in our homes, or we are required to furnish positive identification to pay by cheque.

Have you ever examined your own honesty ? You might be shocked that I would think you would be otherwise. I am not talking about stealing money or flagrant lying. Do you have an attitude of honesty toward God, others, and yourself ?

Are you honest with God ? James exhorts us to submit to God. (James 4:7). We acknowledge him as God and Father, but are we honest with him ? Have we totally submitted to him ? Is there some part of our life we have retained for our own pleasure and not consecrated to him. The Internal Revenue looks with disfavor at those who withhold some part of their salary from taxation. God's disfavor is so much greater to those who refuse fully to submit.

Are you honest with others ? Do you hide your feelings from them that you need to express ? Love is not love until it is expressed by word or action. How often someone dies and the cry is heard. "If he only knew how much we loved him" The same honesty is needed in expressing displeasure. If someone has hurt, or offended you, you must tell him or be dishonest. This is not only dishonesty, but even disobedience to the command of Jesus. (Matthew 18:15).

Are you honest with yourself ? Do you admit both your faults and abilities. If you are not willing to see and accept failures and deficiencies in your life, you are deceiving yourself. You may also deceive yourself by denying your ability to do something. This may be modesty, but false modesty. Moses was not honest with himself and God when he attempted to decline the leadership of the children of Israel.

Honest ? Honesty applies to far more than money.

Denominationalism

W. Edwin Kearley

Denominationalism is one of the destructive forces against spiritual life. Denominationalism is a word that is a synonym for such words as sectarianism, faction, schism and division. If we use the word to refer to a quarter of a dollar or a pie, we refer to division that is acceptable. If we use the word to refer to the followers of Christ, we have committed an error.

Competing parties are condemned in the scriptures. Paul commanded : "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Preachers of denominations are conditioned by their teachers and so condition those who hear them to believe that doctrine does not matter. They say if we believe in Christ and the Bible we are united. This statement taken at face value is true. But are we left to believe Christ approves of all religious teaching ? Does he say one thing to one person and the opposite to another ? Christ does not speak out of two sides of his mouth.

John wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (II John 9). The word doctrine means teaching. We have a responsibility to know the will of the Lord. (Eph. 5:17; Gal. 1:6-9). Surely the Lord will not hold us responsible for knowing his doctrine or will if we cannot know his will.

Infidelity is a contributing cause to religious division. One of the reasons Jesus prayed for unity is "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20-21).

Unity is demanded by the inspired writers. Many mistake union with unity. It is possible to tie two cat's tails together and achieve a union. The results will be a far cry from unity. Paul begged Corinthian church "that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." (I Cor. 1:10). To the Philippian

church he urged, "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." (Phil. 2:2). To the Ephesians he wrote "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3).

Denominationalism is division among those who claim to follow Christ. This division is caused by the party spirit.

What are the causes of schism in christendom? As early as 150 A.D., there was a *change in the organization of the church as authorized by the scriptures*. In the Christ established church, a plurality of men who were designated by at least six twin terms served in the local church. Those terms are elders or presbyters (Acts 14:23; I Tim. 5:17), bishops or overseers (I Tim. 3:1; Acts 20:28), shepherds or pastors (Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:2 NIV). These terms describe the work they do in the vineyard of the Lord. Their sphere of activity is limited to the local church. The New Testament authorizes no organization above the local church. Peter's order to elders was, "Feed the flock of God which is among you..." (I Pet. 5:2). This condemns conferences, synods, conventions, etc., that make any regulations or laws binding on the local church.

Creed making caused more division. The men who wrote the Bible through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, bound the scriptures as the only creed authorized for the church. (John 12:48; Gal. 1:6-9; II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:3).

The first human creed for the church was written at the city of Nice in 325 A.D. It was hailed as the means of uniting the church. Instead division was multiplied. The great debate over the trinity began there and continues today. Other creeds have only further fragmented those who would follow Christ.

There is a great need for a return to the Bible as our only creed. This would answer Christ's prayer for unity.

Protestantism, though it tried to reform the Roman church, resulted in denominationalism. The product of these efforts was more division with more creeds.

May we come back to the Bible and "speak where the Bible speaks, call Bible things by Bible names, do Bible things in Bible ways. In matters of faith let there be unity, in matters of opinion let there be liberty, and in all matters let there be love." (I Pet. 4:11).

A Merry Heart And A Happy Smile

Earlene Rose

He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. (Proverbs 15:15).

A merry heart and a happy smile
 Can ease a multitude
 Of aches and pains and sad refrains
 In life's brief interlude.
 A cheerful smile begets a friend,
 And ties a golden link
 Between two hearts where friendship starts
 More quickly than you think
 A merry heart and a happy smile,
 A most delightful thought !
 They "buy" more happiness in life
 Than money ever bought.

Life Is A Series Of Choices— Good Or Bad

Edsel Burleson

At a leadership workshop of an educational conference held in Houston in 1980 a speaker made this observation : "We worship

our work; we work at our play; we play at our worship." Certainly there are many who could not be so described, but all will agree that he did present an accurate picture of many in the church.

Life is constantly a series of conscious or unconscious choices. What we choose to engage in depends upon our sense of values. So many activities demand our time that we must constantly review our sense of values to be sure we are living life profitably. Jesus said "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33).

When our priorities are not right we are confused. What should I do with my time? Where should I direct my energies? How shall I use my income? What about vocation, recreation, vacations and ultimately every question of right and wrong?

If Christ is not first there is no real basis for deciding conduct. A Christian must turn away from anything that dims his vision of Christ, or takes away his taste for Bible study, or cramps his prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult.

In serving God we must choose God first and this choice must be related to all other activities. We must have heard or read a thousand times that God must be first, but we are really slow to learn. If Christ is first, everything falls into its proper place. Do we really believe that spiritual matters are that important?

Someone told the story of a brother who was plowing in his field on a Wednesday afternoon. A neighbour came over to talk with him about some insect problem. The brother was anxious to get his plowing done, but took a little time to visit. After a while the neighbour said, "I hear you folks are having good interest at church." "Fair", the brother replied. "You say that church is the only one mentioned in the Bible?" asked the neighbour. "Yes sir, it is," proudly replied the brother.

"You must be happy to belong to such an important church," suggested the neighbour. "Well, I am," was the brother's reply. "Sometime I would like to go with you and learn more about the church," said the neighbour. "Fine" said the brother. "I will be glad to take you anytime."

"Isn't tonight meeting night for you folks ?" asked the neighbour. "Yes it is," the brother hesitated, "but I can't go tonight - just got too much work to be done." "Well," the neighbour responded, "I reckon your church isn't anymore important than any other. We don't think you have to belong to, or go to church to be saved. And if your work is more important than that of your church, I reckon we believe about the same thing."

The poet said it this way :

"I counted dollars, while God
counted crosses,

I counted gains, while He
counted losses.

"I counted wealth, by things
gained in store,

But He valued me, by the scars
that I bore.

"I counted honors and sought
for ease

He wept, counting the hours on
my knees.

"And I never knew, till once by
a grave,

How vain these things we spend
life to save."