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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach ?

"Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted"

This is what Jesus Christ has told his disciples, at Matthew 15:13. in verses 8 and 9 of the same setting He told them about the people who were religiously inclined, that, "These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

What was Christ teaching His followers in the passage above? He taught, that our following and worshiping Him should be from within the heart, and not with mouth or lips or outward actions only. That, commandments of men must not be taught as teaching and doctrines of God. In our following Him and in our worship of Him, we should do only those things which He has commanded or taught in His written will, the Bible. There are things the Lord has planted in the Bible, He has told us what we all must do to be saved from sin; how we should live godly lives; what we must do to inherit the eternal life of heaven; how we should worship Him, and prepare ourselves on earth for the spiritual and heavenly life. Everything that we need to know or do, which is profitable for doctrine and reproof and correction and righteousness; the things which would make a godly, person complete

and thoroughly equipped for every good work, is written in God's Scripture, the Bible, as we read in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

If we, knowingly or ignorantly, follow such plants, that is, teachings, which the Father in heaven, God, our Creator, has not planted or authorised in His book, the Bible, then because of them we too will be destroyed with them. What a warning! in revelation 22:14,15 we read, "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie." Note these last words: "and whoever loves and practices a lie." What is a lie? Anything that is taught, loved and practiced as teaching or doctrine of God, but, in fact, is a commandment of man, is a lie

We need to examine our worship of God, each act of our worship that we do or perform, whether it is commanded by God, written in His book, specified or exemplified; and the same must be true in every phase of our life, especially about the things we do or follow religiously, such as, baptism, church, celebration or observance of religious days, addressing some people with special religious terms or names, etc. In fact, through the centuries, since the passing away of the apostles of Christ, who gave us His doctrine (2 John 9-11), hundreds and perhaps thousands of illegitimate plants have been planted by men and women of various religious inclinations, honestly or dishonestly, which have become large trees now and people throughout the world have accepted them as God's truth. But, they will be uprooted, said Christ. Think! Yet, before He does that, let us uproot them from our lives, so that we might not be condemned because of them.

Carefully Keeping The Lord's Commandments

J.C. CHOATE

In the New King James Version of the Bible in Deuteronomy 11:22, 23, Moses said to the children of Israel, "For if you

carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to hold fast to Him—then the Lord will drive out all of these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.” The King James Version puts it in these words: “For if ye shall *diligently* keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto Him; Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.” Both of these versions are saying basically the same thing but one speaks of *carefully* keeping all of the Lord's commandments and the other talks about *diligently* doing them.

I really like the expression, “For if you *carefully* keep all these commandments.” The blessings were to follow were dependant on their careful obedience to God. The word show that they needed to be serious about obeying the Lord, making every effort to strictly follow His instructions. This was not something they could deal with lightly. Rather, they needed to take every precaution to obey in every detail.

Now the setting in Deuteronomy concerned God's relations with his people back in the days of Moses. But if it was important for them to be careful how they dealt with God's will back then, would it not be equally important today that we use the utmost care in dealing with the commandments or teachings of our Lord? I believe it would.

God's people of long ago were assured that if they would carry out the Lord's will, He would bless them far beyond anything they might be able to do on their own. The same is true today. If we will only submit to God, He will save us, and He will bless us and enable us to do things far beyond anything we have ever imagined. I don't refer to the supernatural and miracles, but God promises to be with us and, as we obey Him, He will work with us and through us to accomplish great things. We must remember that without Him we can do nothing but, with God, all things are possible.

The Lord wants to supply our every need. Often times, the reason He does not do more for us than He does is because we do not allow Him to work in our lives. We get in the way. We

refuse to believe him, to obey Him, to serve Him, and to carry out His will. We want to do things our way. Too many times we have doubts, fears, and sins that come between us and God. We need to realize how foolish we are, how small our faith is, and that we block the Lord at every turn. This would bring a change in attitude, a humbling of ourselves before Him, and the decision that we are going to do whatever He wants us to do. We would then be amazed with all the blessings the Lord would shower upon us.

Look at the world around us. Those who are careless and prone to make mistakes can easily be killed. On our jobs, at home, in sports, and in every phase of our lives it is important to be *careful* in *what* we do and *how* we do it. Think how careful one must be in driving a vehicle or even walking in traffic. On the job, so many types of work are very dangerous. What about flying a plane, working at construction, serving as a doctor or nurse and dealing with peoples' lives—don't these occupations require extreme carefulness? But if these aspects of life demand care, how much the more should we be aware of the need to be careful in the way we handle God's word and in following His instruction?

First of all, we have a soul that needs to be saved. We therefore must read and study God's word to know His will and to be able to obey His teaching. But in following His instructions, we must be sure that we do exactly the things He wants us to do. If we fail to obey Him, we cannot be saved. Second, we must be very careful in the way we handle God's word in teaching others. We don't want to mislead or deceive them. We don't want to drive any one away from God. Rather, we want to be patient and slowly and carefully present the word in such a way that the hearers can understand it and comply with it.

In closing, let me emphasize again that we are dealing with God and His word, with souls, and with eternity. Let us do more cautiously and carefully that no mistake be made. Let us do God's will carefully, that we may be saved and have all of the blessings God has in store for His people in this life and in the world to come.

Crucified With Christ

GARY C. HAMPTON

Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved, me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.) His words help us to realize the Christian is one who has been crucified. Recently an article in a church bulletin told three observations A.W. Tozer had about one who is crucified.

First, Tozer said the crucified one faces in only one direction. As crucified ones, we should always be facing heaven, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14.) Our eyes must be set on the Master and the path he followed if we are to remain pointed toward our goal. (Hebrews 12:1-2.) The weights of worldly thinking and materialism must be taken off and old sinful habits set aside.

Of course, we first lay these things aside when we repent of our sins and put on Christ in baptism. (Acts 17:30; Galatians 3:26-27.) In so doing, the old man of sin dies and is laid to rest in a watery grave and a new man dedicated to walking in Christ's way is raised. (Romans 6:3-4.)

Second, Tozer said the one who is crucified never turns back. The entire book of Hebrews was written to show the brethren they could not go back to serving God under the law of Moses. In fact, Christ served as the one great sacrifice for sins. To turn back to Judaism, one would have to reject Christ and leave himself with no other sacrifice for his sins. (Hebrews 4:4-6; 10:26.)

What could be said of those turning back to Moses' law could be said more emphatically, about us. When we turn back, it is to the world with its short term rewards. Peter said we become like the dog who turns to his own vomit. (2 Peter 2:20-22.) Jesus summed it up when he said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62.)

Finally, Tozer observed that the one who is crucified no

longer has any plans of his own. Like Paul, he should say, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21.) We should preface every action with the question, what would Jesus do? To answer it is to determine our course of action since we follow His steps. (1 Peter 2:21.)

It is time for each of us to take a serious look in the mirror. Am I one who has truly been crucified with Christ? Do I face only toward heaven, never turning back and making Christ's plans my plans? To truthfully say is not I but Christ living in me, I must be able to say yes.

The Will Of God

BOBBY LIDDELL

As God's creation, we must be *aware* of God's will for us; but we must go beyond being aware of God's will to the point of *understanding* what God's will is. Having been made *aware* of, and having gained an understanding of, God's will, then we are to be *submissive* in obedience to the will of God.

Learning the will of God should produce a CHANGE in our lives. AFTER HE HAS LEARNED GOD'S WILL, no one can ever be the same as he was before. A change is demanded. The will of God demands a *change of masters*: "And be not conformed to this world: . . . (Romans 12:2). No longer are we to follow the will of self (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12). No longer are we to be formed by the world of sin (1 John 2:15-17). We should not let the world mold us to fit it; but we should be in accordance with God's form (Romans 6:16-18). No longer are we to be fashioned by the wickedness of society (James 4:4). We should learn from the people of Israel: they disobeyed God by the desire to be like the world round about them, and suffered the wrath of God!

The will of God demands a *change of manner*: ". . . but be ye transformed . . ." (Romans 12:2). Not only should our masters change, but our manner of life must also be changed to the point that we are pleasing to God. The will of God brings a new concern (Matthew 26:39). No longer are we concerned about worldly things; but spiritual things have become priority (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:1, 2). The will of God "begets" a "new

creature" (James 1:18; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15). Obedience to God transforms our life. The will of God builds a new character (II Peter 1:4-11; I John 3:8-10).

The will of God effects a change of *masters* and *manner* because it demands a *change of mind*; "... by the renewing of your mind ..." (Romans 12:2). Only when we change our mind to serve God, and to no longer serve sin, will we make a change of masters and manner. This *change of mind* is intellectual. God's will appeals to our intellect (John 6:44-45). God's will appeals to the other aspects of our being; but it also appeals to our intellect because of its truthfulness, accuracy, and evidence presented. This change of mind is inward (Romans 12:1-2; 8:16). No longer are we to be governed by the outward man of the flesh (II Corinthians 4:16; 5:10); but the flesh is to be governed by the inward man of the spirit. This change of mind is influential (Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 12:34). Our every aspect of life in word and deed is influenced by the thinking of the mind. For our actions and words to be those of a new creature, we must have a renewed mind.

Learning the will of God presents a CHALLENGE in our lives: "... that ye may prove ..." (Romans 12:2). The word "prove" means to examine with the expectation of thus approving. The will of God challenges us to *enquire*. Before we can "prove" or "approve," we must enquire into God's will. We should enquire by daily searching (Acts 17:11; Psalm 119:97). As we need our daily physical bread, so we need the bread of life daily. We should enquire by diligent seeking. Our enquiry should not be haphazard, spasmodic, nor half-hearted (Psalm 1:1-2; John 5:39). We should enquire by dedicated studying (II Timothy 2:15, A.S.V. "give diligence"). Our study must be dedicated; therefore, it must be regular, in depth, and with the goal of understanding God's will better that we may be more pleasing to him.

The will of God challenges us to *examine* the evidence. We are not asked to believe and live by that which is not supported by evidence, but to examine the evidence which has been presented (John 20:30-31). We are challenged to make a thorough examination (Acts 17:11); a thoughtful examination (Psalm 1:2); and a truthful examination (II Corinthians 4:2).

The will of God challenges us to *endorse* that about which we have made enquiry and which we have examined. This

endorsement is made by acceptance of God's word (Acts 2:41); by approved of God's will (Psalm 119:11-16, 172); and by application of God's way (Psalm 119:105; I John 1:6-10). It is not enough to accept and approve; each must then make application of God's way to his life.

Learning the will of God presents a CHARGE we must obey. This charge from God is *profitable* to man: "... what is that good, ..." (Romans 12:2). Man "profits" because of riches that are real (Ephesians 1:3, 7; 3:8; Hebrews 11:26); because of a relationship that is right (II Corinthians 6:14-18; I John 1:3; I Peter 2:17; Romans 5:1-2; 6:16-18); and because of the reward that is reserved (I Peter 1:3-5; Matthew 25:46; II Timothy 4:7-8). This charge from God is *pleasing* to God: "... acceptable ..." (Romans 12:2). Its purpose pleases God; that is, the salvation of men's souls (Luke 19:10; Matthew 20:28). Its promise pleases God; that is, the abundant life of the saved both now and hereafter (John 10:10). Its preaching pleases God (I Corinthians 1:21). This charge from God is *perfect* "... perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). God's will is full (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3); finished (Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19); and final (John 12:48).

The will of God demands a change in our lives, challenging us and charging us in the way of God. No one can ever be the same after he has learned the will of God.

The Best People In The World

WELDON LANGFIELD

A new Christian once complained to this writer about the profanity at his workplace, commenting that he wished he could work with Christians all the time. It would be nice, he said wistfully, to always be associated with "the best people in the world." It is true, or at least should be true, that brethren in Christ represent the cream of the crop of the human race. Yet they can sometimes be cruel, intolerance of mistakes and human frailties, backbiting and gossip, have too often characterized some members of the Lord's church. Mature, experienced brethren know that in some cases, reputed "pillars of the church" have a very negative side. Let us remember, all the sins committed in

the churches to which the New Testament epistles were written are committed in the Lord's church today.

In facing any difficulty, it helps to know someone else has had the same experience. Of Christ, the Bible says, "Wherefore, it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17). Christ was constantly associated with the people of God in his day, i.e., "the best people in the world." Let us consider some of his experiences.

The best people in the world rejected Christ because of his teaching. In John 6 Jesus revealed some difficult-to-follow truths. The reaction of the crowds following him is recorded in John 6:66: "Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." The great apostle Paul has similar experiences. On one occasion, he pleaded, "Am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?" (Galatians 4:17).

Some hear the word of God, and see the need to change their lives. Others, upon hearing, resent the message, while quietly storing up that resentment. When the opportunity arrives, they spew out their venom. That is what happened at the crucifixion. Lies, slander, meanness, and cruelty were used to attempt to destroy Christ. Among those engineering that travesty were God's chosen people, "the best people in the world."

The best people in the world put selfishness above the life of their Savior. In Matthew 16:21, the Bible says, "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." Yet only a short time later, they were apparently debating over who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In the shadow of his statement concerning his death, Christ took a child in his arms and taught *them* the meaning of humility (Matthew 18:1-6).

The best people deserted Christ when he needed them most. When we are only, facing pain, and in the throes of tragedy, friends can be of great value. The Son of God found himself in exactly such a state at his crucifixion. He prayed so fervently, his sweat was like drops of blood (Luke 22:44). Bitter tears dampened the dirt beneath him. Friendship would have been welcomed at this time. Instead, his closest friends chose to sleep (Matthew 26:40ff). Upon his arrest, when human loyalty

would have proven a source of great comfort, we read, "Then all the disciples left him and fled" (Matthew 26:56). As if this weren't enough, Peter underscored his unwillingness to stand by Christ by denying him three times (Matthew 26:69-75). These followers were handpicked and personally tutored by the Son of God himself. They were the best people in the world.

What did Christ do for the best people in the world? He loved them. Jesus said, "As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you" (John 15:9). "He taught them" (Mark 10:1). He forgave them. In Luke 23:34, the Bible says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He died for them. In I Thessalonians 5:10, we are told that he "died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."

The lesson is clear. Sometimes "the best people in the world" hurt us, let us down and terribly disappoint us. Yet we, too, must persevere in our service to them if we are to emulate the master. Peter wrote, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not" (I Peter 2:21-23)!

Talk To Yourself

W.A. HOLLEY

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

Psalm 23 is a song without a peer. The writer talks to himself. Count the times David uses "I," "my," and "me." A strong affirmation of faith can work wonders! In the quietness of one's life the blessings of God can abide.

Man IS as he THINKS in his own heart (Proverbs 23:7). Paul, though in prison suffering as only prisoners can, declared, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). David, though beset by Saul, "encouraged himself" (I Samuel 30:6). It is possible for one to talk himself into a better state of mind. We shall note—

(1) When you are angry talk to yourself. Anger is one of the most destructive forces available to men and women. "Anybody can become angry—that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not within everybody's power, and is not easy" (Aristotle). When angry, read Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil."

(2) When your child upsets you, stop and think how BEST to handle the problem. Talk to yourself Don't make any rash remarks. Always keep control; be calm. Never abuse your children. Child-abuse can cause scars which will never vanish away. Ask yourself, What are you upset, disturbed, aggravated, about? Is it worth losing control? Time is a great healer of problems.

(3) If the drinking of alcohol has become your problem, it is past time to talk to yourself. Drinking has never made a home better; where drinking is involved, there are more quarrels, more fusses, more fights, and more divorces. Drink debases and deludes its victims; it has no defense. A discovery that whiskey can be made from sawdust completes the ruin of the lush who drinks himself out of house and home: He now can drink the house! We now suggest that Proverbs 23:29-35 be carefully read. If you are addicted to alcohol, it is time to begin talking to yourself. You can do something about your problem if you but try. You are exhorted to avoid drink because of its final fatal consequences.

(4) If you have fallen into the habit of fault-finding, it is time to talk seriously about this terrible sin. Jesus warned against such a problem (Matthew 7:1-4). Of course, we are commanded to "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). It is always possible for one to be in "the objective case and in the kickative mood." There are those who seem to oppose anything and everything suggested by others. Of course, there are bad things, we freely admit; but why should we see nothing but the bad? Yes, there are bad apples in the barrel, but not all the apples are bad.

Some—women and men—who claim to be Christians, make a career of finding fault with the elders, the deacons, the song leaders, the Bible school teachers, et al; seldom do they find anything good to say about their fellow-Christians. Many of these critics do far more harm to the cause of Christ than they ever realize (Ephesians 4:31-32).

To illustrate: During the Vietnam War, a commander, when asked about a certain city, said, "The only way it could be saved was to destroy it." For shame!! Can it be that some think the only way the church of the Lord can be saved is to destroy it?? Christian, be a builder, not a wrecker! Talk to yourself.

(4) Should you develop a dark, negative attitude, talk to yourself. All improvement, both physical and spiritual, begins in the mind (Romans 12:1-2). "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:23). Look down and you see mud; look up and see the stars. This writer once went aboard a great plane during a storm; the plane took off and in a few minutes there appeared the brilliance of sunshine, leaving the storm far below. We may be troubled by sickness, pain, hardships, handicaps; but remember; these, too shall pass away! (Cf. John 14:1-6).

(5) Do you find it almost impossible to cooperate with others? Sometimes there are personality conflicts, but so much as it depends on you, "live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). "... Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). Don't turn people off. Use a little optimism, a little grace, a strong faith, and a sunny disposition to charm people. Henry Van Dyke said, "There is no personal charm so great as the charm of a cheerful temperament." Tell yourself to turn on the charm!! You can be workers together in good causes (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1).

(6) Your marriage and entire family can be made better if you will but talk to yourself. Instead of talking about breaking up your home, talk about how to save it. Your family should live as a team, work as a team, attend worship services as a team, and it can survive almost any thing. Probably the most important factor that is causing a breakdown in the home today is lack of good examples. Fathers, mothers, only you can set good examples. The family united is the important factor. Families that fuss and fight, quarrel, and undermine each other, and refuse to be true to moral principles and marriage vows, are certain to fall apart (Ephesians 5:22-32; Hebrews 13:4; Mark 10:2-12).

Misuse Of Things Religious

MICHAEL D. GREENE

During the time of Samuel's tenure as a judge of Israel, the Israelites and the Philistines were engaged in fierce and mortal combat (I Samuel 4:1-2). The Israelites did not fare well during the battle, having lost 4,000 men. When the defeat was pondered by the elders of Israel, it was decided that the ark of the covenant be brought into the camp so that it "may save us out of the hand of our enemies." The results when the battle was resumed were no better; 30,000 Israelite soldiers were killed. To make matters worse, the ark of the covenant was also captured (II Samuel 4:4-11).

The Israelites were probably confused. Why had not the presence of the ark produced victory? They had failed to realize that it was not the presence of the ark alone that had produced victory previously, but the blessing of God upon their obedience (Exodus 23:20-33). They were using the ark of God as a talisman to ward off their enemies and were not obedient to God. They had misused the ark of the covenant. God had never intended for the ark to be a sign or a guarantee of military victory. I wonder how often we are guilty of the misuse of things religious?

One thing that is surely misused today is the name Christian. The word was used in the scriptures to denote disciples, those who had obeyed the gospel (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). It is a blessed name and one that should be respected—for it was secured at great cost! Yet, it is bandied about and used so indiscriminately it has lost its meaning for many. Not all that is called "Christian" today, whether schools, churches or people, are so.

Other words that are misused are "miracle," "gospel music," "pastor" and "church." But perhaps the most abused is the name of God and his Son, Jesus Christ. To many, these are expletives, words used merely to fill out a sentence with no regard to their meaning or intended use. The Psalmist said "holy and reverend" is his name (Psalm 111:9). We should use the name of God and his Son only in the most respectful way possible, lest we use his name in vain (Exodus 20:7).

Then there are the functions of the church that are also misused. The church is not in the business of socialization, nor politics. Yet, in this day and time it is not unusual to see the resources of the church misused to advance every social and political cause that sashays down the pike. The function of the church is to evangelize the world and edify its members. True we are to be the light and salt of the world, but the means of effecting change in this world is the preaching of the gospel, and living the Christian life before others—not social reform and the political process.

The pulpit is also misused by many. It is not the place to air one's opinions, nor to engage in disputes, questions and strifes of words which produce envy, strife and suspicions (I Timothy 6:3-5). Rather, it is the place to preach the word to the edification and saving of men's souls (II Timothy 3:13-4:5).

Finally, just as the ark was used as a talisman, so many today use all manner of religious symbols and icons in similar fashion. But no religious symbol, no matter the value of the materials from which it is made, can substitute for true obedience to the will of God. It did not work in Samuel's day; it won't work today.

All want the blessings and favor of almighty God. The Israelites wanted it, as we do today. We should not expect him to bless us if we are not obeying his will, for God will not—and cannot—do that which is inconsistent with his will.

Let us take care that we do not misuse things religious.

After Baptism What Am I To Do?

WENDELL WINKLER

(1) I AM TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. Being "buried with him by baptism into death . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). The man who has been born of God does not continually (commit) living that old life of sin characteristic of him before his conversion (I John 3:9; Romans 6:1, 2). Such obtains on the basis of his genuine repentance (II Corinthians 7:10; Hebrews 6:1).

(2) I AM TO DESIRE THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye

may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). This means I will read (I Timothy 4:13), study (II Timothy 2:15) and meditate upon (I Timothy 4:15) God's eternal Word.

(3) I AM TO BRING GLORY TO THE NAME OF CHRIST. Though I may suffer as a Christian, I am to glorify God in this name (I Peter 4:16). I am to never so live as to bring shame upon this high and holy name. Alexander the Great conquered the world and wept because there was no more to conquer. But, he had a coward, with his name within his ranks. Alexander called this man unto his presence one day and sternly said, "You change your way of living or you change your name!" We wear the name of Christ (Christian). We should live worthily of it. Otherwise, let us not hypocritically thus be identified!

(4) I AM TO CONTINUE STEADFASTLY. Of those who were baptized on Pentecost it is written, "And they continued steadfastly . . ." (Acts 2:42). I am to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). I am not to be in and out, on and off, up and down, and hot and cold, spasmodic, irregular, hit and miss in the Lord's work. Inconsistent living will not get the job done.

(5) I AM TO SEEK THOSE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE. "If ye then be risen (referring back to having been risen from our burial with Christ in baptism, Colossians 2:12, with Christ seek those things which are above . . . set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). The Christian's interest and affections are not only to run horizontal but vertical! Our Father is in Heaven (Matthew 6:9). Our citizenship is in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). Truly, then, we are to seek those things that are above, setting our affection on things above.

(6) I AM TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT THE SAVIOUR. Immediately upon his conversion Paul shared Christ with others (Acts 9:20). Upon finding Christ, Andrew and Philip told Peter and Nathaniel (John 1:40-51). We have been won to win, saved to save, converted to convert, disciplined to disciple. "The things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

In Season

JOHN GIPSON

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

"Autumn to winter, winter into spring, summer into fall so rolls the changing year," said D.M. Mulock. We know the order, and we have accepted it. But suppose for a moment that every year it was different. What would happen if winter followed spring or spring followed fall? And everything was turned topsy turvy again the following year? What chaos would prevail! Who would know when to plant, or whether he could even expect to reap?

How do you account for the regularity of the seasons? The answer is found in a promise that God made to man. "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." God said it and we believe it.

Yes, I have heard it said that the time is coming when you will not be able to tell summer from winter, or spring from fall, but I don't believe it. For that to be true God would have to break His promise. You can mark it down. We will always have our seasons—as long as the earth remains.

But did you notice the phrase, "While the earth remains"? There's a warning in that. This earth, which looks so permanent, is not going to be here always. "The heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up" (II Peter 3:10). One day it will be the "late, great planet earth."

But back to our text. God has kept his word, been so faithful to his word that even unbelievers have come to accept it as "law." We all look for the sun to come up in the morning, and the leaves to fall in autumn. We plant in the spring and wait. We trust the seasons and act in faith. What if someone said, "I don't believe fall will come this year. I believe it will always be summer?" Just mark it down; he will be the loser for his lack of faith. Whether he believes or not, it's going to be.

God is faithful. You can trust His word about the seasons
... OR ANYTHING ELSE!

God's Wisdom In A Mystery

NICKY FAUGHT

Paul wrote a great deal in I Corinthians concerning human wisdom and the foolishness of trusting in human wisdom. He stated his determination to not preach in words of human wisdom lest the faith of his listeners should rest on the wisdom of men (I Corinthians 2:4-5). He then gives a treatise on the wisdom of God that the "mature" of all ages will appreciate. The "mature" are those who humbly receive and trust in the wisdom of God, no matter how "foolish" it may seem to men.

Paul specifically speaks of God's "wisdom in a mystery." In Ephesians 3:6 he elaborates on the definition of this "mystery." There he says that it is that the Jews and Gentiles are fellow members of the body (the church) and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ through the gospel (i.e., the death, burial, and resurrection—the crucifixion and gospel of I Corinthians I and I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Paul says several things about the wisdom of God.

(1) God's wisdom was not of the Jewish age (verse 6). The Jewish age was led by materialistic men of pride. The age itself was governed by a law of works that could not save, and was misused by these leaders.

(2) God's wisdom was hidden in this mystery (verse 7). We defined "mystery" above. The word mystery does not denote the "weird," as it perhaps does today. Vines says that it refers to that which is "outside of the range of unassisted natural understanding, and can only be known by Divine revelation to those illumined by the Holy Spirit." Thus this mystery did not deal with secret or magical arts, etc. God's "mystery" of salvation was so unique that no one could know it, or discover it without God revealing it. Thus it was hidden to men in the Patriarchal and Mosaic Ages. Read Ephesians 3:3-6, 10.

(3) God's wisdom was predestined (verse 7). God planned this mystery before the beginning. He planned to hide it, and then reveal it at the proper time (Galatians 5:4. See Ephesians 3:11; I Peter 1:19-20).

(4) God's wisdom was misunderstood by the Jewish Age

rulers (verse 8). Obviously, if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord. They acted in ignorance (Acts 3:17); but they were not innocent.

(5) God's wisdom was prophesied (verse 9). Paul quotes from Isaiah. This quotation is often interpreted as a prediction of heaven. It seems to refer, however, to the same hidden truths concerning this mystery that Paul has referred to already. Thus, Isaiah was predicting these truths that would be revealed in the church.

(6) God's wisdom was revealed through the Holy Spirit (verses 10-11). (Read Ephesians 3:3). Since this mystery could not be understood by men on their own, it had to be revealed by God. It had to be an apocalypse (Greek for uncovering).

(7) God's wisdom was revealed specifically to the apostles (verse 12). We must respect the role of the apostles in revealing this mystery to men. The apostles only had the inspiration of the Holy Spirit needed to reveal this mystery (John 16:13). The revelation would be made once, for all time (Jude 3).

(8) God's wisdom was revealed by apostles through verbal inspiration (verse 13). Many feel that the Bible has inspired parts. Some feel that the apostles' thoughts were inspired but that their words were not. Paul plainly states that the apostles were inspired word for word. Every word is inspired. In Galatians 3:16 Paul even made an argument based on the singular form of the word "seed." We should either take the entire Bible as inspired or that it is not inspired at all. Others feel that the original words have been altered so much by translations and copies that we cannot depend on the Bible. That is a myth! The Bible has been copied and translated many times; but we have hundreds of manuscripts, copies, and segments of the writings of early Christians from which to develop our best translations today. They are not the exact originals, but they are surely very close!

(9) God's wisdom was understandable by those who would humbly accept this inspired message (verse 14-16). Calvinists used this passage to say that a man could not understand the spoken or written word unless the Spirit enters and prepared hearts first to be able to understand it. Thus a man needs (?) the direct intervention of the Spirit even today just to be able to understand what he reads or hears from the word. Further study shows this to be false. The book of Acts gives several conversion examples. In each case people heard the word and

then chose whether to believe or not. The word spoken was by direct inspiration; but there was no direct operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the word on the heart of the listener.

Thus we conclude Paul's treatise on the revealed wisdom of God. The mature today will accept this revelation and all the inspired teaching of the apostles as the divine standard in matters of religion. The immature will continue to trust in their own wisdom, even as those in Paul's day.

Jesus, The Son Of God

G.F. RAINES

All penitent believers who have been baptized into Christ are children of God (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27, A.S.V.); but Jesus, having been miraculously begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18-25), was (and is), uniquely, the Son of God.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: Some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 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 16:13-19).

If Jesus were not the Son of God, he was an imposter, because he said in many instances that he is the Son of God. If Jesus were an imposter, he was not a good man. It is universally admitted by those who deny the truth of the Bible that Jesus is a good man. It is grossly inconsistent to admit that Jesus is a good man and at the same time deny that he is the Son of God.

Jesus made the evidence that he is the Son of God absolutely impregnable forever by his glorious resurrection from the dead of the working of "the mighty power" of God. Paul says that God "declared (him) to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

Other proofs which declared Jesus to be the Son of God are (1) his matchless teaching (Matthew 7:28-29); (2) his miracles (John 3:2; 20:30-31); and (3) his sinless life (Hebrew 7:22-26).

The Ethiopian eunuch, desiring to be baptized into Christ, said to Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39).

Jesus says: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

Paul says: ". . . if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10.)

Girls Please Read This . . . (Boys Too!)

(ANONYMOUS)

Once I was an innocent, beautiful, virtuous, religious, and ambitious girl. I went to school and had lofty ideas of doing big things in life. I had hoped some day to have a good husband and a happy home. I loved the church. I believed the Bible. I went to Sunday School. I was much loved and admired by my friends.

Then some, whom I believed to be my friends, made me

believe that my happiness depended on my being smart; that only popularity and pleasure were ideal. Too, I was told that "everybody is doing it." After seeing the ads of cigarette companies, and watching my so-called friends indulging, I was influenced to smoke and I got a great kick from sitting in public places puffing smoke in others' faces.'

Having lost my desire to go to church or to be with church folks, I went with the crowds to dance halls, road houses, and cocktail rooms. I became brazen enough to call for a drink at the bar. I learned to gamble, play the horses, and had my late hour dates.

NOW I HAVE HAD MY FLING—I'VE BEEN THE MODERN GIRL, and I have had my personal liberty, but what has it gotten me? My life has been wasted. My virtue is gone. What do I have left? Here I sit, an old, ugly, bleary-eyed blotched-faced, cigarette smoking, half-crazed, drunken sot.

Unfeigned Love Of The Brethren

R.W. GRAY

Peter leaves no doubt that the new birth is into a new relationship and "into" a new way of viewing one's peers. There will be in the purified life a manifestation that a radical change has occurred in the soul (John 3:3-6). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth UNTO the unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another with a pure heart fervently, having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (I Peter 1:21-23, ASV).

John makes it abundantly clear that absence of manifested love for one's brother bespeaks a soul yet benighted by carnality. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (I John 3:14-15 HJV; cf. I Corinthians 3:1-3) The darkness yet in the soul reveals itself in hatred for one who is a member of the household of God (I John 1:6-7).

It is a sobering thought that one may submit to the primary requirements of the faith, seeking through this the purification promised, yet lose his soul at last because he could not dispel the envy and/or hatred for another of God's children. Our soul would be in no greater jeopardy if we murder our neighbor than it is when we seek to harm and/or destroy a brother through envy (I John 3:16-17). This sin is one therefore that must be avoided at all cost.

Love (agapao), whether for God or man, can be known only from the actions it prompts. Our love should have as its primary object the God who first loved us (I John 4:10-11). Love for God must express itself first and foremost in implicit obedience to his commandments (John 14:15, 23). Love for brethren likewise expressed itself in action toward them (I John 3:17, 23). Love that is in word only is a feigned love that will not assure our hearts before God (I John 4:19-20). Because of the importance of this matter, the Holy Spirit has spoken often to the point of it. The so-called "love chapter" seeks to identify love's qualities with such clarity that the reader cannot be left in doubt as to whether it is manifested in his or her life. Paul says love suffers long, and is kind. Love does not envy, brag or boast. It does not manifest itself in a rude or arrogant manner, nor does it seek to have its own way. Love is not easily provoked, is not resentful of others, nor does it think "evil" of its object. It never rejoices in the wrong but always in the right. It bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. It is a never-failing quality (I Corinthians 13:4-8). And, how it is needed among the people of God in these trying times. Do we possess it, brethren, by divine definition?

The inimitable Guy N. Woods, in his commentary regarding the fervency of the love we must manifest, observes, "'Fervently,' from *ektenos*, intensely, describes an emotion that is vivid and forceful, earnest and pointed . . . Children of God are not to love one another indifferently, or loosely, as an unstrung instrument, but with the full tension of heart-strings drawn out fully." (Wood's Commentary on First Peter, p. 50). A derivative of the same word is translated "earnestly" in Luke 22:44 in reference to Jesus' heart-rending plea for his very life in the garden of Gethsmane. How truly "fervent," then, is this unfeigned love to be!

God's love for us, our response to his love, and an unfeigned love for brethren rid the heart of all fear (I John 4:18).

If you love me I do not fear that you will harm me. God loves me, and will do what is best for me at all times (Hebrews 13:5; Romans 8:28). Fear of God's wrath upon the disobedient is quelled in the knowledge that he has brought us from death unto life; and our love for one another guarantees his protection (Hebrews 12:28-29; I John 4:18; 3:14; Colossians 1:12-13; 3:6).

A mistaken view of love is that it manifests a mushy sentimentality to the degree it ignores all sin and error in the life of others. Jesus, our example in love, warned, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: . . ." (Revelation 3:19). Love is sometime manifested in the discipline of its object (Proverbs 13:24). Love for the fallen will move one to "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness (Galatians 6:1). Love for souls and for truth will move one to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:1-6). If you love your brother or sister who is in sin and unfaithfulness, you will "snatch them out of the fire; hating even the garments spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God . . . And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as the gave us commandment" (I John 3:18-23).

Does Jesus Trust Us?

ANCIL JENKINS

" . . . many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men" (John 2:23-24).

There is an interesting play on words in this passage. The people "believed" in Jesus because of his miracles. However, Jesus refused to "entrust" himself to them. This was because of

the superficial nature of their faith. It was based entirely on the spectacular. This was the same faith that caused the multitude to follow him because of the loaves and fishes. This was an incomplete, inadequate faith. To have entrusted himself to them would have been like building a house on the sand.

How real is the power of Jesus in your life? Do you ever say, "I wish I were able to do more for the Lord?" Have our often thought, "My spiritual life is just not what I want it to be." Are you confused by your lack of opportunities to use your abilities. Do you wonder why the Lord has not used you in a mighty way?

The promise of Jesus is that he will be with us, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20). He promises to come in and make his permanent abode in us (Revelation 3:20). Jesus said that both he and the Father would dwell in those who love them (John 14:23). Paul prayed that Christ might have a permanent dwelling in the heart of the Ephesians (Ephesians 3:17).

Do you have such a relationship? What actions come from your knowledge of this indwelling? Our lives are to be enriched and empowered by Christ in us. If they are not, it is because we either do not have this knowledge, or he does not dwell in us.

If we are Christians, how could we have missed his being in us? It may be that he does not trust us, just as he didn't trust some in his day. He has not committed himself to you because you have not committed yourself to him. If we give all we have to him, he will give all of himself to us.

This trust will never come until we are willing to give him every part of our lives. I seem to remember a fable of a king who wanted to reward some of his subjects. He asked them to give him all the money they had. They gave him copper, brass, and a few silver coins. When he later called them in to his presence, he returned the money to them, but the coins were now all made of gold. This brought a mixed blessing to the people. They were happy they now had gold coins, but disappointed they had hoarded back a few they had not given the king. God is able to take all we give him and reward us richly.