

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL

What If You Had To Meet The Lord Today?

Life is far more serious than we imagine it to be. As a matter of fact, we take life lightly, too lightly. We live as though there will be no tomorrow, as though we will live forever. We see people dying around us for every known reason, but that's them, that is not us. And so we go on our merry way. This is not very logical. It is really a foolish way to deal with life.

To help us get this matter in perspective, let me ask you a question: What if you had to meet the Lord today? I mean by that, what if you died? Yes, that is possible for you, me, or anyone. We have no assurance that we will be living tomorrow, or even

the next minute as far as that concerned. So, what if you died to-day? It could be by a heart attack, disease, accident, or dozens of other ways, but regardless of the way, when you die then you die. That is it for this world. Then what? In that case, would you be prepared to meet the Lord? You might say that you had not counted on dying this early in life, and therefore you were planning to obey God later. But do you see the mistake you would be making to wait till later?

Whether young or old, in good health or bad health, or whatever your life may consist of, the Bible teaches that all of us are going to die. Whether we want to or not, whether we are believers in God or not, still we must die. That being true, then we should make the most of this life by preparing for the life that is to come.

There are those who do not believe there will be any life after death. They must be miserable people. They must try to get every ounce of joy and happiness out of this life that they can because when this life is over, as far as they are concerned, then that will be the end. They are like the animals, birds, and fish of the sea, that is, at the end of this life then there is no more. Just imagine living with no hope of anything else. The Apostle Paul even said to the believer, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Corinthians 15:19). What about you? Are you of those people? If so, that might be the reason why you would not be prepared at death.

But let me tell you something. There will be life beyond the grave. You may not believe it but there will be any way. You may not be prepared for it, but still you will be alive. The Hebrew writer said, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27). You may reject the idea of God, or that Christ is the Son of God, but one day, we are told, "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:11,12). Now you might not even believe that, but the day will come as surely as you are living that you will believe it because in that day

you will certainly do what the Lord said you would do, and that is, your knee will bow and your tongue will confess to God.

The Lord tells us that there will be a general resurrection at which time all will come forth from the grave. Christ said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:24-29).

Now what is being said here? Christ is explaining that if the present dead, those who are living, but who are dead spiritually, will hear his voice and believe in God, then they will not be condemned, since they have passed from death to life. That is, they will not be eternally damned since they are now alive in Christ and have the hope of eternal life. Then he goes on to say, however, that the day will come when all that are in the grave, both good and bad, the righteous and the unrighteous, that all of them, will come forth from the grave. He says that the ones who have done good, or those who have obeyed his voice, that they will be resurrected unto life eternal, but that the ones who have done bad, or the ones who have not obeyed him, will be resurrected unto damnation.

We are also told that after death, and the resurrection, that there will be a judgment. What is that for, if the evil are resurrected unto damnation? That just means that whoever the wicked are, that they will appear before the judgment to be judged, and then sentenced to eternal destruction. The Lord will be righteous judge, and he will deal fairly with each one. Paul says that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in

righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (Acts 17:31). Christ is the one that is being spoken of here who will be that righteous judge. He identifies him as being the one that God had ordained, the one through whom he had given hope to all men, and the one who was raised from the dead. Again, Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10). Finally, Christ said, in speaking of the wicked and the righteous at the judgment, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matthew 25:46). That will be final, and no way to ever change it.

My friend, what if you died today? Would you be prepared to meet the Lord? If you have not obeyed God, then you would not be prepared, and the way you die, that is the way it will be at judgment and for all eternity. Are you prepared to spend all eternity in hell? Do you want to go to a place of torment where you will remain forever and forever? Not only that, but the devil and his angels, and all the wicked will be there.

If you are not prepared to meet God right now, then let me encourage you to make your preparation today. If you will do that, then regardless of whether you live or die today, tomorrow, or whenever, you will be ready to face the Lord at the judgment, and to hear him say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joys of life everlasting." Wouldn't that be wonderful? There are no regrets for those who wisely prepare for whatever comes. I pray that you will be wise.

You can be a Christian and a member of the Lord's church by believing in God, by repenting of your sins, by confessing faith in Christ as the Son of God, and by being baptized in water to have your sins washed away. If you will hear the Lord, and obey his voice, then you will surely do what he has asked you to do, and when you do that then he saves you and adds you to his church. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). Please do this as soon as possible. Do it now while you have the time and the opportunity. If you will, you will never regret it.



Will The Good People In All Churches Be Saved ?

We have all heard it said more than once that good people in all churches will be saved. It is stated that God is loving and merciful and therefore He will save all people who believe in Jesus Christ, regardless of what doctrine they follow and in whatever church they are. No doubt, all of this sounds beautiful, but this is not the fact because the Bible does not teach this. Please read the following :

The apostle John wrote, "We are of God. He who knows God hears us: he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John 4:6). Thus we can differentiate the truth from error, if we know what the Holy Spirit filled apostles had taught. (John 14:25,26 ; 16:12, 13).

The apostle Paul said, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of your selves ; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10).

This means then that no one would be saved because he is good or he has done good works or has lived a good moral life, "Not of yourselves" and "not of works, lest any one should boast." Because if that be so then Christ died in vain. The Bible says that we are saved by the death of Jesus Christ and by His blood, which he shed for the forgiveness of our sins. (1 Peter 1:18,19). This does not, however, means that we should not do good works. we must, because God created man for good works.

He expects us to live and to do good works. But one is not saved or will not be saved because he has done good works. Our salvation does not depend on our good works, but by the grace of God we will be saved.

If good works will be the standard of salvation then any number of people will be saved, because there are good and sincere people not only in most all churches (denominations) but there are good people also in most all other religions. And if God would save people just because they are good, then it does not matter what religion they follow.

But what about all those good people who believe in Jesus Christ to be the saviour? Not all who believe in Christ are doing what He has commanded Himself or through His apostles. He said, "But why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Not all who believe in Christ are worshipping Him right. The Lord Himself said, "These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they do worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:8,9). Many are prophesying in His name; they are claiming of healing people and casting out evil spirits, and doing many wonderful works in the name of Christ. Are they doing good works? People seem to acknowledge such people with great honour, they certainly believe that these are mighty good works God is doing through His "servants." But hear Christ, "Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" (Matthew 7:22,23). Here are many good people! sincere people! church going people! worshipping people! but they were all lost. Because they were doing many things but they failed to do what the Lord has said. "Not everyone", Jesus said, "who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7: 21).

On the day of judgment no one will be saved because of his own goodness or because he has done something. We shall not be saved because WE HAVE believed in Christ or WE HAVE done this or that. But the Bible teaches that we will be saved by the

grace of God. Grace means the undeserved mercy of God. We do not deserve to be saved but yet God will save us. The apostle Paul said, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5 : 6, 8).

Yet, the grace of God, the Bible says, has appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11). Also, Jesus died on the cross for all the world. (John 3: 16). By the grace of God He tasted death for every man and woman. (Hebrews 2:9). And He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2). But all the world is not going to be saved just because God loves every one and He has shown His grace toward all. Surely, He wants to save all, but all will not be saved because all do not do what He commands. About Christ, the Saviour, we read, "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation TO ALL WHO OBEY HIM." (Hebrews 5 : 8,9).

The grace of God which saves all has appeared for us all on the cross where Christ, the Son of God, died for the sins of the world. When we do what He has commanded us to do we show our obedience to Him. By doing what He has commanded we show that we accept Him, our Lord, and that we love Him. (John 14: 15). And therefore He saves us. Not because we have done something or there is any good or worth in us, but because He loves us. It is just like in the case of the prodigal son of whom we read in Luke chapter 15. When he came back to his father with all humility, the father gave him a new ring, new shoes and the best robe and accepted him in love. The son didn't deserve all of that, yet his father gave him because he loved him, but not before the son realized that he was wrong and came back to his father to seek forgiveness. He did some thing, but yet he received everything by grace. The same is true when we obey Christ. He saves us by His grace.

What About Baptism ?

W.A. Holley

Admittedly, baptism is a controversial subject. But almost

everything taught in the Holy Bible is controversial : the creation story, the flood, the Red Sea crossing, the virgin birth, the resurrection, and the second coming of Jesus, *et al.* Billy Graham says that he doesn't preach on baptism because it is too controversial. According to such foolish reasoning one could never discuss any Bible subject.

We pose a simple question : Is it possible for you to be open minded and honest, as we approach this study ? It is hoped that you will lay aside all preconceived notions and opinions and permit God's word to speak for itself. The people of Thessalonica set a wonderful example. They listened to the preacher, but "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Would you be willing to follow their example ? One needs to learn that doctrines and commandments of men are extremely dangerous. (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:6-13).

We shall pose four questions regarding baptism :

(1) What is the One baptism of Ephesians 4:5 ? From the First Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection there had been two baptisms in force for a period of time . . . Holy Spirit baptism, plus water baptism. How do we know ? Well, on Pentecost, the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit; but the 3,000 were baptized in water (Acts 1:2,26; 2:1-4, 36-38). At the conversion of Cornelius there were two instances of baptism : Cornelius and his household were baptized with the Holy Spirit, but were also baptized in water (Acts 10:44 with verses 47-48; 11:14-15). Cornelius and his household were baptized in *circa* A.D. 41. Paul wrote Ephesians 4:5 in *circa* A.D. 64. Since Paul wrote in A.D. 64 that "there is ONE BAPTISM," it must be that Holy Spirit Baptism had ceased!! Paul taught that all miraculous works were to cease when God's complete revelation had been revealed and confirmed. (Hebrews 2:1-4; I Corinthians 13:8-13; Mark 16:15-20).

Now, dear reader, according to Matthew 28:18-20, water baptism is to last until the end of the world. Water baptism is performed by men and is for all nations. Water baptism is performed or administered in the name of Jesus by men. Only Jesus Christ

could administer Holy Spirit baptism. (John 1:33-34). Holy Spirit baptism was not to save anyone; but water baptism does save. (I Peter 3:20-21).

(2) What is the act of baptism ? Many say that it makes no difference. Is it sprinkling ? pouring ? immersion ? We shall permit the sacred scriptures to answer. In Acts 3:34-39, we have a beautiful picture of Bible baptism. What did these men do ? They came to a certain water; they went down into the water; Philip baptized the Eunuch; and they came up out of the water. Dear reader, read it and see!

Water baptism requires "much water". (John 3:23). How much is "much water?" Enough to be buried in water. (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). The fact that baptism is a burial rules out once and for all time, sprinkling or pouring.

(3) Who should be baptized ? Not babies, for they cannot believe; and they have no sins to be remitted. Only those who can believe, repent of sins, and confess Jesus' name before men, should be baptized. Why ? Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:26-38; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16. Infants, babies are not born in sin, as the Calvinists teach. (Cf. Ezekiel 28:15; I John 3:4). No person becomes a sinner until he transgresses the law of God. No one can inherit sin from his parents. For argument's sake, if one could inherit sin from his parents, why, when his parents have become Christians, could he not inherit righteousness from them ?? Let some one answer!

(4) Why should you be baptized? You should be baptized because God has commanded it. (Acts 10:47-48). Those who "reject the council of God" cannot be saved. (Luke 7:29-30). You should be baptized because the new birth demands it. To be "born again," equals to be "born of water and of the Spirit," and brings remission of sins. (John 3:3,5; Acts 2:38). "Things equal to the same are equal to each other."

You should be baptized in order to be saved. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned". (Mark 16:16). An unbeliever cannot scripturally be baptized!

You should be baptized "for the remission of sins." Peter, the great apostle said, "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). "Remission of sins" comes AFTER, not before, baptism!! What does the phrase "for the remission of sins" mean? It does not mean "because of remission of sins," unless Jesus shed his precious blood "because of remission of sins," which would be ridiculous! In both Matthew 26:28 and Acts 2:38, the expression, "for the remission of sins," is identical, both in the Greek and in the English.

You should be baptized that your sins might be washed away. Saul of Tarsus was not saved on the Damascus Road, because, three days later, although he was praying, his sin had not been forgiven. How do we know? Because the Lord sent Ananias to tell him what to do. Ananias said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).

You should be baptized to be saved. I Peter 3:21 reads as follows, "The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Thus, baptism is the dividing line between a lost condition and a saved condition. It is true that *men* say that baptism is a non-essential command, but *God* teaches that baptism SAVES.

You should be baptized to enter into Christ. We believe "UNTO," repent "UNTO," confess the name of Jesus "UNTO," but we are baptized "INTO" Christ. (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 11:18; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27). In baptism we are transferred from the world INTO Christ, where all spiritual blessings are. (Ephesians 1:3; II Timothy 2:10). "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (II Corinthians 5:17); but when does one enter Christ? One does not enter Christ by faith only, nor by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit but one is baptized into Christ, baptized into his death; and he is raised to walk in newness of life. (Cf. Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-27).

If Only We Believe

Winfrey Hennessee

We, as Christians, say that we believe God's word; yet some do things every day which indicate otherwise. Do you believe the scripture, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them". (Matthew 18:20). If we all do, then how could the Sunday evening attendance drop so much? In many cases one half the morning number returns for evening services. If we really believe, will not every pew be filled?

Some evidently do not believe things said in the New Testament about divorce and remarriage. If we did, then some so-called Gospel preachers would not declare that the church's outlook on this subject is old and outdated. How disgraceful! Does it not matter any more what God's word says?

If we really believe that God made us, that he gave us all that we have, and that he can take it all away in a second's time, then would we have any qualms about liberal giving? Of course we would not. Churches would have enough money to spread the Gospel into all nations.

If we all really believe that some day there will be a judgment of course we should make ready. How good it will be to hear the words, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many" (Matthew 25:21). What a great day this will be . . . if truly we believe!

"My Blood of the New Testament"

Flavil H. Nichols

After he ate the last Passover Supper, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins". (Matthew 26:26-28). Mark 14:24 also says that he referred to the cup as "my blood of the new testament." However, Luke

quotes Jesus as saying. "This is the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20). Please note with me the relationship between the blood of Jesus and the new covenant, or the new testament.

The Holy Spirit tells us that "When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined upon you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Hebrews 9:19-22). Thus it is clear that the old testament was dedicated with the blood of animals; but New Testament is sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Everything in the old testament was consecrated by blood—every ordinance or command, every promise of reward, every warning or threat of punishment. Conversely, it must follow that every thing NOT included in the covenant God made with them had NO BLOOD on it. Therefore, when Nadab and Abihu offered "strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-10), such "strange fire" had NO BLOOD on it; thus it was "unholy". (verse 10). It had not been dedicated with blood, for it was outside the covenant God had made and sealed with blood. As a result of this violation of the blood-sealed covenant, "there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them." (verse 2). That covenant specified that, to burn incense, the priest was to "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar . . ." (Numbers 16:46). This is the fire which "came. . . out from before the Lord" (Leviticus 9:24) at the dedication of the tabernacle. Being specified in the covenant, it had "blood" on it; the "strange fire" which Nadab and Abihu used, did not.

The lesson from this should be clear to all of us: Every thing in the new testament has been dedicated with the blood of Jesus Christ. Whatever is not in the new testament, does not have a drop of Christ's blood upon it.

Repentance and baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) is in the new covenant, sealed with the blood of Christ. But to

be baptized because one already has been saved (?), does not have any of Jesus' blood on it.

Singing in worship is in the new covenant, for we read: "... SINGING, and making melody in your heart to the Lord". (Ephesians 5:19). If it were not mentioned another time (which is not true), this one time is enough to include it in the blood-sealed covenant. Therefore *singing* has the blood of Christ on it. But the new testament does not authorize instrumental music in worship. Therefore such music does not have any of the blood of Christ on it! It does not have a single drop of Christ's blood on it! It simply is not included in the testament which Christ dedicated with his own blood.

We should never forget the first testament was not dedicated "without blood". (Hebrews 9:18). But it was animal blood that was used to consecrate that old testament, while it is Christ's blood which sealed the new covenant. We began this study with his own statement: "This is my blood of the new testament..." (Matthew 26:28). Of him we also read: "He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises". (Hebrews 8:6). This new and better covenant was sealed with better blood—the "precious blood of Christ" (I Peter 1:18-19) rather than the blood of bulls and goats.

One who respects the blood of Jesus Christ, must respect the covenant or testament sealed with that blood. He must not run back to the old covenant for religious practices. To do so is to deny or reject the "blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified". (Hebrews 10:29). It is to count that precious blood as if it were "unholy," and is to do "despite unto the Spirit of grace."

Is the blood of Jesus, and the covenant sealed with it, 'precious' to you?

Broken Pieces

Earlene Rose

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding". (Proverbs 3:6).

She could not have been more than three
When I watched her striving diligently
To put together a broken vase
That she had knocked from its sitting place.
As she held the pieces in her hand
And tried so hard to understand
Just where they fit and what to do
To make that vase again like new,
I thought; My child, how hard for you!
So I took the pieces and some glue,
And very soon the lovely vase
Was returned to its sitting place.
Today God watched me in my strife
Trying to repair a broken life
The pieces fit, it seemed, nowhere;
And I struggled more in deep despair.
T' was then He seemed to say, "My child,
Be patient just a little while;
The pieces fit when you understand
They must be placed by the Master's hand."

The Unity of the Body of Christ

Max R. Miller

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul". (Acts 4 : 32). That which was said of the Christians of the first century forever defines and exemplifies the unity of the body of Christ which is in accord with the will of heaven. Believers of "one heart and one soul" was the answer to fervent prayer of our Lord, "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17 : 21).

All those who plead for a return to the New Testament way of worship and service in His body, yearn for the unity which was displayed in the Jerusalem church of the first century. This unity is based on God's word and as such rejects strife, division, heresy and every aspect of denominationalism. There is nothing indicative

of the four hundred (more or less) religious bodies being united in the one body. (Eph. 4 : 4). Christ's prayer of John 17 was not for the denominations to be in union but that believers were to be united. He prayed for those disciples who believed in Him and were baptized (Mark 16 : 16); those who by one Spirit had been baptized into one body. (1 Cor. 12 : 13; Rom. 6 : 3). The denominations can never be united in the body of Christ for as one comes into that body one loses his identity with any former denomination or name he may have held.

After our Lord had established His church, which is His body (Eph. 1 : 22-23), His inspired ambassadors, the apostles, continued to pray and plead for the unity of the body. The church of the first century was extolled to "be of the same mind and the same judgment; to strive together for the faith of the gospel; endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; there should be no schism in the body."

There are those today in the brotherhood of Christ who speak of unity in division : (they call it unity in diversity). They mean there can be unity in the body of Christ although there is a complete failure to "all speak the same thing." to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1 : 10). The apostles reprov'd every diversion from the New Testament Scripture. They nowhere approved "unity in diversity." The inspired apostles would not allow the Jew to bring Moses' law and circumcision into the brotherhood of Christ (Acts 15 : 1-2,28); neither could the church at Thyatira fellowship "the woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants". (Rev. 2:20). Every departure from New Testament teaching and practice was rejected by the early church, and must also be rejected by the church today.

Those who clamor for "unity in diversity" (proponents of dividing and destroying the church of Christ) are false teachers. They are to be marked for their philosophy and teaching that is "contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned (New Testament teaching); and avoid them". (Rom. 16 : 17).

Why did Christ and His inspired co-workers emphasize the unity of the body? Was it simply that they wanted the church to

be at peace and have a quiet and peaceable environment? It was this and much more. Where the spirit of strife prevails and the body is torn by disunity the work of salvation is greatly disrupted or becomes nil. The divided body loses its interest in saving souls, edifying itself in the faith or in caring for the needs of suffering humanity. The strife torn church is one that cannot receive the things of a spiritual nature. Such was the church at Corinth and received the admonition of Paul, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal...for ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men." (1 Cor. 3:1-3). James further admonishes, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. (James 3 : 16)." Disunity in any form opens the door for Satan to gain an entrance, and as the spirit of Satan invades the body the spirit of Christ makes an exit. Brethren can't war and wrangle in the body and not hurt the Christ.

Unity of the body is absolutely necessary for the proper functioning of the body. Every part of the body should supply its part to the effectual working of the body that it might be edified or made stronger. In this unified body there is closeness, harmony and love. David speaks words which fill every affectionate heart that loves and strives for unity when he said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity". (Psalm 133 : 1).

Where there is unity in the body there is also to be found the power, aim, desire and ability for that body to fulfill its divine mission of redemption among the lost souls of the world. Every part (every member) of the body has an individual responsibility in contributing to his unity by walking in truth. Certainly elder, deacons, preachers, and teachers can see their responsible part, but cannot we all realize our part in supplying our individual measure of love, devotion, peace, faithfulness and fellowship in His body ?

Influence Beyond This Life

Wallace E. Maxwell

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun

a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." In verse 6, Paul thanked the brethren at Philippi for their fellowship in the gospel (their support of him). They were partakers of his grace both in his bonds (imprisonment) and in their defense and confirmation of the gospel. (verse 7). Paul did not expect the brethren at Philippi to live until Christ came but expected the good work that God had begun in them to continue until the coming of Christ. (Philippians 1 : 6). The apostle John expressed a similar statement in Revelation 14 : 13, . . . "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

The work and influence begun and carried on in the lives of Christians often continues after their death in the lives of those who knew them. A biblical example of this principle is found in 2 Timothy 1 : 5, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also." Many Christians today can look at families whose work in the church is a result of a work started in the parents and grandparents years ago. Each generation has a responsibility to perpetuate this work will last until the coming of Christ. We should realize the wonderful responsibility and the great blessing that is offered us to have our godly influence live in the lives of our posterity and those of our friends until the coming of Christ. We should remember that one broken link in this chain of good works can rob our posterity and that of our acquaintances of the blessings of Christ for generations to come. It is said of Rehoboam's son, Abijam, that "he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him : and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God . . ." (1 Kings 15 : 3). The power of an evil influence also lives on after we die. This should cause us to realize that the greatest blessing we can bequeath to our posterity is the blessed example of a Godly life.

Wise Thoughts

Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

For their heart studieth destruction and their lips talk of mischief.

Through wisdom is an house built; and by understanding it is established :

And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. (Prove. 24 : 1-5).

How was the First Covenant Dedicated ?

Quentin Dunn

"Neither the first testament was dedicated without blood". (Hebrews 9 : 18). Or more literally, neither was the first covenant inaugurated without blood. Verses 16 & 17 tells about the death of Christ. The first covenant was dedicated by the blood of calves and goats and the new covenant by the blood of Christ. Thus the first covenant is a type of the new.

"For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people. Saying, this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry" (Hebrews 9 : 20,21). "And Moses took hold of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people : and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." (Exodus 24 : 6-8). Please notice that the people said, "All that the Lord said will we do and be obedient". A covenant is an agreement between God and man. From a study of the first covenant we learn the value of blood and the value of obedience.

Called of God

Roger Jackson

Most of us gospel preachers have had the experience of being

asked how we received our "call to preach." I am constantly hearing about preachers receiving such a subjective call and there are a few in the Lord's church who think they have received such. It is true that God once called men to various functions by miraculous means. Moses was thus called when he turned aside to see the bush that burned but was not consumed. (Exodus 3:1-4). God said he knew Jeremiah before he was born and ordained him a prophet unto the nation, but we shall see, this did not mean that Jeremiah had no choice in the matter, but that God had a specific work for him and foreknew him in that sense. In Matthew 10 Jesus called his disciples to the work of the limited commission. Some men now claim to have received their call under the limited commission. They do this in order to claim the promise of verse 19: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." Hence many preachers make no preparation before they speak, but claim that the Holy Spirit inspires them. If it is true (which it certainly is not) it means the Spirit inspires them to violate His instructions, for He forbade the preaching of the message under that commission to anyone except the Jew. (v.6). In Acts 9:1-16 is recorded the case of Saul and how he saw the great light and heard the Lord speaking to him. Later Ananias came to him in Damascus with the message that he was to preach the gospel and suffer many things for the Lord's sake. In all these we can see that the Lord did call men to his work often by a miracle.

Today men have confused the means of God's calling with the principle. That is, they have confused the way God did it with the thing He did. God does call men today, but he does not do it as he once did. For example take the case of Isaiah in 6:8,9. It would seem that God invited anyone who would to take up the work when He said, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." Isaiah seems to have had a choice either to accept the call or to reject it. In the New Testament we are commanded in Matthew 28:18,19: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations. . . ." Like Isaiah, we have been asked of the Lord, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Any Christian

man who wishes to may preach. The limitation is on the sisters. (I Tim. 2:12). Isn't it ironical that among those who today believe they are miraculously called is a certain number of women preachers? Can you at all imagine the Holy Spirit's forbidding a woman to deliver a discourse (I Corinthians 14:34,35) and then calling her to do it anyway? Such a doctrine puts the Godhead against itself.

Hebrews 5:4 says men could not serve as priests unless they came under the call received by Aaron. The Roman Catholic priesthood is not called of God and has not a single passage giving them anything to offer. All Christians are a part of the priesthood of God (I Peter 2:9) and have some what to offer. (5). They are called to that position by the gospel. (II Thessalonians 2:14).

From the assumption that God calls men miraculously today comes the following errors :

The first is the erroneous assumption that preachers possess "pastoral authority." This is one of the reasons sectarian preachers hold authority over the places where they preach and cast the deciding vote in every issue. The church of our Lord is not totally free of it. When the smoke clears all the arguments against the authority of elders just means to preacher wants the rule. I know of preachers who will not allow the congregation to select elders because they enjoy having the rule,

The second error is that of official ordination alluded to already. The general feeling is that a preacher must be ordained by an officially ordained preacher, etc. The ordination is not forthcoming unless (1) the candidate can give evidence that he has been "called" and (2) he gives allegiance to the denominational creed. Few members of sectarian bodies know that.

The third error is that of "official functions." This means there are certain duties that people look upon as so holy that only preachers can do them. Among them would be such things as baptism, funerals, prayer at civic functions, and in sectarian bodies, serving communion. Again we are often guilty by setting the

preacher up as "The Minister." I am grateful that my brethren call upon me in various functions like these (except serving communion by myself, which they have never done), but we must never feel that the preacher is the only one who can do these things.

There are three Greek words translated "called" in the sense we are discussing. Their meanings and use will help us understand God's calling better.

KALEO is the root word. According to the Analytical Greek Lexicon, P. 211, it means, "to call, call to, send for person, to call to a participation in the privileges of the gospel." In that sense every accountable person is called. (Matthew 11:28-30). It is used in Matthew 9:13 to pinpoint sinners as the object of the call to repent. It is used in Matthew 22:9 to describe the Father's call to the great supper. It is used in Hebrews 11:8 to describe Abraham's call to come out of Ur of the Chaldees. Therefore, it is a beautiful picture of God's call to sinners to come out of the world and obey the gospel. But not all men who are called respond favourably. Therefore, there is a group of people who are said to be the "called" of God. These are the ones who respond like Isaiah, and another word is used with regard to them.

KLASIS is defined in the same place as, "the temporal condition in which the call found a person." This means that all those who respond to the gospel call (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38) are the called of God. Peter says we can make that calling just as sound and sure as we want to. (II Peter 1:10). We may do that by adding the Christian graces listed in verses 5-7. Now, we could not do that if God's calling were miraculous.

KLATOS is the last Greek word, and it means, "called to privileges or functions". (ibid). In Romans 1 : 1 Paul used it when he said he was called to be an apostle. In verse 6 he said the Romans were called to be saints. In I Corinthians 1:1,2 they are put together.

So the idea that guides a person into a calling without his will's being involved is false. He invites, and if we accept, he elects. Have we not allowed the tendency of the world to glorify the fantastic and confuse the simple to shake our understanding of the calling of God ?

Keeping Our Equilibrium

R.W. Gray

To a younger preacher Paul wrote, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ. . ." (I Timothy 4:6). As a "good soldier" of Jesus Christ Timothy was to endure hardness. (II Timothy 3:2). As an "evangelist" he was to preach the word. (II Timothy 4: 1-6). He was to be gentle as a "servant" of the Lord. (II Timothy 2:24). As to content and style the younger man was encouraged to make the aged Paul his example in preaching. (II Timothy 2:2).

Whether "minister" (diakonos) or "servant" (doulos), Timothy was functioning as the Lord's slave or attendant. Whether viewed as "soldier" or "steward" he was to be faithful, not encumbered with burdens or responsibilities that would divert his main thrust in life, the proclamation of the gospel. (II Timothy 2:4; I Corinthians 4:2). As an "evangelist" Timothy understood he was a messenger of good. He was, in the beautiful language of the prophets and evangelists, a "man of God". (II Timothy 3:17).

One of Timothy's teachers, Paul, was well qualified academically to gain the respect of the intellectual class. (Acts 22:3). Some of Paul's fellow apostles were "unlettered" men. (Acts 4:13). There is no instance recorded wherein Paul reflected adversely upon the lack of formal training, i.e., seminary degrees, on the part of his fellow workers. He felt, rather, that differences in background, training, and personality allowed the Lord to use

all in various fields. (Galatians 2:8; I Corinthians 3:5-8; Philippians 2:13). The important thing was that they be faithful to the revelation of God, preaching in love, but without fear or compromise. (Eph. 4:15; Jude 3).

Paul never flaunted his academic advantages. He appeared to minimize the importance of such things when he refused to cater to the learned and affluent. (I Corinthians 2:1-4). In this he followed the example of Jesus who said that "wise and prudent" would misconstrue his simple message, while the "babes" or "common folk" would hear and obey. (Matthew 11:25; 13:11; Mark 12:37; Luke 10:21). Paul also observed that "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," embraced the gospel. (I Corinthians 1:26).

Have circumstances changed a great deal? Is modern man a different breed to that of the First Century world? Not in the sense of a seeming aversion to divine revelation on the part of the intellectual class. Many educated and most educators of this 20th Century consider the preaching of the cross "foolishness" in the same sense as did their First Century counter-parts.

It is sometime urged that more are educated today, percentage-wise, than in the First Century. If there is merit to the claim it does not follow that we change the style, emphasis, or content of the message to accomodate the vanity of the "wise and prudent." We should not, on the one hand, assume an automatic bias toward the wealthy and educated, nor on the other hand an assumption that they would embrace the truth if doled out to them by one possessing a Ph.D. Man's faith should yet stand in the power of God, not in the wisdom of men. (I Corinthians 2:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:2). We will do well to follow Paal's approach as well as his message.

Ministers, evangelists, soldiers, servants of Jesus Christ are being pressed into the role of "pastor" in far too many cases. We are allowing ourselves to be moulded into professionals whose

primary role is to impress the world that we have arrived academically. While degrees from the right source are to be coveted and appreciated, things are getting out of balance, and the day of powerful preaching is fast waning. Promoters, professionals, and go-getters are replacing simple, down to earth, Bible centered preaching. If we do not regain our spiritual equilibrium we will stumble and fall. (I Corinthians 10:12).

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe”. (I Corinthians 1:19-21). Paul was no enemy of education, nor are we. But to his observation may we all add a hearty—“A-Men!”

Let's put the minister of the word back where he belongs. Let's insist upon his knowing and proclaiming the unadulterated Word of God, giving him both time and opportunity so to prepare and so to do. Let's make him God's servant first, and allow him to serve us as a consequence of that primary role.

Interesting Admissions

Bob Duncan

I have before me a book entitled, *JUBILATE!*, with the subtitle *Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition*. It was written by Donald P. Hustad, an ordained minister, former organist for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and presently professor of church music and V.V. Cooke Professor of Organ at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

This book does not propose to be a discussion of the question of instrumental music in worship; it is, as the subtitle suggests, a general discussion of church music among so-called evangelical churches. But one chapter (Chapter IV) is entitled, "Authority and Leadership in Evangelical Church Music." This chapter contains some interesting statements, some of which amount to admissions which should certainly help drive home a point we have tried to make with our religious friends and neighbours, namely, that those who adhere strictly to that which is authorized in the New Testament cannot worship with mechanical instruments of music.

The statement is made on page 41 that "all evangelicals recognize the authority of God as expressed in scripture, for life as well as for faith." The reader will want to keep this statement in mind, for it does not mean what it may seem to say. If one thinks this statement means that we must be governed by the authority of the scriptures, he is mistaken. That this is not its meaning will be shown from subsequent statements made in the same chapter. In fact, the very next sentence in the chapter is this: "However, looking to the Bible for complete directions in worship and its music has caused some historical confusion because the scriptures *do not claim authority or speak definitively* in these matters". (emphasis added). This is quite a revelation. Evangelicals recognize the authority of scriptures, but the scriptures simply do not claim any authority when it comes to the kind of music we are to have in worship, according to this writer. Furthermore, according to him, the scriptures do not speak definitively with reference to the kind of music we are to have.

These statements are not true, but they point up the truthfulness of what we have been saying, i.e., that the reason our religious neighbours use mechanical instruments of music in worship is because of a lax attitude toward the authority of the scriptures. This man admits that mechanical instruments are not authorized for use in worship, but says the reason he uses them is that the scriptures claim no authority with reference to the matter, and neither do the scriptures speak definitively with reference thereto. If the scriptures had said simply, "make music," I might see why

that would not be speaking very definitively. "Specifically, what kind of music?" we might ask. But the scriptures tell us we are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. How could you be more definitive than that? The truth of the matter is if what God has authorized in the scriptures is not what I want to practice, then all I have to do is say that the scriptures claim no authority with reference to the matter, and do not speak definitively. Then I can go ahead and do whatever it is I want to do. This, in a nutshell, is what the religious world has done with reference to the instrumental music question.

Notice the following paragraph from page 42 :

Upholding this tradition, Eastern Orthodox worship for the most part continues to use only vocal music. In the Western church as well, the use of instruments has been opposed from time to time, both before and since the 16th century Reformation. Until recently, a fairly large number of evangelical groups in America (e.g., the Free Methodist Church, "primitive Baptists," "old Mennonites," and certain Presbyterian bodies) perpetuated the "no instrument" practice, but the antagonism is waning. At present time, the prohibition is most conspicuously continued and defended by certain Churches of Christ, whose leaders argue that they must adhere strictly to what the New Testament authorizes.

This is an interesting paragraph. What is the argument that would exclude the mechanical instrument from Christian worship? Simply this, that we must adhere strictly to what the New Testament authorizes. What will it take to prove that mechanical instruments in worship are alright? Simply show that it is not necessary for us to adhere strictly to what the New Testament authorizes. Now, that is not nearly it; that is it! And it was spoken by one who believes there is nothing wrong with the mechanical instrument in worship. This "fairly large number of evangelical groups in America" who at one time perpetuated the "no instrument" practice, but no longer do so, have simply come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to adhere strictly to what the

New Testament authorizes, then instrumental music in Christian worship will cease.

On page 43 the author states: "The Apostle Paul speaks positively of the singing of 'psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs' in early Christian gatherings. (Eph. 5:18 [sic], Col 3:16)." In the very next sentence, though in the next paragraph, he says, "It is true that *instrumental* worship music is not mentioned in the New Testament". (emphasis in original text). It seems that should settle the matter. Since this writer says that the scriptures do not claim to speak with authority and definitively about this matter, it would be interesting to know what the scriptures would have said otherwise. If speaking *positively* about the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and saying not one word about playing a mechanical instrument is not authoritative and definitive, what would the Bible need to say to be authoritative and definitive?

On page 44 the following statement is made: "For all these reasons, first century Christians simply did not consider the possibility that instruments could be functional in their worship life." Who felt that way? First century Christians! Could it be that the first century Christians were among the number who believed it necessary to adhere strictly to what the New Testament authorizes? They certainly were if they read and believed what was written to them in such passages as II Timothy 3:16,17; II John 9; Galatians 1:8,9; Revelation 22:18,19. Those of us who read and believe these same passages today will feel just like they did about the matter.

But the real key to the matter of why some use mechanical instruments of music in worship is on page 45, and it reads as follows: "In an evangelical church with congregational polity, the individual church member still retains final authority." There it is. Why have the instrument? Because we are convinced the New Testament authorizes it? No! Rather it is because the final say-so lies with the members of the church, and that is the way the members of the church want it.

Dear reader, where do you believe the final say-so should lie? Should it lie within the Holy Scriptures, or should it lie within the flexible will of man? Your answer to that question determines your position with reference to the matter of instrumental music in worship.

What Kind of Shoe Describes you ?

Someone said, "If the shoe fits, wear it !" We sometimes say, "I'd hate to be in his shoe." I think everyone of us will fit into one of the following. But which ?

LOAFER "Thou wicked and slothful servant," (Matthew 25:26). "Be not slothful in business," (Romans 12:11).

HIGH HEEL—This fits the haughty, proud individual. A man is not "to think of himself more highly than he ought to think." (Romans 12:3).

OVERSHOES—Puts on Christianity only when the going gets rough. Wants the prayers and visits of the members only when in trouble.

HOUSE SHOES—This person wants things easy, comfortable. He is scared off by a building program, mission work, benevolent work, etc. They can't worship in bad weather. "Woe unto them who are at ease in Zion." (Amos 6:1).

SANDAL—Just a skeleton of a Christian; didn't grow into well rounded service. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (I Peter 2:2).

SUNDAY SHOES—Once-a-week Christians. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

WORK SHOES—The active Christian who is always on the job for the Lord. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." (John 9:4) "Son go work today in my vineyard." (Matthew 21:28).

We should all remember : "Today is the day of salvation. . ." (II Corinthians 6:2). May I ask again, "What kind of shoes best describes you ?"

—X—X—