

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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A Word To Preachers

A preacher is one who preaches, or teaches, or proclaims something to others. For a believer in Christ, then he preaches the Bible, that Christ is the Son of God, the gospel of Christ, Christianity, the second coming of Christ, that there is a judgment coming, and that there will be a heaven and a hell where the godly and wicked will spend all eternity.

One is not forced to become a preacher. Certainly God does not choose a person without his knowledge and then send him signals or signs to indicate to him that he has been called to preach. The scriptures tell us that we are all called by the gospel or through the gospel, that is, to become a Christian or to become a child of God. (2 Thessalonians 2 : 14). Then as a Christian the Lord has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the

gospel, to go and teach all nations. (Mark 16 : 15; Matthew 28 : 19,20). But you might be thinking that Christ was speaking there to the Apostles. That is true, but he also told them to teach their converts the same things he had taught them concerning these matters, and a part of that was to take the gospel to the world. But what would be some other qualifications? One would be, the desire to preach. Another would be, the ability to do so. Still another would be, to be able to preach in all sincerity, and to prove it, to practice what one preaches. If one does not have some of these qualifications, then how could one think about preaching?

Someone is ready to say, "I am just going to let the Spirit guide me in my preaching and let him tell me what to say." Now if you are thinking in terms of the Spirit leading you and telling you what to preach, separate and apart from what the word of God says, then you are going to be disappointed. The Spirit inspired a select number of men to write down his word, and that is why Paul could say that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God. (2 Timothy 3 : 16,17); Again, Peter was inspired to say that we should speak as the oracles of God. (1 Peter 4 : 11). Paul said that we should preach the word. (2 Timothy 4 : 2). Now, do you think that the Spirit is going to get you off somewhere to yourself and tell you something that he has not already said in the word? If so, then you would have the Spirit contradicting himself. If not, then why would he go to the trouble of revealing the scriptures to you, when he has already done that through the written word? Surely he would not encourage you to be lazy or do for you that which he would not do for others. Actually, he has commanded all of us to study his word (2 Timothy 2 : 15), and to search the scriptures. (John 5 : 39). My preacher friend, the only way you are ever going to know God's will is through Bible study. If you preach without studying the Bible then you are going to preach what you have heard, what you have observed, or what you have thought up, but you will not be preaching the truth in that case. You can preach only what you know, but you cannot preach God's word if you do not know it, and you can't preach the truth of God's will unless you understand that truth. Certainly the Spirit is not going to give you a special revelation to enable you to preach the truth of God.

Now you can become a preacher of God's word without attending a Christian College, and certainly without attending some kind of Seminary, but you cannot become a preacher that God would be pleased with until you become a Christian yourself. In other words, you cannot successfully teach others to obey the gospel if you are unwilling to obey the gospel, and after you become a Christian, you cannot do a good job of preaching unless you are living the Christian life. It will not take very long for people around you to see that you are not sincere, that you are not practicing what you preach, if indeed you are not. Paul taught this principle, when he asked, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written." (Romans 2 : 21-24). Paul was speaking here to those pertaining to the way they had dealt with the law of Moses, but the same principle is just as true when it comes to the gospel of Christ and Christianity.

Sometimes young men want to become preachers because they think that it is an easy way to make a living, that it carries with it prestige, and that it is a way to make contact with foreigners. They think that they might get some foreign support and might even be sent to a foreign country for some training. All of these are wrong motive for becoming a preacher. If that is why you have become a preacher then you ought to quit. If that is why you want to become a preacher, then you should decide to enter into some other profession.

The Bible teaches that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and that means then that if a preacher gives his full time to the Lord then he is worthy of support. (Luke 10 : 7; 1 Timothy 5 : 18). But what if the church doesn't exist where you are working? Then you are either going to have to find somebody or some congregation to support you until you have converted enough to support you, or else you are going to have to work with your own hands, or mind, to earn your living until you have enough brethren

to support you. Paul did that according to 1 Corinthians 4 : 12. Why can't you? If you feel too good to do that then you are not good enough to be a preacher.

So many of the local people are disappointed when they look at preachers. They see them taking up the work as one would become a school teacher, an accountant, a government worker, etc. In other words, it is just a job, just a way to make a living. If someone comes along and offers them a little money to become this or that religiously, then they are easily converted over. Such men are a shame and disgrace to themselves, to God's people, and above all, to God.

I could say much more, but let me sum all of this up by listing some suggestions to you as a preacher, or a young man who wants to become a preacher :

1. Obey Christ and become a member of the church that you can read about in the Bible, the church of Christ.
2. Prove that you are a Christian by the way you live. Don't be a hypocrite.
3. Study your Bible daily. Also there are Bible correspondence courses available to help you gain more knowledge. You can also go to a library where there are Christian books and you can use them in your studies. Study with older Christians. At the same time, get a good secular education.
4. Talk to personal friends and those around you about Christ and that of becoming a Christian.
5. Take every opportunity that comes your way to stand before others to publicly speak. Be humble, prayerful, zealous, and preach the truth only.
6. When you marry, marry only a Christian lady. You will need her help and you will want a Christian family and home.
7. Don't preach for money. but preach because you are a Christian and you love God and the souls of men.
8. If there is no support available from the church then be willing to earn a living for yourself and your family and build a congregation to the point where they can support you.
9. Always preach the truth. Never change or compromise for any person or for any reason.

Now, if you will pattern your life after Christ, and try to be the kind of preacher that you read about in the scriptures, then the Lord will bless you and give you a great work for him. Furthermore, you will have the respect of all of those around you, and will also be able to respect yourself. Preachers are needed today in India, many of them, just like you.



**associate
editorial**

The Reality

There are some things every individual need to know. You should know that you are a very important person, as God sees you. You may be a student or a worker in a factory or office. Perhaps you are a teacher or a small businessman. In the eyes of people you may be an individual of not much significance. And, perhaps, you too think of yourself inferior and unimportant. But the great truth is this that in the eyes of God you are a very important person. Man sees importance in wealth, beauty, possessions, and power. But this is not how God looks at us. When God looks at you and me and all the other people on earth He sees us as His offspring. In the beginning when God created man, the Bible says, He created him in His own image and after His own likeness. Man is not mere flesh and bones, but, he, in fact, is a spiritual being, as God is, and therefore, like God he will exist forever. Just as we love our children, not because they are rich or poor, but just because they are our children, likewise God, our Creator, loves us all, not because what we are, but he loves us because we are His offspring. The Bible, God's book, declares that God so loved the world—not some or certain people on earth—but all people in the world, that he gave His only begotten Son as ransom for the sins of the world so that all might be saved from sin through Him.

Because of sin, the Bible says, every man and woman is separated from God. And as long as man will live in sin he will remain separated from his Creator God. This is a fearsome truth. When some one dies, especially someone dear to us, most people would say that he or she has gone to the heavenly abode, and by this they mean that the dead person has gone to heaven. But is it true? Do all people go to heaven after death? Heaven is a realm where God is. He is Holy. In Him there is no sin. Therefore, He cannot have fellowship with sinful man. The truth is that one must become holy on earth to be able to enter heaven, the abode of the Holy God.

One does not commit sin by actions only, but sin lives in the heart of every man. Jesus revealed this great truth when he said: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, All these evil things come from within and defile a man." (Mark 7 : 21-23).

All fall short of the glory of God, because all have sinned in one way or another, and therefore all are severed from Him. The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6 : 23). But God loves man because He had made him after His own likeness, a spiritual being. This is not God's will that any should perish because of sin. He wants that all should be saved from sin, He wants to forgive man his sins. And he wants to make him holy so that he could be restored to the fellowship of God.

There are some who offer different things to God and shed the blood of animals so that God might be appeased and might forgive them their sins. But God is not a man. He does not require gold or silver or animals, as men do. He does not require coconut, flowers, or sweet-smelling spices. Man need all of these things, not God. Then there are others who would bow down before images and idols to honor them and to receive their blessings. Man has created by his own imagination and workmanship many gods on earth. But the One True God is a Spirit, and therefore no picture or form or image of Him can be made. "We ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver, or

stone, something shaped by art and man's devising" the Bible declared in Acts 17 : 29. The God Almighty who made the world and every thing therein is the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not dwell in houses or temples made with the hands of men. There is nothing in the world which man could give to God to appease Him and to receive the forgiveness of sins from Him.

The greatest Good News revealed to man in the Bible is this that to save man from sin and to make him holy God Himself became man and came down on earth. Jesus Christ, The Man, was actually God Who came down from heaven in the likeness of man to save man from sin. His birth, and life, and works, and claims, and death, and resurrection and ascension into heaven proves this beyond any doubt that He was (is) God. He lived a sinless life and thereby He became an example to all that all can follow Him and live the kind of life He lived as a man on earth. And, then, the Bible says that by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God He was betrayed and put to death on a cross, where He died as a transgressor, so that through His death He might become the propitiation for the sins of the world. In the Bible it is written that even though in him there was no sin but yet He was counted as a sinner, so that in Him we might become righteous before God. (2 Corinthians 5 : 21). The Bible says, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5 : 8).

God loves you. He wants to save you and all from the terrible consequences of sin. He has, in His Bible, revealed to us that if we will believe in Christ Jesus that He died instead of us to propitiate for our sins and that if we will turn from all sins with the determination that we will sin no more, and if we will be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, as Jesus has commanded, then He will save us from all sin and will give us power to live a new and sin-free life in Jesus Christ.

Your life is very important. God has given the greatest sacrifice to save your life. You must save yourself. There will be no second chance. If you are not saved now then you will never be saved. According to the Bible, it is appointed by God for every man to die once and then all will appear in judgment before Him. Where are you going to live forever in that eternal realm?

You must decide today! Whatever decision you will make in this present life that will decide the eternal future of your soul.

You should know that if you will accept God's will and if you will do what He has said then He will save you and will give you eternal life in heaven. But those who will reject God's will they will live in eternal separation from God because of their sins. Because, "The wages of sin is death", the Bible in Romans 6 : 23 says, "but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now you know, where you are, and what you should do, and what difference it will make. The decision is yours!

What Is Truth ?

John A. Mays

In John 18:37, 38 we read, "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, what is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all."

If there is any question that needs to sincerely be asked today, it is the same one Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" The trouble with many today is that they have evidently begun to believe the false doctrine which some of the "educated" philosophers have been teaching for some time which is "One can't really know truth". They have taught that one can reach for and search for truth but never can be sure that he ever obtains it. Others seem to believe that truth is so difficult to arrive at, that only few, if any, can be certain that they have the truth. This is all false, of course, to the core.

Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). In John 17:17 he said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." In I Pet. 1:22,23, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit

unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible, seed but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." These people were just people like we are and yet they learned the truth, the Word of God, and obeyed it. We can do likewise today.

There are many today who seem to think that we cannot know the difference in the Gospel of Christ and a perverted Gospel. It is strange that people in the first century could distinguish between the two and people today, who are better educated than they, cannot. Paul wrote to the Galatians and said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:6-10).

Friends and brethren, is it reasonable and logical for the God of heaven to give us a gospel which we cannot distinguish from a perverted gospel, and commands us to obey it, when we can't be sure what it is and then he damns us for not obeying the gospel? Paul said that Jesus is coming "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:8,9). It just would not be justice for God to damn us for not obeying the gospel of Christ, if we could not know it. Certainly, the Bible teaches very plainly that we can know and obey the truth.

The denominations have been preaching for years that doctrine is not important and that it doesn't make any difference what one believes. They don't really believe it, for they preach

their peculiar doctrine long and hard and try to get people to obey it. Most of them will not worship together. If they really believed that doctrine is not important, then surely they would leave off their own opinions and join together on one doctrine where there could be unity among them. Why are there so many denominations and religious groups in the world? It is because there are so many doctrines in the world and each group thinks it is right.

Does Christ have a doctrine? You had better believe he does. John wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (II John 9-11). If words mean anything, Jesus has a doctrine and it must be obeyed to go to heaven.

All of the Bible, both Old and New Testament is truth, the inspired Word of God. Peter said, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (I Pet. 1:20, 21). Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

When we read the Bible, we can depend on what it says. Someone may say, "There are lies in the Bible, so how can it be truth? There are indeed lies recorded in the Bible, but the truth is that these lies were told. Satan lied to Eve when he told her she would not die (Gen. 3:4). The truth is that Satan did tell her this lie.

Even though the Old Testament was inspired of God as well as the New Testament, we today are not under the Old, but under the New. We can still believe the Old Testament and must do so to be pleasing to God. The creation story of Genesis is still just as

true today as it ever was. But the laws by which we are to live are recorded in the New Testament. Jesus selected men whom he called apostles and through these men revealed the New Testament the truth for us. In John 14:26 Jesus told his apostles, "But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26). In John 16:13 he said to them, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come." Notice the Holy Spirit would guide these men into all truth. In Acts 1:1, 2 Luke wrote, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he has chosen." Notice that Jesus did not reveal the New Testament or his commandments through the apostles until after he had ascended back to heaven.

The Law of Christ or the Will of Christ, which Will or Law we are under today, could not go into effect until Christ died. Just as one's will does not go into effect until he dies, the same is true with the Will of Christ. In Hebrews 9:15-17 we read, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

Indeed, Jesus does have a will for us and we must obey his doctrine if we are going to be saved from sin and inherit a home with God (II John 9). Paul said, "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of God" (I Cor. 14:37). Indeed, we are going to be judged by what is written. Paul also said, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming

fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (II Thess. 1:7-10).

Reader, have you obeyed the truth? Have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ and are you living for the Lord now? If not, why not obey today while you still have opportunity.

No One Is Baptized With The Holy Spirit Today

Clifford Dixon

Many people teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation. Others teach that one of the evidences of salvation is that one is baptized with the Holy Spirit and speaks in tongues. However, **no one is baptized with the Holy Spirit today and here are the reasons why.**

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not promised to anyone today. John said Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit. (Matt 3 : 11, 12). Christ promised this baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles (Acts 1 : 4,5). The only like measure given to others was that which came on Cornelius' household as explained by Peter in Acts 11 : 15,16. Christ never promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit to all men.

2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit brought Perfect knowledge to the apostles. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14 : 26). They were guided into all truth (John 16 : 13). people claiming the baptism of the Holy Spirit today do not have perfect knowledge. only

scriptures they know are those they have studied and learned. If people were baptized with the Holy Spirit today they would not need any Bibles because they would know all of it by heart. When we see those claiming the baptism of the Spirit reading from the Bible we know they are making a false claim.

3. People cannot speak in authentic tongues today who claim the baptism of the Spirit. Tongues referred to languages as can be seen in Acts 2 : 5-8. These Jewish people from many nations had come to Jerusalem to worship. They heard the apostles speak in their languages in which they had been born. People claiming tongue speaking today do not speak in languages which they have not studied. The so called tongue speaking of our day is unintelligible babbling. From this we know that these people do not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

4. We know that people are not baptized with the Holy Spirit today because they do not have the signs that the apostles had. Jesus said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16 : 17,18). We have already shown that people do not speak in languages they have not studied today. People cannot drink poison or be bitten by serpents today and not be hurt. Paul was bitten by a serpent and felt no harm (Acts 28 : 3-5). Neither can people today lay hands on the sick and those sick people immediately and miraculously recover. These are people who claim miraculous healing but by their actions they prove they do not have it. People in the hospital, or under the doctor's care, or taking some medicine for healing are not being healed miraculously. If the Lord was healing miraculously there would be no need of doctors, hospitals, or drug stores. From the preachers to the members, of those claiming the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they go to the doctor when they are sick, take medicine for healing, and at times both go to the hospital and have operations. Such are not having miraculous healing. So none of the signs that the apostles did are being done today and since this is so there is no baptism of the Holy Spirit today.

5. The baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles empowered them to pass on spiritual gifts to others by laying their hands upon them (Acts 8 : 18; 19 : 6; 2 Tim. 1 : 6). None of those who had the apostles' hands laid upon them could pass on any spiritual gifts. This can be seen by Philip in Samaria. He could heal the sick and preach the gospel but the apostles Peter and John had to come down to Samaria to lay hands on those people so they could receive miraculous gifts of the Spirit. (Acts 8 : 5-7, 14-18).

6. The baptism of the Spirit on the apostles was necessary to give the world the gospel and to confirm it. They have given us the New Testament. It has been confirmed. Therefore, instead of claiming the baptism of the Holy Spirit we should be studying the scriptures, finding the truths we need to obey and be obeying them. We are asked, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2 : 3).

Misunderstood Scriptures Used By Men To Teach That People Are Baptized With The Holy Spirit Today

1. Those claiming baptism of the Holy Spirit argue that Joel's prophecy promises the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh. They then state that since this meant baptism of the Spirit on Pentecost day of Acts 2 then it is still promised to people today in the same measure. These people do not believe their own argument because they do not teach that everyone in all the world receive it today but they limit it to those that seek it. The truth of the matter is that Joel's prophecy does not refer to all men but to representatives of all flesh. The apostles' being baptized with the Spirit on Pentecost day represented the Jews while the outpouring on Cornelius' household represented the Gentiles. The important thing that Joel's prophecy means to us is not the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit but that as a result of God's word being given, "that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2 : 21). Joel's prophecy being fulfilled marks the beginning of Gospel preaching which people can hear, believe, and obey and thus be saved.

2. The people claiming the baptism of the Spirit equate it with the "gift of the Holy Ghost" of Acts 2 : 38 which is promised to all who repent and are baptized for the remission of sins. It is true that in Acts 11 : 15-17 the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius' household is called the "gift of the Spirit." However there is no likeness of that which Cornelius received and that which people who repented and were baptized on Pentecost day received. The gift of the Holy Ghost of Acts 2 : 38 did not empower them to speak in tongues, nor give them any other miraculous gift. The only miracles performed were those the apostles did until we reach Acts 6 where the apostles laid their hands on the seven brethren chosen to wait tables. The "gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2 : 38, is not the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

3. The people claiming baptism of the Spirit base it upon the command of Ephesians 5 : 18 to be "filled with the Spirit". They argue that since the Apostles in Acts 2 : 4 were "filled with the Spirit" thus were baptized with the Spirit that baptism of the Spirit is the same as being filled with the Spirit. However, there were Elizabeth, Zacharias, and John the Baptist who were filled with the Spirit but they were not baptized with the Spirit (Luke 1 : 15, 41, 67). In Acts 13 : 45 we are told that the Jews were "filled with envy" but they were not baptized with envy. So "filled with the Spirit" is not synonymous with being baptized with the Spirit. The command to be "filled with the Spirit" of Ephesians 5 : 18 tells us what to be filled with. The parallel scripture of Colossians 3 : 16 tells us how and that is to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." The Spirit filled person of our day is the word filled person who acts upon it.

4. Those who teach baptism of the Holy Spirit teach that the Spirit's part of the New Birth is the baptism of the Spirit (John 3 : 5). If this is the case then there are two births—one of the water, and the other of the Spirit. The Lord only speaks of one birth of the two elements—water and the Spirit. Everyone agrees that the "water" refers to baptism as commanded in Mark 16 : 16; Acts 2 : 38; and 22 : 16. If one will read of the conversions that took place in the New Testament times he will see that the Spirit's part in the new birth was brought about by teaching people

the word and their obeying the word. In 1 Corinthians 4 : 15 Paul stated that the Corinthians had been begotten by the gospel. Acts 18 : 8 states "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." These people were born again and Paul explained, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (I Cor. 6 : 11). The new birth is brought about when people are taught the gospel, believe it, repent and are baptized for the remission of sins just like the Corinthians did.

There is no promise, command, nor example of the Holy Spirit baptism to all believers. It was a special measure for a special purpose which resulted in the gospel being given to the world, and letting it be known that all the world could be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ. Men can now believe the gospel and obey it thus being saved and added to the Lord's church.

People claiming the baptism of the Holy Spirit have been deceived. Satan has used lying signs and wonders to keep people from knowing and obeying the truth (2 Thess. 2 : 1-12). Dear friends, please accept the truth of the New Testament and quit claiming the baptism of the Spirit. Be satisfied with the one baptism of the Great Commission, which is water baptism in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 28 : 18-20; Acts 10 : 47,48).

Primitive Christianity

Walter W. Pigg, Jr:

By use of **primitive** with respect to Christianity, that which was first, or original is meant. In no way is it to be assumed from the use of the term that Christianity in its original form was lacking in the purpose for which God intended it, or that this same Christianity would be anything less than complete and all-sufficient in every age, including the present one.

When Christianity was originally established (about 33 A.D.), it provided complete spiritual security for those who were willing

to accept it by a complete submission to the teaching of Christ. The teaching of Christ was set forth by various inspired men during the first several years of the system's existence, and by the late A.D. 60's most of the New Testament had been recorded in the form of letters, which we now call **books** of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit, in accordance with the promise of Christ (John 16:13), guided the writers of those letters in making known God's will for men of that day, and for men of our day as well. In what is generally accepted to be the last recorded letter of the apostle Paul, II Timothy, a statement concerning the all-sufficiency of the inspired scriptures is made. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished into all good works" (II Tim. 3:16, 17). In II Peter 1:3, 4 the writer says: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Since Christianity was a complete system in the first century, in that all the needed instructions had been supplied, enabling the adherents to obtain salvation, that Christianity should (and will) suffice today. It is true that some things about the human race have seen change, but those things which are of greatest importance have not changed. People are still tempted through the same avenues; "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. . ." (I John 2:15-17). To contend, as some do, that Christianity in its primitive state is obsolete for our problems today is to make some very serious implications.

Since it cannot be shown that God has continued the revelation of objective truth this side the first century, it would imply that God is not concerned about man's spiritual well-being, if the truth of primitive Christianity is not sufficient today. If God is concerned about man's spiritual needs, and yet has not continued inspired revelation of additional truth (which some claim is needed), it would imply that God is limited in his power and unable to

furnish that truth. Either charge would be a serious one and an impeachment of God's love for man.

From the end of the first century, when predicted departures from the truth began, many changes have taken place in the religion which is commonly referred to as Christianity. Unlike the original, today's "Christianity" is made up of hundreds of different bodies, and there has been an obvious veering away from the clear and distinct teaching which prevailed originally. With every departure from the New Testament pattern there is a corresponding lack of similarity to primitive Christianity. Various ecumenical movements have not succeeded in effecting a restoration of first century Christianity because of a failure to use the New Testament as the basis of divine authority.

Primitive Christianity existed one time. And, it **can** and **does** exist in every age when men are content to return to God's all-sufficient word as the **only rule** of faith and practice. When this is not done, the religion which exists is something less than Primitive Christianity. It is sad that men have the same guide (God's word) that men had at the beginning and **yet do not follow it!**

Preachers, Are You Preaching To Please Men Or God ?

Lindon Ferguson

We often wonder why the church of Christ is not making the kind of progress (spiritual and numerical) in this century that it made in the first century. The reason the church is not growing like it once did is because in too many congregations the Bible is no longer being preached. In too many pulpits things are being spoken that could be said and received with joy by the various denominational bodies. In some places preachers have been pressured into speaking that which men want to hear. Such pressure is often times brought about by threatening the preacher with a loss of his job (i.e., threatening to fire him). Many times it

is that "money talks" because the conditions are just too good. Today, if we had more like Micaiah who would say, "What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (I Kgs. 22:14), a great spiritual healing would begin to take place. Today, if we had more like Paul, willing to say, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27), a great spiritual healing would begin to take place. This same Paul, by divine guidance, issued this charge to Timothy: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. . . But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2, 5).

How many among us, today, are doing what Paul charged Timothy to do? How many preachers among us, today, are worth their salt? When the pressure comes upon us not to preach controversial sermons, how are we reacting? Of a truth I perceive that with many it is no longer "instant in season, out of season."

The very purpose of proclaiming all the counsel of God is for the deliverance of souls (cf. Matt. 16:26). Based on the "diet" that many are being given in many places, there is no wonder that we find many in the church who are spiritually "skinny." In many congregations do we not find in principle the same attitude that characterized the people of God in olden times? Look at the example of the past: "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isa. 30:10). "A wonderful (astonishing) and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so" (Jer. 5:30-31). The prophets were prophesying falsehoods, promising the people that God was on their side and no ill would befall them. Here is a clear case of peddling a false security. When we no longer speak out, using God's word, to condemn alcohol, dancing, immodest dress, gambling, adultery, homosexuality, forsaking the assembly and such related topics, we are of necessity giving the people what they want to hear. In Jeremiah 1:10 we read: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down,

and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." The statement that brother Foy E. Wallace Jr. used to make on this verse was: "Here are six ways to preach and four of them are negative." When the preaching is not balanced properly with the positive and the negative, then spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:15-16) will suffer. If such remains the case, then the fall will come.

The prophet Amos is a very fine biblical example of one who disturbed people with a message from God. From chapter seven, verses 10-17, many sermons have been preached, being entitled, "We can't Stand That Kind Of Preaching Here." Why was this? Note some points in principle: (1) V. 10, "The land is not able to bear all his words" (i.e., That preacher will ruin this church). (2) V. 11, "Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword" (This preacher is too personal, he calls names). (3) V. 12, "O thou seer, go, flee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there" (Threaten him with a loss of salary and benefits). Such action by others will stop many preachers cold and they will conform to the whims of men, but the word of God still says, "Preach the word." How many of us are ready to be fired if we have to please men. (Gal. 1:10; I Cor. 2:5; 2 Cor. 4:5)?

Too many seem intent on removing Christ from his place of authority over the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18), and are attempting to walk in the pathway of human wisdom. Such is a course that is "earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15), and the Bible says such will fail (Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23; Isa. 55:8-9).

The question that is directed to us as preachers, elders, and congregating brethren is this: "Will we have the Bible preached to please men or God?"

The New Life In Christ

Ed. Casteel

When one studies the book of the Ephesians they stand impressed with the greatness of the church of Christ. This church is: God-planned, blood-bought, Spirit-filled, and heaven-bound. What

is this church ? It is not brick, mortar and wood; but rather, it is people. People who have been saved by the blood of the Lamb. People who have obeyed the gospel, and were by God added to his church (Acts 2:47). Concerning these people Peter asked the question, "what manner of persons ought ye to be" (2 Peter 3:11)? I would like to pose that same question and try to answer it from a study of the Ephesian letter.

Before, those who comprise the church, made up the glorious church, they were nothing more than sinners. They were : "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), alienated from the "life of God" (Eph. 4:18), "without hope, without God, in the world" (Eph. 2:12), and "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). If they had remained in such a condition they would eventually and eternally be lost. Paul declared, "for the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Paul is not talking about physical death, for that comes to all (Heb. 9:27). Rather, he is talking about the second death described as being "cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14, 15).

As Paul addresses the church at Ephesus a great change has occurred in the lives of these people. Literally, they have obeyed the gospel. This obedience to the gospel is described by Paul as being saved. Therefore, he says, "for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Salvation involves grace. Grace is God's part in our salvation. "But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). God giving his Son to die for us, in our stead, is grace. Furthermore, salvation involved faith. Faith is man's part of salvation. The word faith is an inclusive term representing all that man must do in order to be saved (hear, believe, repent, confess his faith, and be baptized). Neither of these terms can negate the other. Grace from God and faith in man results in his salvation. Now there is a great change in his life.

Too many people never make the needed changes as they go through a form of obedience. Where formally they were "dead in sin" (Eph. 2:1), now they are to be "dead to sin" (Rom. 6: 1-6). When one dies to sin he begins to live in "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), and now he is "alive with God" (Rom. 6:11). Because of

that change others can see "Christ in you, hope of glory", and thereby "glorify your Father which art in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Before one obeyed the gospel Paul described him as a "child of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). And he makes the promise that the "children of disobedience" shall know the wrath of God (Eph. 5:6). As one obeys the gospel they are no longer the "child of wrath" nor the son of Satan, but now they are the child of God. Being that child he now : is "reconciled to God" (Eph. 2:16); has access to the Father (Eph. 2:18); is in God's household, his family (Eph. 2:19); is the "heir of God" (Rom. 8:14-17); and has that inheritance "reserved in heaven" (1 Peter 1:3-5). Truly what a great change!

Being now in this spiritual family we have certain spiritual blessings to enjoy. These blessings are found only in Christ (Eph. 1:3). These blessings would include : being "chosen of God" (Eph. 1:4), being "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6), having redemption (Eph. 1:7), obtaining forgiveness (Eph. 1:7), being "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13), the obtaining of peace (Eph. 2:14), and acquiring boldness to approach and access with confidence to the throne of God (Eph. 3:12). As we study the Ephesian letter we learn that none of these blessings are available outside of Christ.

Not only do we obtain certain blessings and privileges because we are "in Christ" but we also acquire certain responsibilities as well. Paul says first we are to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Eph. 4:1-2). This vocation is the Christian life in completeness. He is to walk as a Christian displaying lowliness (humility), meekness (gentleness) with longsuffering (patience) and all this is to be done in love. Paul also says he is to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), as he "speaks the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). A combination of all of these will build up the church (Eph. 5:1).

Let us observe the result of this changed life. We are now going to be the very best people upon the face of the earth. We will be husbands who, will truly be the head of the family, and who will love our wives as we should (Eph. 5:23, 25, 28). When

Christ has changed one's life then that wife is totally submissive to her husband "as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Where the husband is all that he should be and the wife is all that she should be, the headship of the husband and the submissiveness of the wife is no real problem at all. It is natural.

When Christ rules the life then we see better relationships between parents and children. Fathers will rear their children "in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord", but will not "provoke them to wrath" (Eph. 6:4). Because he is the kind of father he should be there is no trouble with children obeying their parents (Eph. 6:1), nor honouring their father and mother (Eph. 6:2).

Last, when Christ lives in our heart and rules our life we have better working relationships. The master (employers) treat their employees right and fair for they know their "Master is in heaven" (Eph. 6:9). In a similar fashion the employee works hard to give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. He does not work "with eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:5,6).

The best life of all is the Christian life. It has the greatest blessings, greatest privileges, greatest responsibilities, and the greatest rewards. Let us therefore be saints and the "faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1).

Is Social Drinking Justified ?

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

I wish to discuss with our good readers one of the great evils of our day. It is a rampaging evil, an overwhelming wrong. Its victims are now numbered among the multiplied millions. More and more it is being extended social grace and approval. More and more it is being accepted as a way of life. More and more members of the church are joining the ranks of the social drinking crowd. Even those who do not use it will defend its usage by others and will not take a strong stand against it. A growing number of preachers will not condemn its use as sinful. Preachers

and writers who oppose such are not very high in the popularity scales with the liquor lovers of our day. But that does not matter in the least to me. WHAT IS RIGHT is far more important in determining attitudes and actions than WHAT IS POPULAR among the masses of men and women, among boys and girls.

The Increasing Curse Of Social Drinking

The main gist of this article, as indicated in the title, is to be about social drinking. Without serious doubts this is the greatest class of alcoholic consumers. Social drinkers are not as yet classed as heavy drinkers. They do not now need to drink morning, afternoon, and evening. They do not now seek to drink while alone. They are not yet classed as alcoholics. THE NOT YET concept is mentioned with repetition deliberately because MANY of them in the future will become heavy drinkers. Many of them will leave the crowd of drinkers and will begin to drink in privacy. They will reach the state where no day is a day without liquor or a day without strong desire for more and more of the Satanic liquid. They will reach the place where they will spend money for liquor that is needed for food, clothing, and shelter. Some will reach the camp of acute alcoholism. How did they begin ? Like all drinkers do without exception. By taking that first drink !! That is the most fatal step in a life of drinking—the very first one. They then began to take it in smaller portions. Drinking with the crowds and to be socially acceptable came next. Many of them once prided themselves on being able to take their liquor or to leave it alone. But as is usually the case, they decided not to leave it alone and soon it would not leave them alone ! Alcohol became the king; it became the merciless tyrant, the dictatorial force in their mixed-up lives. They became duped serfs to its addicting powers; they became the enslaved patrons of something that proved to be too powerful for them.

Today there is a growing laxity relative to drinking, especially social drinking. The practice is increasing among adults; it is taking a sharp rise among the youth. Sometime back a survey was made of the drinking habits of young people in New York City. These were juniors and seniors in high school which means their ages would have been between sixteen and eighteen. The number surveyed was 8,400. The survey revealed that 80 per cent of the

males and 75 per cent of the females drink "beer, wine or liquor." The "vast majority" of them do so on only special occasions and in limited amounts. The survey further revealed that the age at which these youngsters began to drink is steadily dropping. Many of them are already having real problems with strong drink and they are yet in their teens. Some of them are already alcoholics. Read it beloved people, and weep !! This is among our young people. **TV GUIDE** reported not long ago that 90 per cent of young people who drink in America obtain their first at HOME !! And just who put it there ? irresponsible parents !! Parents who vote for their children to drink and perhaps become helpless, hopeless and hapless alcoholics in later life !!

Social Drinking : A Real Problem Among Religious People

Social drinking has become a way of life with vast multitudes of people. Included in this growing number are many people who call themselves religious. They think nothing about spending Saturday night out drinking with the devil's crowd and then coming to a church service on Sunday morning when the smell of liquor has scarcely vacated their contaminated breath! Such is a clear violation of a principle set forth by Paul dealing with another matter of inconsistency in his day. In I Corinthians 10:21 he says, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils (demons—ASV) : ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils (demons—ASV)." Liquor at midnight on Saturday night and the Lord's Supper twelve hours later in a church service are actions of inconsistency as great as those depicted by Paul to the Corinthians during the first century.

The number of people seeking to justify social drinking is on the rapid increase. Joining the ranks of those who drink and try to justify it are religious leaders inclusive of preachers, elders, deacons, Bible School teachers, etc. In a Southern city sometime back a young man was teaching a class of teen-agers. He was telling them what is wrong with social drinking. One of the young girls in class spoke up and said that her Daddy kept beer in the refrigerator at home and the family thought nothing was wrong with drinking. Would you be surprised to learn that he was a church leader in that congregation? He was!! But he was a mighty poor one!!! The young man went to him immediately and suggested

that such was wrong on the church leader's part. The drinking deacon told him immediately that there is nothing wrong in drinking as long as one does not get drunk in the process.

Closely akin to this has been the often expressed sentiment, "The Bible does not condemn drinking; it only condemns drunkenness." The implication of this is that if one avoids outright drunkenness, then he may drink in varying amounts all he wants and as often as he desires. Beloved readers, do you believe this? I tell you rather plainly, pointedly, and positively that I do not believe a word of this Satanic propaganda and that is precisely what it is!! Surely, people who voice such folly as this have not read very carefully what the Bible says about strong drink. The Old Testament says.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise . . . Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh. . . Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that got to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine, when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. . . Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands . . . Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also; that thou mayest look on their nakedness! (Prov. 20:1; 23:20, 29-32; Isa. 5:11, 12; Hab. 2:15).

Does all this sound like the Bible provides sanction for drinking provided outright drunkenness is avoided? Does this sound like Scriptural approval for social drinking? It has the definite tone and absolute tenor of total abstinence to me. One is not only to refrain from drinking such but is not even to look upon such with approval when it is in its intoxicative stages.

The New Testament presents this general prohibition which certainly includes strong drink in all amounts. Paul said, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Tess. 5:22). The American Standard Version says, ". . . abstain from every form of evil." Considered as a tree, strong drink is evil in its roots, its trunk, its branches, its leaves, its fruits. The person who wants to please God cannot

pluck from its infamous fruits and partake in controlled amounts. Social drinking is sin, Sin, SIN!!! There is on way it can be justified regardless of the person who thinks he can.

Social Drinking : Its Sure Fruits

Social drinking is to alcoholism what that first dose of deadly dope is to addicitiun. It is what that session of heavy petting is to overt fornication. It is what the lusting or coveting of another's possession is to outright theft or brazen robbery. It is what that first effort to deceive is to a life of lying. Each is a door opener. Social drinking is the opening of the door that leads DOWN-WAY DOWN—a long corridor. That corridor has no UPS; they are all DOWNS. DOWN that corridor will be found heavy drinking, problem drinking, alcoholism, poverty, social ostracism, loss of health and ultimately the loss of one's soul. Beloved readers, to open that door for any amount of alcoholic consumption CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED ON ANY GROUNDS. Social drinking is wrong; it is woefully wrong.

'The Lord Or The Loaves'

Ray Peters

"Jasus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you. Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."—John 6:26

The multitude was determined to find Jesus, (John 6:22-25) and were interested in how He got to the other side of the sea of Tiberias (Galilee). They had observed Jesus feed the five thousand the day before, with five barley loaves and two small fishes (John 6:9-13). Jesus replies in verse 26 and points out their "carnal" motivation behind their searching. They had seen the miracles, but not as "signs" of "easy-street" for Israel. The crowd sought Him because they had their hunger satisfied. Like the beasts of the field they sought only to satisfy their physical desires—they walked by taste and sight, not by faith. They could not think of their souls for their stomach! In verse 27 Jesus said, "Labour not for that meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. . .", pointing out that they were spending their best energies on that which is temporal (the loaves). It was shame, then that people sought, "the loaves instead of the Lord", and it is a shame that it exists today.

The Entanglements Of The Earth

The multitudes, basic problem was they were wedded or

entangled with the earth and its materialistic traps. Satan used this "device" (II Cor. 2:11) to distract them from the Lord and will do so today. Paul to Timothy stated, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life" (II Tim. 2:4). These sought the Lord for the wrong reason, and today there are those who will be "baptized" because it is a good business move; politically expedient; to get one to agree to marry them etc., and in doing so seek the "Loaves" instead of the Lord. Being motivated for the wrong reason makes it no conversion at all! The Lord must come first (Matt. 6:33) and be "drawn" by the Gospel and the cross (John 12:32; Rom. 1:16). Too often there are those that will obey the gospel thinking all of their "material" problems will be solved and in essence seek the "loaves" and not the Lord! The materialistic motivations must be massacred that involved repentance (Luke 13:3).

The Enigma of Entertainment

Another device, under the umbrella of definition of the "loaves", or worldliness and materialistic attitude, is the drawing card of entertainment. Up front let it be understood this scribe is not against fun etc. but it has its place and is not be an allurements for one to obey the Gospel nor to keep one. Brethren, we have drifted (Heb. 2:1)! We feel that we have to entertain our "young people" to hold them plain Gospel preaching is old fashioned and stuffy in the thinking of too many. The church is not doing anything if it isn't busy "entertaining." I suggest this creates the same situation of members seeking the "loaves instead of the Lord."

The Excellency Of the Eternal

Jesus, later on in chapter 6 of John points out, "I am the bread of life", (verse 48), and also says he is the "living bread", (verse 51). This was the meat (food) He was referring to in verse 27, that would endure to everlasting life. The "loaves" (Material) are going to vanish away (I John 2:15-17) but the spiritual will last forever. Paul discusses in I Corinthians 15:50-57 that our "material bodies" would decay but our spiritual (incorruptible) bodies, which has a greater glory, would be forever, pointing out the "excellency of the Eternal". Satan, in his scheme will try and get people fixed on the "temporary" (Loaves) and not on the "eternal" (the Lord). In this writer's experience, when talking to those facing death, they are not concerned with the "loaves" but with the "Lord-why wait till death? Think about it!