

THE BIBLE TEACHER



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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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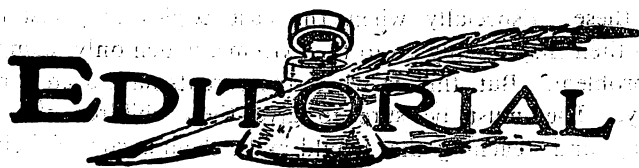
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Modest Apparel

One of the big problems of our time is that of modest apparel. This includes both men and women, but mostly women. By women, I am naturally speaking of the female population in general, the young and the old. The problem at hand has to do not only with the un-dressed but also with the over-dressed.

The term modesty is defined as being moderate, decent, and unpretentious. It can be applied to a number of things but we are using it here to refer to one's dress or apparel. We are talking about being properly dressed, with not too little clothing on the body, neither wearing too much clothing, make-up, or jewelry that would call special attention to one. It is the opposite of that of being immodest, brazen, indecent, and naked.

Although we have attempted to define modesty, I think all of us know what it means to be modest. Even those who are guilty of immodesty likewise are conscious of the fact that they are not

really dressed as they should be. There must be then some motive or reason behind this. If such can be corrected then the problem of immodesty can be removed. These words are being written to call special attention to this problem and to make the Lord's people in particular conscious of it and to warn of the consequences that follows when there are not enough sufficient restraints.

Young ladies in particular may fall victim to that of following the crowd or being like the world in their personal dress habits. They may learn of the latest fads in fashions and be tempted to copy these. Especially when the east copies the west in such things then they usually go to the extreme, which only compounds the problem. But this is where the parents have a great responsibility. They must be sure to give their children the proper training and teaching that would make them aware of their place in society, the kind of dress that is proper for a young lady, and that she should always be decent in her general appearance.

In the western part of the world there is a different type of dress. Although it is far different from that of the east, still even there people know what it means to be modest and they know what it means to be immodest. The recent mini skirt was a disgrace to those who wore it and the majority probably followed the fashion of the day. The beach attire or bathing suits are likewise considered immodest by all decent people. If that be true, then you can be sure that see-through blouses and other such garments that are designed to expose the female anatomy are completely out of step with all that is pure and decent.

I am happy to say that at this point there seems to be a shift in fashions, at least in the woman's daily dress outfits, back to a more modest type of apparel. The dresses are longer now and in general more of the body is covered. That is wonderful. Although the world may prefer less clothing, the Christian is embarrassed by it and detests such a lack of respect for God and his wishes. But the world being the world, and fashions being designed to satisfy the world's wishes, and also for the purpose of making money, then you can never tell what tomorrow may bring.

But what about the local dress? Although Indian women in their beautiful saris are supposedly very modest, and at the same time would frown on western dresses as being immodest, nevertheless, most western women would never think about wearing a dress that would be as revealing around the waist or mid-drift as is the case when the sari is worn. Most of them would be embarrassed to go around with the navel, or in the modern terminology way of putting it, for the belly button to be clearly shown. Especially the recent mini sari was very revealing. Of course the secret to a modest sari is the type of blouse that is worn, that is, how far it comes down to cover the mid-drift.

On the other hand, women call special attention to themselves when they are covered from head to toe, when they use too much make-up, or when they wear an outrageous amount of jewelry such as rings, bangles, necklaces, ear rings, and other things. We are not saying that none of these things can be included in one's dress, but we are saying that when there is an excess of these then they call undue attention to one and therefore they may be classified as being immodest.

The Bible has much to say about modesty and women's general appearance. Peter wrote that a woman should not depend on her physical dress and charms to convert her husband, but that it depended on her conduct and spirituality. He said, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." (1 Peter 3:3, 4). Paul said, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh woman professing godliness) with good works." (1 Timothy 2:9, 10). Again, the writer is dealing with the extremes of over-dressing or calling special attention to one's self. That doesn't mean that the Christian woman has to wear old, dark, and dreary types of clothes. It doesn't mean that she can't dress neatly and smartly. It does mean that she is to lead a normal life, that is, not to under-dress or to over-dress, that

she is to be modest and godly in her dress and in all that she does. In so doing, her love for the Lord, and her service to God, and to those around her, will be noticed more than the fact that she represents the opposite sex. She is not trying to be a sex symbol but a dedicated servant of the Lord. In so doing, she will accomplish far more for the Lord than if she was loud and boisterous in her dress and conduct.

The woman who purposely dresses in such a way as to cause men around her to have impure thoughts, and to want to seduce her, has sinned whether she enters into an immoral act or not. She must be aware of who she is, of her dress, and of the reactions she can cause in others. She must be on guard for the sake of herself and for the sake of others. She can go a long way in controlling the situation with just a little forethought about some of these things. If she fails to do so, and gets herself into trouble, who can she blame but herself.

The scriptures teach that women are to be holy, godly, and pure in all things. That means then that to clear up the problem of immodesty we are going to have to teach what the Bible says about the Christian and his way of life, and how that we must respect his wishes and apply it to our lives. We are going to have to teach our children these truths and all members of the church. We are also going to have to teach those who would become Christians what the Bible says about these matters. They must realize that if they are going to be Christians then they must bring their lives into harmony with God's teaching, not only on doctrinal matters, but also in their daily living, in their conduct, in their morals, in their dress and appearance.

As stated earlier, we all know what it means to be modest. We know when we or others go too far and become immodest. Therefore, we must stay within the bounds of modesty. To do so we must not follow the world, give in to the fashions of the day, but be determined that we are going to follow Christ and his teaching concerning these things. We should also keep in mind that he will not ask the unreasonable of us. Rather, what he asks is in our own interest and in the interest of others. When we obey God and

live modest lives in dress, and in all things, then we will not only have God's approval, but the world itself will admire us, and respect us for the principles that we believe in and by which we live.



associate editorial

You Can Be Religious And Still Be Lost!

To be religious is good. But not all religious people are saved or will be saved. There are some who teach that as long as you are religious, regardless of what you do or believe, you will be saved. Then there are others who believe, all ways of different religion lead people to the same place, that is, heaven. Such people are deceived. The Bible very clearly teach that one can be religious and still be lost. In fact, none of them, and there were many, about whom we read in the seventh chapter of the book of Matthew, were saved. Although, as we read, they all claimed to be very religious. But I would like for you to consider with me the following examples from the New Testament:

1. In Luke 18:10-14 Christ spoke a parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others. He said, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes into heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you," said Christ, "this man

went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The Pharisee here, we see, was a religious man. He prayed regularly, fasted and gave a portion of his income for good works, and there were many evil things that he did not do. But nevertheless he was lost. He was lost because he trusted in himself, in his own righteousness and not in God. And if we truly trust in God then we will do what he says. The wise author of the book of Proverbs in the Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil." (Proverbs 3:5-7).

2. The example of Saul of Tarsus is also worth seeing in this context. He was also a Pharisee. He was very religious. At one place, speaking about himself, he said, "Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:6). At another place he told people, "I have lived in all good conscience before God untill this day." (Acts 23:1). Can you say such about yourself today? But yet, we see, that after all of this Saul was still lost. Since the law, the Old Testament, was taken away with the death of Christ upon the cross (Colossians 2:14), it had ceased to rule over people as the will of God. Conscience is the result of ones education or knowledge, it is therefore not a guarantee to ones salvation. Saul was religious, but he was religiously wrong, because he had not complied with God's law of pardon which God has revealed for all mankind through Jesus Christ, His Son. Thus, in Acts 22:16 we read how a preacher of the Good News came to Saul and told him that he needed to obey the command of Christ, he told him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Thus Saul was saved when he obeyed the command of the Saviour to be saved.

3. Next we read about a eunuch in Acts 8 chapter. We read that he was so religious that he made the long trip from Ethiopia to Jerusalem just to be able to worship God as his religion required of him. And not only so, but we also read that as he

was returning in his chariot after he had worshipped and was going back to his home that he was still reading from the scripture. What a good example! No doubt, he was very religious. But this religious eunuch like Saul was also lost in his sins because he had not yet obeyed the plan of salvation. In the same chapter we read, however, when Philip, a preacher, preached unto him Jesus, and as they came unto a certain water, then this religious person asked Philip this question : "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Continuing we read, "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still : and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." (Acts 8:36-38). Evidently, when Philip preached Jesus unto eunuch he told him what Christ had said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16).

4. Another striking example of a lost religious man is of Cornelius. In Acts 10:1, 2 the Bible says, "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." Thus, he was a devout man, a God fearing man, and one who gave much alms and prayed to God always. But the Bible says that he was still lost. Because we read, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Cornelius and instructed him to send some one to a place called Joppa and call for the apostle Peter, "Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:14). Then, we read, when Peter came he preached the Word of the Lord unto him and unto his household, "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48).

Are you religious? The Pharisee, Saul, eunuch and Cornelius were also religious people. But they had to obey what Christ had said man must do to be saved. You must obey. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The Church of Christ

Bill Nicks

(Bill Nicks, and his good wife spent many years in missionary work in West Africa. Bill now preaches for the Paris, Tennessee U.S.A. church of Christ. Recently, the First Methodist church in Paris asked Bill to preach for them. That church is to be commended for wanting to know more about the church of Christ. The following is the sermon Bill preached to that Methodist congregation).

It is always a pleasure to speak to people about God's Word, especially when such people are open and receptive to truth. It reminds us of the Bereans, "who were more noble than they at Thessalonica, for they received the word with all readiness of mind, searching the scriptures daily whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Thank you kindly for inviting me. It is an honour to speak to friends and fellow citizens, especially to people who believe in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe you wish me to speak my convictions, even though they may differ in some ways from those held by you. Surely we can appreciate one another better when we have a better understanding of one another.

First of all, may I say that neither I nor any man can speak authoritatively for churches of Christ, for the simple reason that no man has that authority. I will try to explain why. There are at least three reasons:

1. The authority of Christ forbids it. Christ said, "all authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:18). When Christ built His church (Matt. 16:18), he did not delegate anyone to be the head, but maintains that position himself (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:19-21).

There is no organization revealed by Christ in his word on a universal, national, state or country level. It smacks of Roman

Catholicism to say, "the church teaches thus and so." They believe in the infallible church and an infallible Pope as the universal head on earth, thus tying all of their churches together under a hierarchy. We believe in an infallible Christ and his infallible word. Therefore, I come before you to speak to you about what the Bible says about the church, rather than what the church of Christ teaches. Yet in doing so, I am conscious of the fact that most informed brethren in churches of Christ concur with the principles I am advocating tonight.

Since the authority of Christ can be ascertained only by studying the New Testament, which I hold to be inerrant and inspired of God, it is to that body of truth, and the upholding of its one harmonious system of religion, that I address myself tonight.

If the Bible is not inspired, and thus without error, then what I say makes no difference. In fact morality, freedom, justice, unity nor any of the things, we hold dear, would matter. If there is no propositional truth which is a normative standard for all men, then we may as well admit the failure of Christianity. Hinduism, Buddhism, or even Communism, might be just as good.

It is highly important whether we regard the New Testament as an inspired document, and our attitude toward this central truth will determine our course in life.

2. There is revealed in the New Testament the church which Christ built. Its organization was only on the local level. Elders (or bishops, or pastors) were "ordained in every church." (Acts 14:23). These elders were to oversee the flock "in which the Holy Spirit made them bishops." (Acts 20:28).

Elders and deacons constituted the organization, along with the saints, at the Philippian church. (Phil. 1:1). Thus, each local church is autonomous, or self governing, and is also self-supporting and self-propagating. Even elders in the church cannot speak "beyond that which is written." (1 Cor. 4:6). So, if I exalt the church tonight, it is the plan of God for the church in the New Testament to be exalted, not the fallible men, such as myself or any other brother.

We fully recognize our limitations, and with Paul must say, "if any man thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:12). But God's plan is perfect and right, because his word is truth.

CLARIFYING SOME MISCONCEPTIONS

Since Christ is the supreme and only authority, it follows :

1. The bishops (elders) cannot bind any doctrine on men than that revealed by inspiration in the New Testament. This eliminates human creeds, formed by men and made binding on men. If it is more than the Bible it is too much; if less than the Bible, it is not sufficient.

2. Our conscience cannot be the standard in religion, since it is designed to react according to our training, either to accuse or excuse us. It may be seared over (1 Tim. 4:1-3), and it may be defiled (Tit. 1:15). The word of Christ is our standard (John 15:14). Thus, our subjective feelings are not the standard. Our feelings are not the standard. Our feelings are "in us" and Jeremiah 10:23 states, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps."

3. The church belongs to Christ, not men. He said, "I will build my church." (Matt. 16:18). It is his by right of purchasing it by his blood (Acts 20:28). He is the head of the church, which is his body (Col. 1:18). God appointed him to be head after he was raised from the dead (Eph. 1:19-23). It is not "our" church vs. "your" church. The question is : what is His will for the church? It is not the domain of man to regulate what is right and what is wrong in religion, but to recognize what he has determined, and to respect his headship and follow him. The question is not, "What does your church teach on the subject of baptism, for example, but what does the word of Christ say.?"

4. Men have departed from the sacred scriptures. This was prophesied by inspired men. (Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:3-12). It is quite evident that there was an apostasy which led to the Dark

Ages and the tyranny of Roman Catholicism, and its tremendous holds on the minds of men.

It is also an historical fact that there was a Reformation, a breaking of the hold of this tyranny over men by giving the scriptures back to the common people, and breaking away from some of the traditions of the priesthood.

However good the motives and effects of the Reformation, it left the protestant world hopelessly divided. There was a need for Restoration, that is, going back behind Protestantism and Catholicism, back to the New Testament church, back to the Bible as authority. To do this, men began to plead, let us drop our human names and creeds and take the Bible only as our rule of faith and practice.

It was not the purpose of restorers to establish another denomination, but rather to plead for unity of all men who believed in Christ, and his word to be the inspired word of God.

This may be illustrated by a game of chess. Suppose it should cease to be played for 1000 years. Then 100 years hence someone digs up a copy of an old rule book of the game of chess, with the same players: king, queen, pawns, etc. This would not be a new game, but the old game restored.

The church had been buried beneath the traditions and creeds of men, and it did, and still does, need to be restored by digging deeply to the truth of God's word, apart from doctrines of men. Jesus said worship according to the doctrines and commandments of men is vain. (Matt. 15:9).

PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATION

If we are to have unity, the kind for which our Lord prayed (John 17), we must recognize some principles that will be conducive to unity:

1. Believing the divine scriptures to be inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), we must search in them for a divine pattern, for "how can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3),

There is a way that is right, and because it is "the highway of holiness." (Isa. 35:8), it cannot be wrong. Paul the apostle pleads for us to "walk by the same rule" (Phil. 3:16).

Surely, if God showed Moses a pattern in the mount, we are not left lawless, without chart and compass. Ours is not a system of works, like that of Moses, but is the law of Christ, nevertheless (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2), which must be obeyed out of love. (John 14:15).

2. Divisions among men are not pleasing to God. We are instructed, "that there be no divisions among you" (1 Cor. 1:10), and we are told that "divisions" are a "work of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21), and that if we walk after the flesh, we shall die (Rom. 8:12). God hates those who sow discord among brethren. (Prov. 6:16-18).

The church, is not a sectarian body, divided into warring sects and parties. Only people like Tertullus, the Roman lawyer, who had an imperfect understanding of the nature and purpose of the church, called it a sect (Acts 24:5). Far from conceding that the church is a sect, Paul answered, "after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of my fathers" (Acts 24:14).

The only wall God ever erected between man has been broken down. In God's Divine plan, he separated Jew and Gentile in order to bring Christ into the world and to fulfill his promise made unto Abraham. The law of Moses was that wall, and it was broken down when Christ died on the cross (Gal. 3:19; Eph. 2:14, 15).

The Gentiles, the other sheep, were included in the church (John 10:16). Today, all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). The only wall Jesus has erected is the wall of obedience, that is, between the saved and the unsaved. He has not erected walls to separate the saved. And we should erect none. If I know my own heart tonight, I do not knowingly erect any wall to separate myself from any other person who wants to live and serve Christ in his Way, his Church!

3. **True Christians desire, work for, and pray for unity.** It is not only desirable (Psalm 133:1), but our Lord prayed "that we all might be one even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee" (John 17:20-21). The reason Jesus assigned for this unity among his followers is, "that the world may believe that thou didst send me."

All missionaries see that the divided state of Christendom is that which prevents the onward march and the great progress in foreign lands. Christianity in its pure and unadulterated form is capable of winning the world for Christ. Paul gave us the "planks in the platform" for unity in Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

WHAT CAN WE DO TO ACHIEVE UNITY IN CHRIST?

1. **We can resolve to be united in matters of faith.** By this, I mean in matters whereon the Bible speaks. We cannot make laws where God has made none, neither can we de-emphasize or minimize those laws which he has made. (1 Tim. 4:1-4; Jude 3).

2. **In matters of opinion, that is, on all matters whereon the Bible does not speak, we must show liberality.** Jesus taught that we make void the word of God by our traditions (Matt. 15:6). He was speaking, not of divine traditions handed down by inspired men, but of those handed down by customs, legends, and other ways uninspired men have of binding laws on fellowman.

3. **In all things, we must show love to our fellow man, as well as to God.** We will fragment into thousands of splintered movements unless we love the people of God. If there is one truth that is outstanding in God's word, it is this fact: "that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:21).

4. **We can resolve to drop all human names which distinguish us.** Conditions around us have made a denominational Christendom as acceptable. We can unsectarianize the church by wearing only the name Christian, dropping all "kinds," which have been

considered "orthodox." Paul and Peter just wrote the name **Christian**. (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). What kind or type were they at Antioch? No kind, no type! Of what denomination were they? No denomination! We plead for no one to be any kind or type of Christian different from that of the Antioch Christians. That is sufficient for unity. I say this realizing much more than Christianity in name is required.

5. We can resolve to drop all human creeds which divide us doctrinally. It is not what is in the Bible which divides men, but what is not in the Bible, that is, what is bound by human creeds. In Christ, people are bound only by the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). It claims to be sufficient to furnish all "things pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). If one believes, repents of his sins and, on a confession of his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, he is buried with the Lord in baptism for the remission of his sins, the Lord has promised to save him from his sins and to add him to the church which he built (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-47; Acts 22:16; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9, 10; Gal. 3:26, 27).

If all the saved will continue to "grow in grace and knowledge of the truth" (2 Pet. 3:18), and endeavor to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11), there is a home of the soul awaiting all the faithful, which makes all the labours, toils, sacrifices and suffering worth while.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the privilege of visiting with you. May God bless you as you study his will. May we all be conscious of the important fact that Christ's word alone will be that standard by which all men one day will be judged (John 12:48).

Let Them Alone

Joe Sponaule

"Then came the disciples and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying? But he

answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit." (Matt. 15:12-14). The problem of what to do with those who become offended with the truth has been a problem for the church down through the centuries. Some brethren choose to apologize for the truth. I suppose most every faithful gospel preacher has had the sad experience of hearing a brother or sister in Christ apologize to someone for the truth the preacher has preached or taught. I feel sure that this still happens today.

Paul wrote, "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit but the profit of the many, that they may be saved". (I Cor. 10:32-33). It is nice to be able to please men in things that are right and good. But to seek to please those who oppose the truth of God's word is sin. Again Paul writes, "For am I now seeking the favour of men or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10.) Brethren who apologize for the truth are no longer pleasing to God, for they love others more than they love God and his word. (Matt. 10:34-37.)

In some congregations when the truth is preached in love and some brethren become offended the decision is made to fire the preacher. This of course does not change the truth and it will be there to face them in the judgment. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35). "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Firing the preacher may please those offended with Christ and his word but God calls such action sin, for it indicates a rejection of Him and his word.

When the disciples came to Jesus with the complaint that some had become offended at his truth he said, "Let them alone, they are blind guides." (Matt. 15:14.) Should we not do the same today with those who become offended with the truth of God's word, whether they be in Christ or out? People who do not love God and his word are blind guides. They have the same choices that we have.

As Joshua said in the long ago, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah." (Joshua 24:15). "And Elijah came near unto all the people and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him but if Baal, then follow him." (I Kings 18:21).

As no man can serve two masters, (Matt. 6:24), we must choose between Christ and Satan. Those who become offended with Christ and his word have chosen Satan. Many who are blind spiritually are self blinded, as Jesus "said, And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear and shall in no wise understand and seeing ye shall see and shall in no wise perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and should turn again and I should heal them." (Matt. 13:14-15). Those who are self blinded are the only ones who can open their own eyes. No doubt this is why Jesus said, "Let them alone".

We read in John 6:66-68, "Upon this many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered and said, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Those who left Christ were either offended or no longer interested in him. They made their choice and Jesus allowed them to leave. Following Christ is a matter of personal choice. There is no reason whatsoever for anyone being offended with Christ or his word and those who are offended are without justification. Thus Jesus says, "Let them alone".

Jesus loves the lost and he died to save the lost but he cannot save the lost if they reject him and become offended in him. The faithful saints of God love the lost but they cannot force the lost to accept Christ and salvation.

Have You Wondered About Predestination?

W.N. Jackson

Have you wondered about the word "predestination?" Have you wondered if all things about your life were already determined by Heaven, and that you really have nothing to do with them? You have, no doubt, heard religious messages using the words "predestination, foreordination and election," and the treatment given left the impression that you were just "out of it". You need to know that there has been much abuse of these words, and the abuses have fostered religious error. We hope, in this treatment, to present the truth of the Bible on the subject of predestination. Study with us.

THE WORDS ARE BIBLICAL

The words under discussion are indeed Biblical: Foreknowledge and predestination are mentioned in Romans 8:29, 30; predestination again is mentioned in Ephesians 1:5, 11, and the fact of election is mentioned numerous times in the New Testament, as in 1 Peter 1:2 and Colossians 3:12. As in so many other instances, however, men use these words, determine in their own minds the doctrine involved, and then cite the verses as "proof" that their stated doctrine is correct. God has revealed his will to us in words (1 Cor. 2:13), but man must handle the words correctly in order to know and obey the truth of God. (2 Tim. 2:15).

WHAT DO THE WORDS MEAN?

"Predestination" means "to determine, decree, ordain beforehand." To "foreknow" and "foreordain" is to "know, perceive understand beforehand." "Elect, election" means "to select, to choose, to pick out." Most of us have somewhat of the correct idea of these words by simply looking at them. The error the

religious world makes in regard to these words is based on an assumption man makes on his own.

THE ASSUMPTION MAN MAKES

Man has ever been prone to pounce upon these words and then assume that God has predetermined every single detail of man's personal life, and more—that God has so ordered every event as to determine beforehand the eternal destiny of the individual. This was a basis of Calvinism, which taught an arbitrary selection by God, person-by-person, and that man's will, desire, behaviour and response had nothing to do with man's eternal destiny.

This brings into conflict two things (1) Man's assumption that God has ordained all matters without man's will being involved, and (2) the doctrine of man's free-moral agency as plainly taught in the Bible. Either God predetermined and selected every individual for salvation or damnation before the world came into existence, or else God has made predeterminations which have taken into account the free-will of man. We will be able to show from the Bible that the latter is true.

MAN HAS FREEDOM OF WILL

From the beginning, the Bible has stressed the free-moral agency of man. Even in the Garden, as God gave freedom and prohibition to man (Gen. 2:16,17), it was made clear that man had the choice to make as to his response to God. The Great Commission of Christ sends the gospel to every creature, with the option given to man to believe and obey, or to reject (Mark 16:15, 16). Though God tells us that some are going to everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46). He makes it clear that Jesus paid the atoning price for the whole world (1 John 2:2); man, therefore, is free to decide. The Bible virtually ends with the appeal, "...Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). In the light of the freedom of man's will, as taught in the Bible, we can understand the passages having to do with predestination, and we can see all of these areas of Bible truth in perfect harmony.

WHAT DO THE PASSAGES SAY?

Romans 8:28 refers to the fact that children of God are called by God to His purpose. We learn in 2 Thess. 2:14 that God calls us by the gospel of His Son. Verse 29 of Romans 8 explains what was behind that calling: God foreknew, and predestinated, and to what end? That we might be like His Son! Verse 30 tells us that to accomplish this God then called us—of course, by the gospel. In obeying the gospel, one is baptized into Christ and thus puts on Christ (Gal. 3:27); Christ is in him (Col. 1:27); He, in life, is to be like Christ. God predetermined this, and made it possible by the gospel. Note that not one word is said about God making selection, predetermining and foreknowing individually, rather, God has predetermined the plan and left it up to the individual to himself decide whether he'll answer the call or not; man himself determines whether he will be conformed to the image of Christ. God makes it possible, and man can make it a reality. Here is the heart of the matter: God predetermined the classes of men (good, evil, obedient, disobedient, those in eternal bliss and those in eternal torment) and man himself is to determine the class he will be found in.

Ephesians 1:3 and following verses teach the same thing. Paul in verse 3, acknowledges the spiritual blessings children of God have in Christ. Beginning in verse 4, he explains how these blessings came to be realized. He mentions that we were chosen in him (in Christ) before the foundation of the world, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. Please note that this selection and predetermination is not said to be personal and individual. Paul continues on to explain how one thus becomes a child of God: by obtaining redemption through the Lord's blood, verse 7. He then again refers to the things available in Christ, and says that such benefits are ours who heard the word of truth, the Gospel of Salvation (v. 13). Again the point is made that men are predestinated in this manner: God predetermined that all who obey the gospel would be saved. God foreordained this, even before the world was. He thus elected men, but all of it leaving man up to exercising his own will in the matter.

IT MUST BE THIS WAY

Inasmuch as the Bible everywhere teaches the free-moral-agency of man, then the terms "predestination, foreordination and election" must work in conjunction with this free-will, and not contrary to it. Men who pounced on these words in ages gone by, and connected doctrines contrary to man's free-will, removed all condition on man's part. They not only made man's salvation, damnation an arbitrary thing on God's part, but rendered God himself guilty of every wrong, every transgression, every failure. That fact was a natural outcome of their own man-made doctrine, since man had no part to play in redemption.

The workings of man in creating this doctrine also brought into the world all manner of direct operations of God's Spirit, all sorts of miraculous and supernatural occurrences whereby God would inform his elect that they had been chosen for redemption. Other men, to whom no such "supernatural experience" happened, were left to wallow in distress, heartbreak and disappointment over the fact that God had denied salvation to them, and all of this before they ever came into the world—before they ever had a chance.

Which course is scriptural? Surely we can see that man has free-moral agency, and is presented the awesome responsibility of determining the response he makes unto God, and thus himself determines whether he is of the elect, or whether he remains away from the benefits God has made available in His Son.

God, then, did indeed fashion the system. From eternity He determined that His Son would author the system of salvation, and that it would be available to man through the gospel. God foreknew that men would obey or reject that gospel. God predetermined that the obedient would receive salvation, and the disobedient would be dismissed from God's mercies forever. In all of it, God left it up to man to determine the course of action he would take. God predestinated man by class, not individually. Indeed, Peter was so correct when he said, "The Lord...is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that

all should come to repentance," (2 Peter 3:9). But who is it who determines whether the individual will repent or not?

Fire Fighting and Soul Saving

Norman Gipson

About twenty years ago on Long Island, a house caught fire. The alarm was turned on, and presently the fire truck roared onto the scene. The firemen started attaching their hose to the fire plug. Just then another fire truck grounded to a halt. The firemen jumped off and shouted, "This is our area." So the firemen gathered around (while the house was burning!) got out maps, pondered the matter for a time, finally came to a decision. The men who arrived first unhooked their hose and prepared to leave, as the second truckload started their preparations. But, by that time it was too late to stop the fire, and the house was a total loss.

Across these years and the many miles, we may grin ruefully at the inept firemen of Long Island. But it is entirely possible for us to make a similar mistake spiritually.

To make a single application: Consider all the time we may spend wondering about the terrible condition of the world, while doing nothing to put out the fire! Think how we may deplore the violence, the ugliness, the rawness of sexual displays in even "family" newspapers and magazines—but not really be busy reading the word, which alone can curb these things.

There are those who think everyone ought to be saved—but nobody else has jurisdiction in trying to save them. Some feel that it is unscriptural to bring children in a bus to teach them; but they have never used their own cars to bring children or adults either. There are those who are vocal in their insistence on the autonomy of the local church; at the same time they obtain membership lists of other congregations, and sow discord among them. Isn't it about time we all started fighting the fires of sin that

are consuming the world, instead of arguing about who gets to hook up the fire hose?

Let us all be using our own fire buckets by working with individuals, with a view toward their salvation.

WORDS TOO HARD FOR BILLY GRAHAM TO PREACH

Basically, the Bible is a simple and plain book. It speaks in language easy to be understood. Naturally, a book, or rather, library of 66 books covering thousands of years of religious history contains a few difficult passages. These, however, are of such nature that they present no practical difficulties for us.

Sometimes sincere individuals believe that religious people are divided over very complex ideas. The truth is that division has resulted over failing to pay proper attention to the exact wording of the scriptures—and especially words of THREE LETTERS each.

"FOR"

One such three-letter word which gets dropped from the pulpit vocabulary is "FOR". In ACTS 2:37-38, more than three thousand believers of the gospel message preached by the apostle cried out, wanting to know what they must do in order to be cleansed of the guilt with which they had been charged—crucify the Son of God. They were told simply and clearly to "Repent AND be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ FOR the remission of sins." There simply is no way that any system which accepts different "faiths" can be pleasing to God. No interdenominational preacher, including Mr. Graham, can possibly call attention to this. The very foundation upon which his work is based is the false assumption that God approves of different, conflicting, contradictory "faiths" of those who contribute financially to his support.

The English word **FOR** means "in order to". However, the New Testament was written in Greek, and the word which is translated **FOR** in **ACTS 2:38** is a word which **ALWAYS** looks forward, and **NEVER** backward. Unlike the English word, it can only point toward the purpose or goal of the action which is spoken of in the same sentence. This verse makes it indelibly clear that **BOTH** repentance **AND** baptism are required of the one who would receive the forgiveness of his sins.

Unfortunately, Mr. Graham and other interdenominational preachers realize that the larger portion of Protestant believers subscribe to the false idea of salvation at the point of belief, without obedience, so this is not the means by which they urge their hearers to be cleansed from sin.

"THE"

Another three letter word which is often neglected is **THE**. This word is an article, a special kind of adjective which points to particular, or specific object, person, time, event, or thing. If you were standing near a large parking lot filled with cars and were asked by a friend to put some object in "a car," you would likely approach the nearest car, and put the object in it. If, however, the friend said, "put this in **THE** car," you would immediately ask, "Which one?" You would realize that the definite article **THE** could refer to **ONE** and **ONLY ONE** car.

Why do we not approach the Bible in this fashion? There is much talk of many "faiths." We speak of differing religious systems by referring to "his faith, my faith, and your faith." **COLOSSIANS 3:23**, written by Paul, an apostle, speaks of "**THE** faith" which was revealed when Jesus came. **JUDE 3** urges that Christians should "contend earnestly for **THE** faith."

As surprising as it may seem, one never hears denominational or interdenominational preachers stress these simple three-letter words which the Bible stresses so much.

"AND"

For example, in **MARK 16:15**, Jesus told His disciples to "go to all the world **AND** preach the gospel to every creature."

Now in order to comply with what Jesus said, what was it necessary for those followers to do? When they had left Jerusalem and gone into the various countries of the world had they obeyed Christ? Certainly not. Jesus said, "Go AND preach." After they went they had to preach or they had not done all that Jesus said for them to do.

Now, let us look at the next verse, MARK 16:16 — "He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved." When one has believed has he done what Jesus said? No. Jesus said, "Believe AND be baptized." Let us look at it again: "Go AND preach:" "believe AND be baptized." Is there a difference? None whatever. Why then, is it not preached that way? It is not preached that way because a great many people subscribe to the unbiblical idea that salvation is by faith only, without obedience to the gospel. Because of this mistaken preconception, various kinds of attempts are made to explain away MARK 16:16—"Believe AND be baptized." You will never hear Mr. Graham tell an audience "Jesus said: 'Believe AND be baptized.'" Yet, that is exactly what Jesus did say!

"ONE"

A fourth three letter word which is easily understood in every other setting, or field, seems suddenly to become incomprehensible in religion—ONE. The accepted definition of ONE is unity; not two or more. Yet, Mr. Graham and other denominational and interdenominational preachers have little use for the term. We can easily see why when we examine a few scriptures. EPHESIANS 1:22-23 and COLOSSIANS 1:18 establish that a common designation for the church is the "body." The church is the body of Christ. Members of the church are the members of Christ's body. It is not surprising then to see that EPHESIANS 4:4-6 declare that there are seven things of which there is ONE. First named among the seven is the "body", the church! There is ONE church for which Jesus died of which He is the head, and for which He will return.

NOT DIVIDED BY WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

When common, everyday three letter words such as AND, FOR, THE, and ONE are the words which divide us, it is no

strictly honest for us to pretend that we are separated by deep, complicated theological doctrines which require years of study by experts to properly understand.

No! We are NOT divided by what the Bible says! What the Bible says can be understood. We are divided by the fact that so many are UNWILLING to DO what the Bible says! Division is promoted by preachers who are unwilling to give Bible answers to religious questions. How simple to tell the inquiring sinner that Jesus said: "He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved." How easy to quote Peter's instructions: "Repent AND be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, FOR the remission of sins." How plain that we are to subscribe to and practice THE faith spoken of by Paul and Jude. How impossible to misunderstand that there is ONE church purchased by the blood of Christ, as stated by Paul and by Luke.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

The question is not: "Can we understand the Bible?" or even: "Can we understand the Bible alike?" The question is, "Are you willing to obey and be saved?" God wants you to be saved. He gave His only begotten Son that you might be saved. Jesus died that you might be saved. But, He can only save those who obey, HEBREWS 5:8:9—He is the author (source) of eternal salvation to those who obey him.

The World's Greatest Question

by

Rodney V. Rutherford

Questions form a large part of everyone's speech. From the time a child learns to speak, his inquisitive mind forms questions. As he grows older and enters school, he finds that questions are

asked of him to test how much he has learned. When maturity is reached, questions are still important. A young lady looks forward to the time when a certain young man asks her the question, "Will you marry me?" Throughout life, everyone asks and answers countless questions. But of all the questions that have ever been asked, one is far more important than all the rest! Its great importance lies in the fact that it deals with both time and eternity! It is the question "What must I do to be saved?"

THE QUESTION ANALYZED

Since the seven simple words in this question are so important, let us examine each one of them very closely. "What" is an interrogative pronoun. It means that the one who asks understands that he has to do something in order to have salvation. "Must" indicates that it is not a matter of opinion but of requirement. "I" is a personal pronoun. It is a personal question that each individual must ask for himself. It is not a question of what must God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit do. They have made salvation available. (John 3 : 16). It is "I" who must accept what they have done. "Do" is a verb. It requires action on the part of the inquirer. God, by His grace, has made our salvation possible. (Ephesians 2 : 8). But we must do something in order to receive it. (Acts 2 : 40). "To be saved" is an infinitive used as a noun. It is the object being sought. It implies that the saving is done by any other, i.e. the Lord.

THE QUESTION ASKED

On several occasions, the question "What must I do to be saved?" is asked, in substance, in the New Testament. The first two times was during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. A lawyer tried Jesus by asking, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus referred him to the Law of Moses since it was still in force at that time. "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" And he answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou has answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." (Luke 10 : 25-28). If one loves the Lord with all of

his being, he will gladly do all that the Lord requires of him. (John 14 : 15; Luke 6 : 46; Acts 2 : 41).

On another occasion during Jesus' ministry, a rich young ruler came to him and asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18 : 18-23; Matthew 19 : 16-22; Mark 10 : 17-22). Jesus told him, keep the ten commandments. Jesus had not yet died to take the Law of Moses out of the way and therefore it was still binding on the people of Israel during his earthly ministry. (Colossians 2 : 14; Hebrews 8 : 6-13; 2 Corinthians 3 : 4-11). When the young man replied, "All these things have I observed from my youth up." Jesus said : "One thing thou lackest yet : sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come follow me." Jesus knew the young man valued his possessions above service to him. "But when he heard these things, he became exceedingly sorrowful; for he was very rich." (Luke 18 : 22-23). If we are going to be saved, we must put service to God above all earthly things. (Matthew 6 : 33; 10 : 37-39).

But since Jesus died on the cross a new law or covenant is in effect. (Matthew 26 : 28; Hebrews 9 : 16-17). We today live under this new testament and therefore must look to it for the answer to the question "What must we do to be saved?" The first time since the inauguration of the new covenant that this question is asked was on the Pentecost day following the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles as Jesus had promised. Peter preached to a great multitude which had assembled at the sound of the Spirit's descent. (Acts 2 : 1-36). The hearers were "pricked in their hearts" and cried out, "What shall we do?"

The next time the question is asked is in the conversion of Saul. (Acts 9, 22, 26). The Lord appeared unto Saul on the road to Damascus. Out of his new conviction that Jesus was the Christ, Saul cried, "What shall I do, Lord?" The Lord replied, "Arise, and go into Damascus and there it shall be told to thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." (Acts 22 : 4-10).

The last time the question is asked as recorded in the Scriptures is in Acts 16. Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi. At mid-

night as they sang and prayed, there was an earthquake. The jailor, fearing that the prisoners had escaped, was about to take his own life. Paul stopped him and the jailor fell down before Paul and Silas and implored, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

THE QUESTION ANSWERED

Three times this side of the cross, the world's greatest question is asked and the answer is recorded in the Scriptures. In Acts 2, the Jews on Pentecost who had heard and believed Peter's sermon asked, "What shall we do?" Peter commanded them to "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." (Acts 2 : 38). Did they obey? The inspired record says, "They then that received his word were baptized." (Acts 2 : 41).

When Saul of Tarsus was told to "go into Damascus," he arose and went. The penitent persecutor spent three days praying before the Lord sent Ananias to tell him what to do to be saved. (Acts 9 : 9-11). What did Ananias tell him? "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22 : 16). "And he arose and was baptized." (Acts 9 : 18).

In Acts 16, when the Philippian jailor asked, "What must I do to be saved?" he was told to "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." (Acts 16 : 31). Many people stop at this point and infer that only belief is required in order for one to be saved. But please consider the whole context. Paul and Silas "spake the word of the Lord unto him with all that were in his house." (Acts 16 : 32). This was necessary because "belief cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10 : 17). The result was that "He took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and his, immediately." (Acts 16 : 33).

In each of these three examples of conversion recorded in Acts, we have seen that the inquirers were told to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, and be baptized to have their sins washed away. But what does it mean to be baptized? Many

(Contd on last page)

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are confused on this point and have been led to believe that the manner in which one is baptized is unimportant. What does the Bible say ? God's Word plainly teaches that baptism is a burial in water. It is a likeness of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6 : 4). The baptism that God requires is a burial in water. Therefore sprinkling or pouring are not acceptable as baptism. Those who have received sprinkling or pouring as baptism have not been baptized. They are yet in their sins. They need to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away their sins."

"What must I do to be saved ?" is indeed the world's greatest question. The answer to this momentous question is given by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures three times for those who live this side of the cross of Christ. Those who heard and believed the gospel were told to repent of their sins and to be baptized for the remission of their sins.

Have you asked this great question ? If not, you need to, for nothing is more vital to your present and future happiness than to answer this question correctly ! Perhaps you have asked this question but have received a different answer than the one found in the Scriptures. It is God who has made salvation possible. We must accept it on His terms if we would be saved. Why not accept God's answer to this question today ?

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