

# THE BIBLE TEACHER



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# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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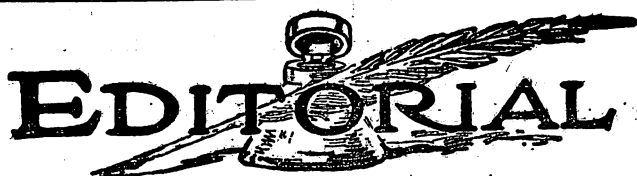
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## The Need For Reassurance

Here in India I am often asked by young Christians what the difference is between the church of Christ and other churches. Those who ask these questions have come out of denominational churches where they had their friends, a large church that was well established, a bishop or pastor, a meeting house, and perhaps other seemingly assets. But they heard the gospel of Christ, believed it, and obeyed it to become Christians and members of the church of Christ. At the time they were convinced that they should leave denominationalism and the teachings of men. Becoming a member of the church that Christ himself established appealed to them. But after awhile, they may begin to wonder. Their family members may disagree with them and even urge them to return to their former church. They are told that they have become a member of a new church, one that is small, and one that does not even

have its own building. It has no schools, hospitals, and other things that most of the denominations have. Therefore, being confronted with all of this, then they come again and again and ask about the church of Christ, and why it is different from the others, and why it has not been here for a longer period, why it is not any larger than it is, and why it does not have its own building. They want to be reassured that they have not made a mistake but that they are indeed what the Lord would have them to be.

I try to answer all of these questions so as to reassure these brothers and sisters that they are Christians, and at the same time they are members of the Lord's church, the one and only church that belongs to Christ. I explain to them that they have not made a mistake in leaving the teachings of men to become a member of it. They may have left behind churches that had the things that attracts the world, but in obeying the Lord there is salvation and the hope of eternal life. I further explain that the reason the church has not been in India longer is simply because of the failure of those who had the Bible to obey its teachings. As for the church being small in number, its size depends solely on whether the people obey God's teachings or rejects it. Buildings or meeting houses come in time, depending again on the local people, who are members, and how much they need and want such a place. But again, these matters are not the things that count when it comes to the Lord's church. If these were the main things that mattered then one would naturally look for the largest group with the biggest building, and so on. Sad to say, but some do just that. These are the ones who never seem to be concerned with what God requires but rather seek for prestige, popularity, and the praises of men. This is a tragic mistake.

I tell my brethren that the church of Christ is different from all other churches and religious groups because of its divine side. From that side it is perfect because it is based on the pattern, or blueprints, which is the word of God. In the long

ago Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle, or place of worship, according to the pattern that God had given him, that is, according to the specific instructions that he had been given. (Hebrews 8:4, 5). The same is true with the church. The Lord has given in his word all of the marks of identification of the church and when that is followed then it is possible for it to be reproduced here in India or anywhere in the world in any age.

For instance, we may read in God's word how Christ promised to establish the church (Matthew 16:18), and then in Acts 2 we have a record of its beginning. We are told that Christ died for it (Ephesians 5:25), shed his blood to purchase it (Acts 20:28), is the saviour of it (Ephesians 5:23), and he is said to be the head of it (Colossians 1:18). We are told of the conditions of entrance (Mark 16:16), that the saved are added to it (Acts 2:47), that its members wear the name of Christ (Acts 11:26), and that as a body of people it is called the church of Christ. (Romans 16:16). The scriptures tell us of its worship (John 4:24; Acts 2:42) and its work. (Matthew 28:19,20). And finally, we are told that there is but one church (Ephesians 4:1-6), and that one church is the one and only church that you may read about in the scriptures.

Now when we obey God and become members of that church then that within itself makes us different from all other people. To be more specific, one cannot be saved in any of the denominational churches. Regardless of how similar they may be to the Lord's church, how close they may be to the truth, the name it wears, or what have you, any church that does not fit the description as set forth in God's word does not belong to the Lord and one cannot please God and be a part of them. If one really understands what the Bible says about the Lord's church, and has become a member of it, then one could never be satisfied with anything but that.

On the other hand, when it comes to the physical side of the church, since it is made up of human beings, and human

beings are subject to mistakes, weaknesses, and sin, then its members may be very much like the members of other religious groups. Such is to say, that members of the church of Christ are not perfect. Sometimes when one sees a Christian do things that are wrong then they conclude that Christianity is worthless. Also, some would find fault with the Lord's church on the basis of the conduct of some of her members. But one should remember that Christianity or the church should not be judged altogether on the actions of some of its members. The Lord's plan for man is perfect but man himself is not perfect. If one will follow the Lord's instruction then he may become a new person and exemplify in his life what Christianity is all about. As a member of the church he may be a faithful member and through his life help to show the beauty and importance of the church to the world around him. But whether he does that or not, that does not altar the fact that the Lord's plan is there and those who follow that plan, or measure up to it, will indeed be what the Lord would have them to be.

Even when it comes to the physical side of the church, if its members will follow the Lord's teaching then they may rise far above all other religious people. This is true because Christ has given teachings, truths, and principles in his word that will change human beings and make different people out of them. For example, he has set forth the principle in his word that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us (Matthew 7:12), and that we should love God with all of our hearts and our neighbours as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-40). We are taught to be humble (James 4:10) and to be patient. (James 5:7). We are taught to be honest (Romans 12:17) and to overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21). Christians are the best workers on their job (2 Timothy 3:10), are ideal parents (Ephesians 6:4), and are good citizens. (Romans 13). Christians are good examples in appearance, speech, and conduct. (1 Timothy 4:12). They are faithful to God in worship (Colossians 3:17), in work (1 Corinthians

15:58), and in their daily living. (Matthew 6:33). They are therefore a peculiar people, a different people from the world, even the religious world. (1 Peter 2:9). Christians are in Christ and Christ is in them. (Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 1:27). As they give themselves to the Lord (Romans 12:1,2), he gives to them. (Matthew 19:27-30; Luke 6:38). As the Lord's people then we are the most blessed people in the world, having his blessings and having him to go with us and to care for our needs, and then finally to have the hope of eternal life. (Ephesians 1:3; Matthew 28:20; 1 Corinthians 13:13).

So in conclusion I would emphasize again that the church of Christ is far different from all other churches in every way. How wonderful it is to be a member. How blessed we are to know that we can obey God, be saved, and be added by the Lord himself to his church. Then how blessed we are to be able to represent him as we follow him and thus to be a part of his family.

I want to assure you that you cannot go wrong when you follow the Lord's pattern pertaining to his church as is set forth in the scripture. If you know what the Bible says about the church then you understand all of this. If you have any doubts or fears pertaining to the church, as a member of it, then study the scriptures that I have given in this article concerning the church and go to the Bible itself and read and study it until you are completely satisfied that you are on the right path that will lead you to heaven itself. (John 14:6). The Lord wants you to know his will and he wants you to be sure of your faith and of your standing with him. Once you have all your questions answered and your doubts removed through a knowledge of the divine and human sides of the church, as set forth in God's word, then you will be a stronger Christian because not only will you know that you are what God wants you to be but you will also then be able to teach others.

So look up. You have nothing to be ashamed of and neither do you need to make an apology to anyone. You have no reason to feel inferior or to be on the defensive. You are a Christian, a child of God, a child of the king. You are a member of the church that belongs to Christ. You have the word of God to back and support you in being what you are. How thankful you should be that this is so.

If you are not a Christian and a member of the church of Christ then it is my prayer that you will likewise take the time to read and study your Bible so that you may learn about the church that you read about in the Bible and that is the church of Christ. I believe that if you are really serious about knowing the truth on these matters then you can learn the truth and once you do that then you will not be content until you have obeyed the Lord so that you too may be a member of Christ's church.



*associate  
editorial*

## Why Are We Different ?

We are different. I mean the church of Christ is different from all other churches. But why are we different ? To some we are different because they say we do not accept the Old Testament law of Moses. For others we are different because they see we do not fellowship other churches or denominations. But why are we different? Is it just for the sake of causing others to see that we are different than others? or we are different just to maintain a different identity of ourselves



because we do not like other people? No. Certainly not. We have not made ourselves different in any way but it is the Bible, the New Testament of Christ that makes us different from all others. Here is what I mean: while others are trying to please men, their bishops, pastors and other religious leaders, we are trying to please God alone. As others are trying to follow their *rules of faith* as laid down for them by men, we are striving to follow the Bible alone. While they are trying to follow their parents' religion, customs and traditions of their respective churches and organizations, we are striving to follow Christ and his New Testament only. That's what make us different.

We believe, God has spoken [and has given us his perfect will to follow (Hebrews 1:1,2). The Bible which consists of sixtysix books, thirtynine of the Old Testament and twenty-seven of the New Testament, is God's word. Old Testament law was given [by God through Moses to His people before Christ, and those who did not follow it were punished by God. After the death and resurrection of His Son, God gave us his New Testament through His Son Jesus Christ, and He expects us to follow it. But if we don't follow its teaching then we will likewise be condemned. (John 12:47,48).

We believe; there is only one gospel (Galatians 1:6,9). The gospel of Christ is his death, burial and his resurrection from the dead (1Corinthians 15:1-4). One must obey the gospel to be saved (2Thessalonians 1:7-9). By repenting and by being baptized into Christ one obeys the form of the gospel (Romans 6:3,4, 16,17). All those who thus obey the gospel are added by Christ himself into his church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). There is only one church. (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22,23; Ephesians 4:4). The church is Christ's body and he is her head, (Colossians 1:18,24), therefore the inspired writer referred to her as *the body of Christ* (1Corinthians 12:27) and to her many congregations as *the churches of Christ* (Romans 16:16). Her members are also called by one name only, after his

own name, *Christians* (Acts 11: 26; 1Peter 4:16). There is no other name given. (Acts 4:12). Also, we believe, gospel preachers should not be called by unscriptural names or titles such as Padri, Father, Reverend and Pastor, etc. (Matthew 23: 9; Psalm 111:9). We believe in weekly observance of the Lord's supper (Acts 20: 7), and the collection should also be taken upon the first day of the week (1Corinthians 16:1,2), when the church comes together for worship, and not every time the church meets for a Bible study or devotion, or a meeting. We believe, mechanical instruments of music should never be used in the worship services of the church because we are commanded to make melody or music in our hearts while singing God's praises. (Ephesians 5:19). We do not celebrate or have special services on days such as Christmas, Easter and Good Friday, etc. simply because none of these are commanded or authorized by the New Testament.

We believe all God's people will be saved only in the church He has authorized (Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16), just as Noah and all others with him were saved in the ark only which God had authorized. (Matthew 15:13; 24:37-39; 1Peter 3:21).

Thus we are different from all other churches because we try to speak only where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. We give a "Thus saith the Lord" to every man who asks us why we do the things we do as Christians in worshipping and serving the Lord. Like Elijah of the Old Testament we would like to stand alone and different on the promises of the Lord rather than to go with the crowd and be popular (Matthew 7:13,14). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1Peter 2:9).

# Smoking, Drinking, Drug Abuse and Christian Youth

By Joe W. Nichols

## INTRODUCTON

The subject of smoking, drinking, and drug abuse is one that is not likely to be exhausted by preachers and Bible teachers. Since many of our young people want the truth on the subject, the following discussion is offered for their consideration as young Christians responsible before God.

## WHY DO PEOPLE SMOKE, DRINK, AND USE DRUGS ?

In coming to an understanding as to why people smoke and abuse themselves with alcohol and drugs, we must consider first the question: "Why do they start ?" The majority of adult users say that they began their abuse in youth and simply never quit the habit. Let us try to understand why a young person would begin such habits.

Young people often find themselves in unhappy surroundings with the desire to be popular and accepted—not just ordinary, but outstanding in the crowd. Torn by disappointments, frustrations, and strenuous competition they turn to "helpers". Instead of self-discipline and character building, many times they seek what the world offers to bridge the gap from discontentment to desired happiness. Many drop out of society; others set out for greener grass, hoping to find a better world somewhere else. Some plot a revolution to overthrow the present society—tear down, destroy and kill, but have nothing better to offer in its place. To a lesser extreme some turn to smoking, drinking, cursing, dope and other crazes in order to fill the gap for distinction. Few there are who will

undergo the strenuous task of changing the dislikes and unpleasantness of self and world, one step at a time.

This frustration, we conclude, is the reason many vices are adopted and practiced by a great number of our young people today. In such a state, a young lady is led to believe that lipstick, a tight skirt, an emphasized bosom, or a cigarette will make the difference in being outstanding and socially accepted rather than being just a wall flower amidst the crowd. The young man thinks that drinking intoxicants, using profanity, smoking, or getting involved with marijuana or drugs will make the difference in his popularity. A giant step from childhood to manhood is thought to be bridged by a cigarette, a beer, or the taking of some drug.

The excuses for such habits are many : the rest of the crowd does it, it gives glamour and sophistication, or one must do so to be accepted by the crowd, and parents forbid it. One out of every three high school students smoke. Fifty percent of the nation's teenagers are regular smokers by age eighteen. Everyday about 4,500 of our youth light up their first cigarette. Beer drinking and drug abuse affect over half of high school and college students and is increasing at an alarming rate.

### **what is wrong with smoking, alcohol, and drug abuse from the health standpoint ?**

The 1964 Advisory Committee appointed by the surgeon general of the Public Health Service in U.S.A. has given a convincing report on smoking :

There is a connection between smoking and lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, coronary artery disease, as well as 70 percent death rate.

Noted side effects are: shortness of breath, throat irritations, chronic cough, loss of appetite, and reduced stamina.

Affected also is learning capabilities, vitamin "C" is destroyed in the body (necessary to ward off disease), children breathe and form cravings from the smoke and others break out in a rash.

## BEER DRINKING

Beer contains the narcotic alcohol which is habit forming as well as harmful to the body. Beer drinking leads to drunkenness which is sin (Galatians 5:21), ".....they who practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God".

Beer contains the narcotic lupulin which dulls the senses. Beer drinking causes one to become lascivious and to revel, often this leads to ".....strife, jealousies, wraths.....envyings" (Galatians 5:20-21). "Be not deceived.....nor drunkards...shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven." (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

"Beer usually contains many chemical additives which can harm the body by causing "allergic reactions," "heart disease," "gastric irritation." "liver damage." "respiratory failure," and "kidney impairment". Paul states pertaining to drunkenness, "and such were some of you : but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified....." (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Beer drinking is the open door through which many young people enter to be forever shackled by alcohol." Liquor can wreck a life as well as a home.

## SMOKING MARIJUANA

Smoking marijuana definitely affects natural functions of the body. The eyes are affected and vision is often distorted. Dryness of the mouth and throat are an after affect. Normal judgment is affected and the user often reacts slowly and with poor judgment. A large majority of youngsters who start experimenting with marijuana later become hooked on hard drugs.

## DRUG ABUSE

Drug abuse involving amphetamines and barbituates has become a national threat. This is mainly because hard drug users must satisfy their ever-craving habit and to do so they turn to crime for monetary support.

The drug abuser is affected physically and mentally by his habit. His life-style is altered drastically. Stimulants affect the major organs of the body, which in turn cause jitteryness, irritability, tension, and unclear speech. Further affects are dilated pupils, dry mouth, sweating, headaches, diarrhea, and paleness.

Barbituates or "good balls" mildly depress the action of the nerve of the body which, consequently, affects the skeletal muscle and heart muscle. The heart slows down and the breathing is altered. The blood pressure is lowered. Users are most often irritable, angry, and quarrelsome. Confusion, slurred speech, and staggering usually result.

One terrible part of drug abuse is in the language of the abuser. "the monkey on my back". He is always there demanding attention and satisfaction. To satisfy the habit is costly in terms of money, family, friends, life, and finally the soul.

Another consideration is that the use of drugs without a physician's prescription is illegal and upon conviction carries a stiff penalty.

Such reports reveal the seriousness of adopting such habits and should deter any young person from any further consideration of such.

### BUT YOU SAY, "IT'S MY LIFE ISN'T IT."

It has been said, "to indulge ourselves today without thought for others is to squander our tomorrows". What you are

today is the result of a lot of other people's interest. Every being is a product built socially by others: parents, preachers, teachers, artists, policemen, ancestors; and on and on we could go. Each has made his own contribution to the mould and are seeking a return on his investment. No man is an island—what we do, the things we say, our very appearance will affect the lives of a lot of people. The decisions made today will affect a lot of people tomorrow. Soap perfumes the air, auto fumes contaminate, a morning smile catches on, cursing makes bitter life's way. The school dropout, the alcoholic, the smoker, and the addict are destined to affect the lives of many people. Because of such, many children will be maimed, uneducated, undernourished, and impoverished. Wives will be robbed of husbands in life's golden years; children of fathers; and grandchildren of grandfathers because some thought that their lives belonged to themselves.

## WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE TEACH?

As children of God our lives are turned over to Him by choice for instruction and guidance. To reject Divine direction is to refuse grace, mercy and love and hinder our own personal well-being.

Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ: and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." (Galatians 2:20).

As Christians, our lives have been given over to Christ, and we like Paul are to say it is no longer I that live—Christ is living in me and through me.

Paul further states, "or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). In the light of this scripture, God is to be glorified in

our body. What we say and practice and the appearance we display are determining factors as to whether God will be glorified in our bodies or whether we have become a dishonour to Him.

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilements of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (II Corinthians 7:1). *Anything that makes filthy and pollutes, and tends to corrupt the body physically or spiritually is sinful and is to be put away and forever abstained from.*

We have but one life to live in our earthly body and God's children are to use it in fear to the glory of God.

Peter stated, “Beloved I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” (II Peter 2:11). Any vice that causes us to be less spiritual in conduct and example toward others is warring against the soul and is a detriment to life eternal.

Paul exhorted all to “abstain from every appearance of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Peter exhorted elders. “But making yourselves ensamples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:3). Any responsible person in a spiritual position of guiding others must of necessity be careful in pattern of practices that others might follow.

## CONCLUSION

We should not be disillusioned into thinking that all our dissatisfactions and unhappiness of self and surroundings can be corrected in a day. Neither should we look to the world for our remedies. God is the author and finisher of our faith through Christ, the Master of our lives. Our responsibility is to conform to Christian principles. Christianity, to us, is the best way. We travel this way but once, and life is beautiful only to those that through toil and patience make it so.



In the words of the inspired writer, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service, and be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1:2). "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, and not on things that are upon the earth." (Colossians 3:2).

## **TO THOSE WHO PERSIST IN EVIL PRACTICES**

"Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to do uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonoured among themselves." (Romans 1:24).

# **The Bible**

**Robert C. Hampton**

The Bible consists of 66 books written by about 40 different men over a period of 1600 years. It was written by kings, soldiers, shepherds, farmers and fishermen. It was begun by Moses in the lonely desert of Arabia and finished by John on the Isle of Patmos. Some of it was written in kings' palaces, some in shepherds' tents, some beside still waters and part of it was written in prison. Part of the Bible was written by highly educated men and part of it was written by unlettered fishermen. It was written in different languages and different countries. Yet, when all the books of the Bible are brought together they blend into one great volume. They are a unit, hence the Book. There are no contradictions; there is no discord. It is never necessary to rewrite the Bible and bring it up to date. It is always up to date and was free of error

from the beginning. These men could have written such a book only by divine guidance. Just as the materials for Solomon's temple joined perfectly together because they were prepared under the direction of a great architect, so the books of the Bible blend harmoniously because they were written under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is divided into two great divisions called the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of 39 books beginning with Genesis; and the New Testament has 27 books beginning with Matthew. We can subdivide these two great divisions into the following classifications :

### **Pentateuch**

Genesis  
Exodus  
Leviticus  
Numbers  
Deuteronomy

### **Poetry**

Job  
Psalms  
Proverbs  
Ecclesiastes  
Song of Solomon

### **Minor Prophets**

Hosea  
Joel  
Amos  
Obadiah  
Jonah  
Micah

### **History**

Joshua  
Judges  
Ruth  
I & II Samuel  
I & II Kings  
I & II Chronicles  
Ezra  
Nehemiah  
Esther

### **Major Prophets**

Isaiah  
Jeremiah  
Lamentations  
Ezekiel  
Daniel

### **Nahum**

Habakkuk  
Zephaniah  
Haggai  
Zechariah  
Malachi

### **Biography**

Matthew  
Mark  
Luke  
John

### **Letters to Churches and Individuals**

Romans  
I & II Corinthians  
Galatians  
Ephesians  
Philippians

Titus  
Philemon  
Hebrews  
James  
I & II Peter

### **Prophecy**

Revelation

### **History**

Acts

Colossians  
I & II Thessalonians  
I & II Timothy

I & II, III John  
Jude

There are three specific ages or dispensations from Genesis to Revelation.

## **I. PATRIARCHAL AGE**

Patriarch means father or head of a family and with reference to the age was a family religion and the father or head of the house was the officiating priest to offer sacrifice for himself and his family. It lasted from Adam to Moses and is largely covered by the book of Genesis. It was about 2500 years in duration.

## **II JEWISH or MOSAIC AGE**

This was a national system of religion with Jerusalem as the place of worship. It lasted from Moses to Christ, a period of some 1500 years. This age began with the giving of the Law of Moses at Mount Sinai and covered most of the Old Testament from Exodus 20. It ended at the cross of Christ.

## **III CHRISTIAN AGE**

This age went in force under the great commission after the cross on Pentecost of Acts 2, and has already lasted more than 1900 years. It will continue to the end of the world.

It is imperative that we come to a proper understanding of the Word of God because our eternal destiny depends upon it. We are suggesting the following to be essential to understanding the Bible.

- (1) *We Must Note Who the Speaker Is.* Inspired men did not say everything said in the Bible. For instance, Job did not say all that is said in the Book of Job, as some think he did. The context will usually show who the writer, or speaker is. If the speaker is not inspired, then his statement may, or may not be true. But all the Bible is

true, in the sense that when God says someone said a thing, it is true that it was said. The thing reported to have been said may not be true, but it is true that it was said, as divinely reported.

- (2) *Note to Whom the Speaker or Writer is Speaking.* Are they under the Patriarchal age, which lasted to the giving of the law by Moses? Or are they under the law thus given and which lasted till the death of Christ? Or are you reading what was addressed unto men in the New Testament which went in force after the death of Christ?
- (3) *Note the Context, and the Connection to see what Subject is under Consideration.* We have no right to take a scripture out of its divine setting and give it an application which the Lord never had in mind when he wrote it.
- (4) *Study the Hard-to-be-Understood passages in the Light of plain passages whose meaning cannot be Misunderstood,* rather than try to explain away the plain by a figurative, or difficult statement.
- (5) *Take into consideration all that is said on a given subject,* and accept it all at face value, placing no interpretation upon any passage which contradicts other passage elsewhere. When Satan misapplied a passage, Jesus said, "It is written again." He showed that Satan's interpretation of the given passage contradicted a plain passage written elsewhere.

## Non Attendance A Sin

Gus Nichols

".....If one member of a local church.....can ignore that church and treat it as of the devil, refuse to assemble and work with the members for its edification and good, and not be guilty of willful and fatal sin, which if not repented of, confes-

sed and forgiven, could lead to eternal destruction, then all the members of that congregation could abandon such a church and its work and worship, destroy it off the face of the earth and not sin in so doing. And, if all the members of one local church could so abandon and neglect the work and worship of that one church and not sin, then all the members of all churches of Christ on earth could abandon all of them, destroy all the churches of Christ and not sin—and this would destroy CHRISTIANITY off the face of the earth. Therefore, it is a *willful* sin, which if not confessed and forgiven, will cause one to lose his soul in eternal perdition, to willfully ignore and abandon the work and worship of the church for one year; and if for one, then for one month, etc. For if one member could ignore the church and still be a Christian, then all could, and the doors would be closed for a year.

Therefore, all members who have quit attending the service and worship of the church have quit the church, unless the absense in unavoidable. Such backsliders should be restored, if at all possible. They are God's children, but sure to be disinherited and lost if they die in their sins. "Unto him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not; to him it is sin." (James 4:17). And "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation". (Hebrews 2:3). Those who cannot be taught and restored should be excluded from the fellowship of the church. (II Thessalonians 3:6, 15; 5:1-13). No one can be a Christian while ignoring the church which cost the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). A fish could as easily live out of the water as a child of God could live the Christian life apart from the worship and service of the church (Hebrews 10:25,26).

## Know The Truth

Marvin Rainey

A PLEA FOR CHRIST. All religious bodies have their own distinctive plea. Our plea is a plea for Christ. Whatever

is not in some way connected with Christ, has no place in religious faith, doctrine, nor practice. Paul knew nothing in his preaching save, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." A proper plea for Christ should include the whole truth about him and all that he taught. We plead for Christ, for his divinity and Son-ship. There are those who acknowledge that Christ was a great man but deny that he was the Son of God. If we deny the fact that Christ was born of a virgin and that God was his Father then we might as well deny all the Bible.

Since Christ is the Son of God, and only Saviour of the world, we plead for his right to rule over lives and thoughts of men. His gospel must be obeyed, or men are eternally lost. (II Thess. 1:7-9). Jesus is the author of eternal salvation. (Heb. 5:8,9). Many claim to go by the authority of Christ and at the same time practice many things in religion that Christ never taught. This brings us to the next point. If we are going to accept the Son-ship and the authority of Christ then we must accept the teaching or doctrine of Christ. No one can ignore his teaching and respect his authority at the same time. Christ can not be separated from his doctrine. To change his teaching in any way, about anything, is to rebel against Christ himself. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." (II Jn. 9).

We plead for the blood of Christ is the only atonement for sin. It is through his blood that we have redemption. This is taught by Paul in Eph. 1:7 and Col. 1:13, 14. To ignore the commands of Jesus, is to despise the blood of Christ. Some will contend that baptism cannot be necessary because we are saved by the blood, not by baptism. One might as well say we are saved by the blood, not by repentance, or not by preaching the word, or not by faith. While we are saved by the blood, it is not by the blood without any faith, repentance, or anything on our part. The blood was shed for all alike. (Heb. 2:9).

We plead for salvation in Christ. Peter tells us that there is salvation in no other name than in the name of Christ. (Acts 4:12). When Christ comes again, he is coming with those who "Sleep in Jesus". (I Thess. 4:13-18).

## What Is Hard Preaching?

**Ted Knight**

As the people leave the church building on Sunday morning someone said, "Boy, that sure was a hard sermon today". "Yes," replies another, "He sure stepped on some toes today didn't he"? This is a conversation that might be heard in almost any city over the country where the truth of God is being preached. But, what is hard preaching? What do we mean when we talk about hard preaching?

To the alien sinner it is hard preaching when we deal with the plan of salvation. Some will get puffed up and turn completely away from it. Some cannot see the need for change in the life they already are living because of their high moral character. When the need for repentance and baptism is pointed out it is too "hard" for some and they go on in their sins.

To the lukewarm and unfaithful Christian it is hard preaching when we deal with such subjects as involvement in the work of the church. An occasional appearance at the services is all the involvement he expects of himself, so he too is puffed up and goes on in his sin. But, shall we ignore the problem of lukewarmness because some brother hollers when he gets hit? Indeed not! We know from the scripture what the fate of the lukewarmer is and he needs to be made aware of it. He will not be lost because the preachers say it but because the Lord said it in Revelation chapter three.

What is hard preaching? I believe that it is the kind of preaching that hits us where it hurts. Some of us don't like it. Some will get mad and turn away from the Lord because of it. But, the Apostle Paul asks, "Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth"? Hard preaching is necessary for the growth of the individual. I hope that we never reach the point where we cannot stand that kind of preaching. I am afraid for us if we do.

## What Am I Worth To The Church ?

**Richard Batten**

Christ paid a great price to purchase the church. (Acts 20:28). It must have meant a great deal to Him. The church is the only place where I can serve God and get treasures in return after death. (1 Cor. 15:58). In business it is usually understood that a person must contribute to the general welfare of the company in order to stay on the payroll. For the company to keep my name on the books, they must be satisfied with my performance. The same is true in the church. In Rev. 3:1-5 we read where God had become displeased with the performance of those at Sardis and had blotted their names off His book.

Let us suppose that our job was one that we were kept by election and every four years we had to campaign to be re-elected. What would we use for campaign power? (1.) "Here is my record; see what I have accomplished." (2.) "Note my qualifications, my experience, my talents." (3.) "Here's what I promise to do." If my membership in the church was maintained the same way, would I be re-elected? Can I be counted upon or just counted? How about my absenteeism? Do I contribute to the growth of the church or expect the church to contribute to me? Do I visit others who are in need



or expect others to visit me? Does the appearance of my name on the roll add strength to the church or bring reproach? Am I a problem or a promoter? Am I a spectator or a participant?

Many desire the ship of Zion to safely cross the sea of time to yonder shore of heaven but too many are not willing to grab an oar and pull. Remember Hezekiah was told to set his house in order for he was going to die. He prayed and wept. Notice his appeal to the Lord: "I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, [and have done that which is good in thy sight." (2 Kings 20:3). If we were faced with a similar crisis what would we use for a basis of appeal to the Lord? It is becoming increasingly difficult to get members of the Lord's church to attend the worship much less involve themselves in the Lord's business of saving lost souls.

## Can You Recommend Your Religion ?

Jerry R. Self

The Psalmist suggested, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God and I will declare what he hath done for my soul" (Psa. 66 : 16). Can you ask others, as did David, to come and hear what the Lord hath done for you? What has Christianity done for you? How is your life as a Christian different than it would be were you not a Christian? Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Christians are to be different from the world (Rom. 12:2).

If you will stand with and for Christ, you can recommend your religion. Don't ever be ashamed of Christ and his word. Christ himself gave warning. Whosoever therefore shall be

ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation ; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed.” (Mk. 8:38).

Can you recommend your religion in the light of the Scriptures ? Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”. (Jno. 12:48). Our Lord demands obedience (Matt. 7:21-28). He forbids our adding to or taking from His Word in any way (Rev. 22:18-19). Do the Scriptures teach everything that you believe, teach and practice in religion, or do you accept tradition or some other source of authority ?

Can you recommend your religion by the way you live ? Paul told young Timothy, “Keep thyself pure.” (1 Tim. 5:22). Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure [in heart ; for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8). Christ died to “redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). Paul pleaded, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2). Don’t let the world mold you into its own image. Be righteous. Live godly. Purity of life will recommend your religion. That’s why Peter said, “Having your conversation (manner of life) honest among the Gentiles that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Pet. 2:12).

Can you recommend your religion by the way you support it ? Does your attendance at church services recommend to the world your religion ? (Heb. 10:25). Do you recommend your religion by the liberality with which you give of your means

to support it? The people of Berea recommended their religion by their liberality in giving. (2 Cor. 8). Do you do likewise? Paul admonished corinth to follow the example of Berea. Can you recommend your religion by the joy with which you use your abilities? (Matt. 25:14-30). The parable of the talents suggests the Lord knows our capabilities and limitations, and expects labour from us according to our capacities.

Can you recommend your religion by the way it works for you? Remember our text, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul" (Psa. 66:16). Can people see what Christianity has done for you? Can they see such character in you that whatever guides and directs your life, they will want the same guidance and direction for their lives?

*How are you Recommending Christ and his Church?*

## Spoken Against

Maxie B. Boren

When the apostle Paul arrived in Rome, according to *Acts 28*, he was allowed to speak to the chief Jews there about himself and his work. In the exchange of conversation, these chief men expressed a desire to hear more of what Paul would have to say concerning the "sect.....that everywhere.....is spoken against." Verse 22.

Obviously, these chief Jews were calling the cause of Jesus Christ and His church "a sect." In so doing, they erred, because the Greek word (*hairesis*) denotes a "division and the formation of a party in contrast to the uniting power of truth held in toto." (An Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words, by W.E. Vine, page 335). The church is one body! *Ephesians 4:4*. It is not a sect! God "tempered it together" that there should be no schism in it. *1 Corinthians 12:24-25*.

But the significant point is that they said it was “spoken against” everywhere ! Why ? Because the church was bold in its proclamation of pure, unadulterated truth! Read *Acts 4:29*, *Acts 7:51-53*, *Acts 8:4*, *Acts 13:49-50*, *Acts 20:20*, 26-27, etc.

It seems to me that in our day and time the church does not want “to rock the boat.” We’ve gained respectability and we like it. The approval of our fellow man has come to mean more to us than the approval of God! Too many congregations are fed a palatable diet of positive axioms and any type of aggressive boldness with plain, hard-hitting Bible truth is frowned upon.

As a result, the church of Christ today is generally spoken well of, and much of the antagonism toward it has subsided, and what little there is, is but a relic of a past era.

Most brethren like in this way. But I have a strong feeling that it is not the way it should be! If we were really heralding the plain truth to our cities and communities without favour or compromise, challenging all proponents of error to defend their false doctrines, something tells me the church would again be “*spoken against*” as once it was !

If “speaking the truth in love,” and boldly, causes people everywhere to “speak against” us, may God hasten the day when this is once again the case !

## Some Whom God Cannot Save

John A. Mays

When that statement is first read one may conclude that it is false, for we have been taught that there is no one whom God cannot save. Many statements even though very positive must be qualified. For example in Matt. 19 : 26 we read, “But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, with men this is impossible but with God all things are possible.” But not all

things are possible with God. It is not possible for God to lie. In Tit. 1 : 2 we read, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world." So it is we must qualify the statement "...but with God all things are possible". It means all things within his nature and his will. It is against the nature of God to lie; therefore, he cannot lie.

Keeping this in mind we must qualify the statement. "Some Whom God Cannot Save". It is not a question of the power of God or of the desire of God, but of the revealed will and nature of God. Let us notice some whom God cannot save.

(1) God cannot save those who do not desire to go to heaven. Even though he has provided salvation for all men (Tit. 2 : 11), he does not force men to accept it. Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7 : 13, 14). In Heb. 11 : 6 we are told that God is a ".....rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If one doesn't desire to go to heaven, he certainly is not going to diligently seek the Lord or find the strait gate.

Paul said of himself, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart; and be with Christ which is far better." (Phil. 1:23). Paul also said in II Cor. 5:1-2, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven : Man is not going to accidentally go to heaven and God cannot and will not save him against his will. If man goes to heaven, he is going to have to desire it more than anything else.

(2) God cannot save a person who will not turn loose of his sins. Sin separates man from God. (Isa. 59:1, 2). God commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30). Jesus

said, "I tell you, Nay : but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Lk. 13.3, 5). He commanded five of the seven churches of Asia to repent or punishment would come. (Rev. 2 and 3). Repentance means to have a change of mind and heart and this change must produce a change of life which is a turning from sin and turning to God. God will save a person from sin but not in sin. This would be inconsistent with his will; therefore, God cannot save the person who will not turn loose of his sin.

(3) God cannot save those who refuse to answer his call. In Prov. 1:24-25 we read, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof."

The people of old would not heed God's call and many will not today; In Matt. 11:28 Jesus calls, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Those who answer the call are the children of God. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Pet. 2:9). It would be against God's will for him to save the ones who refused to answer his call.

(4) God cannot save those who refuse to obey his will. To answer the call of Jesus is to be obedient to the gospel of Christ. This call comes by the gospel. (II Thess. 2:14). He promises to save only the obedient and take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (II Thess. 1:7-9). "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:9). It would be against God's will to save the disobedient, therefore, God cannot save those who refuse to obey his will.

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(5) God cannot save those who will not forgive others of their trespasses against them. Jesus said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:14, 15). Since God says he will not forgive those who refuse to forgive others then he cannot go against his word.

(6) God cannot save the lukewarm, indifferent, unconcerned and unfaithful member of the church. In Rev. 3:16 Jesus said. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. In verse 19 he said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore and repent." In Rev. 2:10, Jesus said ".....be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." God cannot go against his will saving the unfaithful.

Reader, can God save you in your condition now ? Do you need to repent and obey God ? Won't you do so today ?

TO:

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