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EDITORIAL



Some Things That Baptism Will Not Do

The Bible teaches the importance of baptism. It tells us that one must be baptized to be saved, to enter Christ, and to be a member of the Lord's church. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Paul writes, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). He also said, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (church); whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13). Although baptism is necessary to salvation, and one cannot be saved without it, there are many things that baptism will not do. That is, there are things that baptism *will* do and things it *will not* do. If we get these confused, we may misunderstand baptism altogether and therefore fail to see its real function. We will consider some of these in this study to enable us to keep baptism in its proper perspective.

1. Baptism *only* will not save. Peter tells us that "baptism doth now save us" (1 Peter 3:21), but he does not say that baptism *only* saves. In reading through the New Testament we are informed that there are several conditions or commands that must be complied with before one can be scripturally baptized. The book of Acts in particular gives the account of a number of conversions and in those we can readily see the role that baptism plays in salvation. There is no special merit in just being baptized. Baptism is the final step in one's obedience to the Lord to be saved. When preceded by hearing God's word, believing in the Lord, repenting of one's sins, confessing Christ as the Son of God, then upon being baptized (immersed in water for the remission of sins), baptism saves and one enters Christ and his church. Read Romans 10:10; Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:26, 27; and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

2. Baptism does not follow salvation. There are those who tell us that after one has been saved, he then is to be baptized to show that he has been saved. The Bible does not teach this. Instead, the Lord tells us that one must be baptized in order to be saved. This again, is on the basis that one has complied with the conditions that lead up to baptism. But Christ says that one must be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16). Peter informed the people on the day of Pentecost that they needed to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38). Saul (or Paul) was told that he needed to be baptized to wash away his sins. (Acts 22:16). So scriptural baptism comes *before* salvation and not as a sign of having already been saved.

3. Baptism without faith is impossible. In trying to justify faith only, there are those who argue that if baptism was necessary to salvation then the Lord should have said, "He that believeth not, and is baptized not, shall be damned." But what did Christ say? He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). How could the Lord have made it any plainer? He says in Mark 16:15 that the gospel is to be preached to every creature and then in Mark 16:16 he adds that the individual who will believe and be baptized will be saved. In contrast, he says that those who believe

not shall be damned. It is obvious that if one does not believe then there is no need to bring up the subject of baptism. Unbelief alone is enough to cause one to be lost. (James 2:24, 26). So the Lord tells us that if we want to be saved, we must believe and be baptized. Of course he is talking about believing in God, and believing in him as the Son of God, and then being baptized in obedience to his command. Only then can one be saved, and not until. On the other hand, if one is not interested in being saved then he says that it is not even necessary to believe. Therefore, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

4. Baptism is no substitute for repentance. As important as baptism is, it cannot take the place of repentance. That is, without repentance baptism is useless. Peter told a group of believers that they should repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. (Acts 2:38). Notice that repentance preceded baptism. There are those, however, who teach that in certain cases, such as living in adultery, that one can be baptized, while keeping that adulterous companion, and still be saved. But this would be impossible. Repentance is a change of heart, a change of life. It means that one must turn away from his sins, or quit them, in order to be scripturally baptized and therefore to be saved. If one thinks that baptism can save without repentance then he is certainly mistaken.

5. Baptism cannot replace the confession that Christ is the Son of God. There are those who say that baptism itself is the acknowledgement that Christ is God's Son. But Paul wrote that the confession is to be made with the mouth (Romans 10:10), and Christ said that we must confess him as the Son of God before men if we are to expect him to confess us before his Father in Heaven. (Matthew 10:32). It is only after this confession has been made that one is ready for baptism. A good example of this is found in Acts 8 where Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch to confess Christ as the Son of God before he was willing to baptize him.

6. Sprinkling and pouring (called baptism by some) cannot save. No where in God's word do we read that sprinkling and pouring are said to be baptism. Men have substituted these for baptism, and this is contrary to God's will. How then could such

Acts save? The Bible says that there is but one baptism. (Ephesians 4:5), that it is a burial (Colossians 2:12), and a burial in water for the remission of sins. (Acts 8:38, 39; Acts 2:38). Those who practice sprinkling and pouring are in error and are therefore wrong.

7. Scriptural baptism will not make one a member of a denominational church. Man-made rules, when followed, will make one a member of some man-made or denominational church. Equally true is the fact that Christ has a church (Matthew 16:18), *one* church (Ephesians 4:4), and when one complies with the Lord's terms of pardon, which includes the act of Baptism, then the Lord saves that individual and adds him to *his* church. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). It is therefore to be understood that when one says that he is a member of a denominational church, that means that he has not been scripturally baptized. Scriptural baptism will not put one into a man-made church, but into the church of our Lord.

8. One cannot be baptized for another, living or dead. Just as one must personally believe, repent of his sins, confess with his mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he must likewise be baptized for the remission of his sins. (Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:10; Mark 16:16). One person cannot do such things for loved ones or friends. Neither can he obey the Lord for those who have passed on. They are in the hands of God and must give an account for the way they have lived. (2 Corinthians 5:10).

9. Baptism will not save one from his future sins. While scriptural baptism will wash away all of one's past sins, and put him into Christ and the church, and prepare him to live for God, it will not prevent that individual from sinning in the future. It did not keep Ananias and Sapphira from lying to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 5). It did not prevent Simon from trying to buy the gift of God. (Acts 8). And neither will it keep one from sinning today. When a child of God sins he must repent, confess his faults, and pray to God for forgiveness. Thus the Lord will forgive him, and so will his brethren.

We can see then that there are many things that baptism (as

taught in the Bible) will not do. It is true that a large number of people have been supposedly baptized, but when their act was not in harmony with God's will then it was worthless, useless, and deceitful. It is so sad that there are so many who think that they have been baptized, when in reality they have not been. Baptism that is not in harmony with God's will is actually *not* baptism, but rather only a poor imitation. It is consequently null and void.

I would like to urge you to seriously consider the subject of baptism as it is set forth in God's word. Study it to see what it is and what it is not. Accept only what the Lord has said on the subject; be baptized as he has commanded. In so doing, he will save you and add you to his church. It is only when one complies with scriptural baptism that this salvation will follow.



**associate
editorial**

Unity In The One Body

The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:4 said, there is one body. This one body, he said, in Ephesians 1:22,23, is the church. At 1 Corinthians 12:12,13, the Apostle said, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." And then he concluded by saying, in verse 27, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particulars." Since the body is the church, therefore, in saying "ye are the body of Christ", he was actually stating, "you are the church of Christ." Remember, he was not speaking here of various denominational groups or bodies, since none of these, as we have today, existed in

the time of the Apostle. He was rather writing the epistle to Christians, and said that they were all **ONE BODY OF CHRIST** or one church of Christ. Remember, however, this is what he said almost 1900 years ago. Suppose the Apostle was living today, would the Holy Spirit inspire him to write such words for all those who today believe in Christ and claim to be Christians? Think about it!

Through the pages of this magazine and other literature we publish we are pleading for the complete restoration of the pure New Testament Christianity. We are pleading with sincere people today to go back to the Bible. We believe, we can all be the one body of Christ, the church of Christ, in this the 20th century. Remember, human teaching will divide us but God's word only will unite us. Our Lord has paid a great price, his blood, on the cross of Calvary to reconcile us all in his one body. (Ephesians 2:14-16). He, in whom we all believe, prayed earnestly that *all* who would believe in Him might be *one* in Him. (John 17:20-23). Of course, He didn't pray for something which is impossible. Or did He?

As a matter of fact, thousands of sincere men and women around the world have left various denominational bodies to be the **ONE BODY** of Christ. They have rejected all human authority and have accepted Christ to be the only authority in true Christianity. (Matthew 28:18). They have rejected all creed books of men and have accepted the Bible to be the only guide to follow Christ. (II Timothy 3:16,17). They gave up their parents' religion and have accepted Christ's challenge: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.....Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:3,5). They have discarded man-made names and titles to be simply Christians, as the Bible says (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). Like the religious people of the day of Pentecost—they have repented and have been baptized (Immersed in water) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38,41). Acts 2:41 states, after the 3000 people were baptized, the same day the Lord added them unto them, or in the number of the apostles, and then, we read, in verse 47, "And the Lord *added* to the church *daily* such as

should be saved." So they know today definitely the Lord has added them to his church. And since the saved ones are added to the church by the Lord, therefore there are no saved people outside of His church.

Isn't it wonderful to know that in this religiously divided world today we can have unity in the one body of Christ. All we need is courage, boldness and determination to reject man-made teaching and traditions and to accept the Bible, God's Word, as our only standard in religion.

The Kingdom Of Christ

Carl Maples

Will Jesus Christ return to earth to reign a thousand years? Many religious groups believe that he will and many others do not. What do you believe, friend? Is your mind closed on the subject, or are you willing to study the Bible for an honest answer? The purpose of this article is to stimulate in your heart a keen desire to know what God has to say on this important subject rather than the opinions and doctrines of men. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST IN PROPHECY

The kingdom of Christ has been promised down through the ages. Many of the Old Testament prophets spoke about it, revealing the fact that one day the God of heaven would establish a kingdom that would not last just a thousand years but would be an everlasting kingdom.

The prophet Daniel said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but

it shall break in pieces and shall consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

There is no question in the minds of Bible scholars and students that this prophecy refers to the kingdom of Christ. The question is WHEN was it established?

The only true answer can be found in the Bible where the prophecy was fulfilled. The Bible says, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the KINGDOM of GOD, and saying, THE TIME IS FULFILLED, AND THE KINGDOM of GOD is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). The prophecy of Daniel and the preaching of Jesus are in perfect harmony one with the other. Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom is at hand."

But let us consider another Old Testament prophecy regarding the kingdom, and then examine it's fulfillment. Daniel said, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a KINGDOM, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13, 14).

This passage reveals the Son of man coming with the clouds before the Ancient of days. Jesus Christ is the Son of man spoken of by Daniel, and the Ancient of days is, of course, the Father in heaven. It is also very important to consider what the Father gave his Son. The gifts include dominion, glory, the kingdom, and people of all nations and languages.

Let us now examine the fulfillment of this prophecy in the New Testament. Jesus said, "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the KINGDOM of GOD come with power" (Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:28; Luke 9:27). Jesus was speaking about the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel that would be fulfilled during the lifetime of some of

those people present on that day. Therefore, we can conclude that the kingdom was really at hand.

Jesus also said, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:8, 9). In this verse we learn the disciples were to receive POWER from heaven, and they would then go into all the world preaching the gospel. We should also remember the kingdom was to come with POWER, and during the lifetime of those disciples (Matthew 16:28).

When we read the second chapter of Acts, we learn, the Apostle Peter quoted the Old Testament prophet Joel, saying, "This is that" (Acts 2:16). He cited the "last days", and the power which Jesus had promised. This is the "fulfilled time" Jesus spoke of in Mark 1:14, 15. The only conclusion that will harmonize with the Old Testament and the teaching of Jesus is that the KINGDOM was established exactly when Jesus said it would be, and that was during the lifetime of some of the disciples to whom Jesus spoke (Mark 9:1).

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

Neither the Father in heaven, nor Jesus his Son, ever promised to restore the kingdom of Israel, or establish an earthly kingdom over which Jesus would reign a thousand years. The Jews looked forward to the restoration of an earthly kingdom, but it was never restored, nor will it ever be restored as they expected. Other religious groups predict the kingdom will be established on this earth when Christ comes again, but this will never be, because God has not made such a promise.

The common mistake made by most people looking for the kingdom is in the nature of the kingdom. The materialist, pre-millennialistic, post-millennialists, and others believe the Lord Jesus will establish a literal earthly kingdom here on earth and rule

and reign over it in the flesh for a certain period of time. The reason for such a false doctrine is the mistake in thinking of the kingdom of Christ as being of a material nature—that is, thinking Jesus would return in the flesh and set up a physical kingdom. The Bible DOES NOT contain such a promise.

Friend, open your Bible and study what Jesus teaches about the kingdom. Jesus said, “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the KINGDOM of God should come, he answered them and said,” The KINGDOM of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there! for, behold, the KINGDOM of GOD IS WITHIN YOU” (Luke 17:20, 21).

There, you see, the KINGDOM of GOD is not a physical kingdom that men can point to and measure by boundary markers, but it is a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM that is within men. The Apostle Paul said, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath TRANSLATED us into the KINGDOM of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13). In this passage we learn several important things that help us understand why Jesus is NOT coming back to establish a kingdom on earth.

Let us consider, first, that we cannot be translated into something that does not exist; that is, if the kingdom has not yet been established we cannot be translated into it. However, Paul said the Colossians were translated INTO it; therefore, the ONLY conclusion that can be reached is that the KINGDOM of GOD has already been established and people are translated into it.

Jesus pointed out the kingdom was a spiritual kingdom reaching into the hearts of men (Luke 17:20,21). Since men are translated INTO the kingdom, and the kingdom is WITHIN people, there is no other conclusion to be reached other than that the spiritual KINGDOM of CHRIST has been established and is NOW in existence.

CHRIST IS NOW KING

Christ Jesus our Lord is either NOW reigning as King of kings

(Revelation 19:16), or he is Not. If the kingdom has not been established yet, then Jesus the Christ is NOT yet king. However, the Bible clearly reveals that Jesus has set up his kingdom and is NOW reigning. Friends, let us believe in the scriptures of God rather than the doctrines of men.

Jesus says in Luke 19:15, and following, that he would go away to receive his kingdom. We have already learned from Daniel that the Son of man came before the "Ancient of days" to receive "dominion, glory, power, and his kingdom". Now, let us notice that Jesus has ascended to the right hand of God where he has all power, glory, dominion, and is reigning. Jesus said, "ALL authority (power) is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18,19). The Apostle Paul said, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:25). We learn here that Jesus is NOW reigning, and will reign until all enemies are put down, and the last enemy is death.

Another scripture that will help the Bible student find the truth about the kingdom is found in Hebrews 10:12,13, which reads, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." There is no question in the minds of honest men seeking the truth but that Jesus is NOW reigning over his kingdom.

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28). The writer speaks of receiving a kingdom which CANNOT be moved, signifying the fact of its existence now and not in the future. Thus, Jesus Christ is now ruling and reigning over his KINGDOM.

If Jesus is supposed to come and reign on earth as some teach, he must be REINCARNATED,—that is, he must come back in the flesh. But the Apostle Paul said, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh : yet now henceforth know we him no more" (II Corinthians 5:16). Paul simply states that Jesus had been in

the flesh at one time, but he would never return again in that way. He will not be reincarnated, or come again in the flesh. Therefore, his kingdom IS NOT fleshly, but spiritual, and we will not know Him in the flesh again.

YOU NEED TO BE IN THE KINGDOM

Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again in order to be in the kingdom of God. Since Christ is now reigning over his kingdom, and one cannot be saved outside that kingdom, you need to enter that kingdom by obeying the terms of God's commands to enter. God says you must believe in his Son (John 8:24), repent of your sins, (Luke 13:5), be baptized for remission of sins, or born again, (Acts 2:38; John 3:5), in order to enter the kingdom. Will you?

What Do You Remember?

JOE R. BARNETT

JOSEPH was in prison. Even there God used him. He interpreted the dream of Pharaoh's imprisoned butler—in three days he would be restored to Pharaoh's service. For this interpretation Joseph asked a favour: "...remember me, when it is well with you... get me out of this house."

But he forgot! Ah, that's the sad story of many of us. We forget the favours done us. God's blessings go unnoticed. Our problems, but not our blessings, make an indelible etch on memory.

If all the stars stopped shining for a year—then suddenly flashed on again, every eye would gaze at the sky. Every heart would gasp.

If God's blessings came rarely, unexpectedly, we would prize them. But they have been constantly ours since we were born. Familiarity breeds contempt,

Look back over the past year. The things which are prominent in memory are not the constant blessings, but the occasional disappointments.

One week's illness is better remembered than fifty-one weeks of good health. The words of one critic are given more thought than the compliments of a dozen friends. Three years of depression are more vividly remembered than forty years of wonderful prosperity.

I love that uncomplaining farmer who told me, "I've never had a bad year." I thought, "He has a very poor memory." But I was dead wrong. He has a very good memory. Oh, I expect he's had a bad year, all right. But he's had a lot more good ones than bad ones—and it's a good memory that keeps the record straight—that says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2).

What About The Unbaptized?

Homer Putnam Reeves

The responsible human creature is under obligation to be baptized. It has been stated that baptism is the act of immersion to a competent individual. This competency embraces ability to hear (learn) God's word. "Go ye therefore and make disciples of (teach) all nations, baptizing them..." (Mt. 28:19.) It includes faith—an unbeliever cannot be baptized, cf., (Mk. 16:15-16.) Repentance is another prerequisite to baptism, (Acts 2:38.) Only infants and feeble-minded persons are free from the obligation to be baptized. Both are irresponsible. Both are incompetent. Neither possesses capacity. No responsibility attaches whatever.

Christ was baptized to "fulfill all righteousness." (Mt. 3:15.) Those who would be his disciples are eager and happy to follow his example. Those who refuse or otherwise fail to obey his will and follow his example cannot be his disciples.

The unbaptized person, capable of being baptized, is unsaved. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mk. 16:16.) The Lord placed *baptism* between the *believer* and *salvation*. Peter declares that eight souls of Noah's family were saved through water, and adds that baptism, after a true likeness, "doth now save you." (1 Pet. 3:20-21.) The unbaptized therefore are unsaved.

Baptism procures remission of sins. Peter addressed inquiring believers: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins..." (Acts 2:38.) Ananias instructed believing, penitent Saul: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins..." (Acts 22:16.) The unbaptized person, therefore, bears the guilt of his sins. Sins cannot be remitted or "washed away" except by the valid act of baptism.

Baptism brings one into Christ. One cannot be baptized *in* Christ, but *into* Christ. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27.) The unbaptized are not in Christ. Rejecting baptism, they can never enter Christ. Apart from Christ there is no salvation.

Know The Truth

MARVIN RAINEY

JESUS IS COMING AGAIN. Do you believe that Jesus is coming again? He said, "I will come again" (John 14:3) and His word endureth forever, for He is the truth. The angels said He will come again. The Holy Spirit, by the mouth of the apostles, hath repeatedly said He would come again. Is not such an event of vital importance to us? At His first coming, the world rejected Him. Will the world today do the same thing? Are you rejecting Him now? The sad thing is that many will say, "I am not a Christian and I don't care anything about it." How sad! I would like to point you to the crucified Saviour as the only hope of salvation. We beg of you to accept Christ and to obey His commands

before it is too late. Just now you may be more interested in the things of this world but remember that Jesus said, "What shall it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?"

Jesus is coming, and we know neither the day, nor the hour, when He may come. What if He should come now? Would you be found by Him in peace, or would you be left behind to endure the terrible things which shall come upon those who do not obey? "Prepare to meet thy God," was the solemn injunction to Israel (Amos 4:12) and He extends to us the same plea. Will you continue to refuse to prepare to meet your God? Now is the accepted time. Do let me plead with you to believe in Christ, repent of your sins, confess your faith in Christ and to be baptized for the remission of sins.

To those who are already Christians (New Testament Christians) I point you to Jesus as the one who is coming again and I plead with you to mortify your members which are upon the earth, that you may appear with Him in glory. Strive and pray for purity of heart. Search the Word, that you may know how to keep your soul pure and clean.

We may not like to think of death or the coming of Christ in judgment but it will happen if we think about it or if we do not think about it. When Jesus comes He will come to take unto Himself His bride. His bride is the church and the church is composed of those who are Christians. If Christ should come today would he take you unto Himself? Christ is coming again. We do not know when. Since we do not know when he will come again we must be ready all the time.

Is The Bible Alone A Safe Guide?

BY GYNNATH FORD

The Faith of Millions, The Credentials of the Catholic Religion, by John A. O'Brien, Ph.D., L.L.D., states: "A competent guide

for the Christian religion should possess these three qualifications :

1. It must be within the reach of every inquirer after truth.
2. It must be clear and intelligible to all.
3. It must present all the truths of the Christian religion.

Now the Bible alone possesses none of these" (*The Church; The Interpreter of the Bible*, Chapter 11, page 152).

Although the Catholic religion does not believe that the Bible alone is a safe guide, she does teach that the translations which she has given to the people are inspired of God and contain the words of the living God, *The Faith of Millions*, page 143. She believes also that the Bible is infallible. The difference in her teaching lies in this statement: "The plain fact is that an infallible Bible without an infallible living interpreter is futile. Infallibility never gets from the printed pages to the one place it is needed : the mind of the reader. The myriad divisions within Protestantism offer ample evidence of the truth of this statement" (*The Faith of Millions*, page 138).

THE BIBLE IS INFALLIBLE

The Douay Version, translated by Catholics, speaks of its own perfection or infallibility: "For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time : but the holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost." "But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth....." (The Second Epistle of St. Peter the Apostle 1:21, The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to St. John 16:13).

IT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD

These writers who were inspired by the Holy Ghost give us this confidence.

".....according to revelation, the mystery has been made known to me, as I have written above in a few words; As you

reading, may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit..." (The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians 3:3, 4).

The scripture above clearly states :

1. The mystery was revealed to the apostles.
2. The apostle Paul wrote it down.
3. When you read you can understand it.

It is agreed that Paul wrote things "hard to be understood" (The Second Epistle of St. Peter the Apostle 3:15,16). It is likewise true that many popes of the Roman Catholic Church have written things that are hard to be understood. The fact remains that this same Paul said, "As you reading, may understand....."

IT PRESENTS ALL NECESSARY TRUTH

The Bible does not contain all that Jesus said or did (The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to St. John 21:25). Yet it contains all that is necessary to have eternal life.

"Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God : and that believing, you may have life in his name" (The Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to St. John 20:30,31).

The Bible contains enough to make us perfect and to furnish us to every good work.

"All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work" (The Second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy 3:16,17).

DOES THE BIBLE NEED AN INFALLIBLE INTERPRETER?

If yes, then the following statements must also be true,

1. *God has given us a revelation which still has to be revealed.* But God revealed the mystery unto Paul. Paul said that we could read and have his understanding, the understanding of an apostle of God. The Pope claims to have no greater understanding. Did Peter ever give Paul understanding? No, because they had the same God-given power to understand! If we can obtain the understanding of an apostle by reading the words of Paul, than we need no infallible interpreter!

2. *God who made the mind of man cannot so address man in words which man can understand.* This would be reflection upon the power of God if this were true.

3. *We cannot understand what the Spirit said approximately 1900 years ago but we can understand what He says today through the inspired Pope.* Do you believe the Spirit of God can speak in more understandable way today than He did through the writers of the New Testament years ago? Can the perfect Spirit of God improve?

THE INFALLIBLE APOSTLES

We agree with the Roman Catholic Church that the apostles were infallible. When they wrote they recorded the words of the Spirit which "searcheth.....the deep things of God" (The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians 2:10). These words received the approval of God's Spirit and His holy apostles. The question is: Why do we need infallible interpreter, the Pope, the alleged successor of Peter, to interpret what Peter infallibly wrote for us? Surely, we can see that if we can understand what the present day Pope says, we can understand what Peter, allegedly the first Pope, said. If we can understand what Peter said, then we can understand the Bible. If we can understand the Bible, it really is a safe guide for mankind.

WHO IS RIGHT?

If the Bible is a safe guide, the Catholic Church has erred from the truth. Does this mean that men must accept the myriad

divisions which are mentioned by Dr. O'Brien in the opening quotations of this article? Certainly not! There is a people who are as strongly opposed to division and Protestantism as is the Roman Catholic Church. This people believes in the one true church which Christ purchased with his blood. They plead for a return to the divine pattern as laid down by Christ and His apostles in the infallible writings of the Holy Scriptures. Their desire is to go back beyond Catholicism to the true church which is built upon Jesus Christ and promoted by his teachings as given in the Bible alone. It is our fervent prayer that you will investigate the plea of the church of Jesus Christ in your community. The Catholic Church says, "Investigate." Good! Investigate the church of Christ!

The Lord's Supper

Mac Layton

What is the Lord's Supper? Why partake of it? How often should we observe it?

These are questions on the minds of many people. The Lord's Supper was begun by Jesus himself as a memorial to his suffering for our sins. (Matt. 26:26-29). Today Christians observe it to commemorate the supreme event of the ages, the death of the Christ. To partake in a way pleasing to God, this Supper must have the right things.

THE RIGHT ELEMENTS

Bread and fruit of the vine are the simple elements. Though not literally his flesh and blood, the bread is a communion of the body of Christ, and the cup a communion of his blood. (Luke 22:12-20). When Christians surround this Table, their hearts are stirred to sincere appreciation for his glorious life of sacrificial service and his death on the cross for this wicked world.

THE RIGHT PARTICIPANTS

Jesus said he would drink of this cup with those IN the Father's kingdom. (Matt. 26:29). BAPTIZED BELIEVERS continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread. (Acts 2:42). The DISCIPLES came together on the first day of the week to break bread. (Acts 20:7). Those in the Lord's church are the right people to partake of the Lord's Supper, yet no one has the right to forbid or close the communion because Paul said, "But let a man EXAMINE HIMSELF, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." (I Cor. 11:28).

THE RIGHT SPIRIT

Unless in mind's eye one "discern the body, he eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." (I Cor. 11:29). Because some of the Corinthians partook of the Supper in an unworthy manner and irreverent spirit, they were weak and sickly. (I Cor. 11:30). In partaking one must do so RETROSPECTIVELY... "this do in remembrance of me," and INTROSPECTIVELY... "But let a man examine himself," and PROSPECTIVELY... "ye do proclaim the Lord's death till he come." (I Cor. 11:25, 26, 28).

THE RIGHT TIME

The New Testament Christian observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7). How often? As often as the first day of the week came. Just as the Jews knew the command to observe the Sabbath meant EVERY Sabbath, so Christians know this example means EVERY first day of the week. Since there is absolutely NO authority in the New Testament for yearly, semi-annually, quarterly, or monthly observance, we must follow the early church and partake weekly. Such is certainly safe, and cannot be doubted.

The New Testament declares Christians are to give of their physical means to the Lord on every first day of the week, and practically every religious group does. (I Cor. 16:1-2). And yet the same authority that tells us to give EVERY first day of the week tells us to observe the Lord's Supper EVERY first day of the

week.

This explains how the Jerusalem church "continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread," and how Paul could say the Corinthians take of the Supper "often." (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 11:25).

It is truly a tragedy when any Christian will allow this sweet hour of Communion to be pressed out of his heart by trivial excuses. This Supper has been given for the spiritual health and well being of God's children, and he does wrong who forsakes the Lord's table on any first day of the week.

The Basis For Unity

Gene A. Ellmore

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:1, 2).

Unity has become a very delicate and fragile element among Christians. On the one hand, barriers have been erected to prohibit fellowship, and on the other hand, boundaries of truth have been overlooked or passed over to permit fellowship. One extreme is called legalism and the other is called liberalism. To the legalist, all truth is absolute as dictated to the heart by its possessor. To the liberal, all truth is relative and may be received by varying degrees according to the desire or educational level of its possessor. In the former case, unity is a point established by a dogmatic mind and offers little hope of being universally acceptable. In the latter case, unity is not a point at which people are required to meet, but an evolutionary process of rationalism that embraces many divergent view at various degrees of religious thought or faith. The former violates 2 Pet. 1:21, and the latter violates 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1, 2 and 4:2.

Christian unity is both inward and outward. It can exist only

among Christians and yet, at the same time, it is possible and also common for those who in the main are brethren to fail grievously. Christian unity is specifically an agreement of view, an accord in purpose and mutual love. Wherever there is true inward feeling there is a corresponding outward manifestation. This type of unity makes a favorable impression on the world.

Paul encouraged the brethren at Philippi to "Rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 4:4). The spirit of rejoicing in the Lord came as a result of being "of the same mind in the Lord." He had prepared them for this unity of spirit and conduct in the second chapter of Philippians: "If there be therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Phil. 2:1,2). This was to be accomplished by emulating the example of Christ (Phil. 2:5).

Christ's humility was the ground of appeal or exhortation for Christians to be "of one mind." This type of Christian unity can be achieved or the inspired word here is meaningless. The reason why this unity among saints is possible is because of the "incentive of divine love." This unity can prevail only when there is a proper relationship between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God in man (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). The proper relationship is called fellowship—a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and a mutual, active participation in that interest. Here it refers to the ministry of the Spirit in the life of the saint, and the cooperation of the saint with the Spirit in His work of causing men to grow in grace. The last reason which leads to Christian unity is when brethren in the Lord are tenderhearted toward one another, and have compassion upon one another.

Christian unity is possible, not at the pre-designed point of human legalism, nor by the process of human permissiveness, but upon the basis of divinely revealed truth. No other basis will suffice in the hearts of men; no other criteria will produce the unity promised by God and sought by man.

Compared With Me

ELMER PROUT

"WHEN they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Each January my neighbour family line each family member against their kitchen door and record each person's growth with a mark above his head. The door is covered with marks from previous years and the children clamor to see who has grown the most. They also speculate eagerly about who will be first to catch up with their father. Their annual measurement day is a pleasant family tradition that has become a centre of anticipation and fun.

But if the largest child began to say, "I'm the tallest so I'm the best," the enjoyment would be replaced by envy and tension. Or if the father said, "When you boys get to be as tall as I am, I will recognize you as real members of my family," the fun would be turned into discouragement. In either case the unity of the family would be destroyed.

ACCEPTANCE IS ESSENTIAL

Watching children grow is one of the deep joys of parenthood. But it is unthinkable that a parent would condition his acceptance of a child on that child's physical growth or seek to create a spirit of jealous competition among his children. A child may be large or small, fat or thin, handsome or homely but he is a member of the family from the moment of his birth. The parent has the responsibility to accept each of his children as true members of the family and, at the same time, to train all to recognize the others in that same light. Thus the family grows together through mutual acceptance, respect, encouragement, and unity.

What is true in the home is also true in the local church. When Paul speaks of those who "measure themselves by them-

selves, and compare themselves with themselves" he points to a basic cause of church trouble. It is clear that "they are without understanding" for anyone who attempts to live on the basis of self-recommendation does not understand the gospel. Such people grab at every opportunity to advertise self and in the process disrupt, if not destroy, the unity of the church.

WHO IS TO COMMEND?

None of us is immune from this tendency. It is well to rethink the scriptural cure for the problem: "But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (2 Corinthians 10:17,18).

First, Christian relationships begin "in the Lord" or "in front of the Lord." Before we launch a campaign of comparison we must recognize the vast difference between God as he is and "I as I am." God is perfect, sinless, holy, almighty but we are imperfect, sinful and weak. If we forget or ignore that contrast we soon begin to feel capable of judging others. Of course they will respond in the same way toward us and the measurement race will be on. If that race is not stopped both church unity and individual spiritual growth will be lost.

JUDGE NOT

One of the first steps in Christian growth is the recognition that because the holy God judges us we have no authority to judge others (Romans 14:3, 4,10-12; James 4:11, 12). This is not because the divine standards of right and wrong are low or unimportant. It is because God's standards are so high that I can never measure up to them myself, much less control them in the measurement of others (Luke 17:7-10). Each of us stands as a sinner in need of not only forgiveness but also of the humility without which Christian growth is impossible (Philippians 3:7-14). Humility is a key to spiritual progress because without it we will be so busy measuring self and others that we will have neither time, interest, nor energy for growth.

GOD'S ANSWER TO MY NEED

We must never forget that the gospel centres around news of

the free gift of God available to men through Christ. No man can pay for the gospel or establish a human claim to salvation. To the end of every day man is dependent on God for the salvation of his soul. This does not mean that there is no response for man to make. There is. But it does mean that man can never think "God saved me because I am good" or "God added me to the church because I am smart and well trained." The act of becoming a Christian is not a chance to demonstrate our own strength, rather it is the moment when human weakness and need should be most clearly recognized.

We dare not let self become the object of our trust. There is a definite place for will power and determination in Christianity. But that place is not in the centre of the stage. God alone is worthy of our trust; and if we forget that basic fact, we will turn our religion into a race of comparisons in which we try to outdo each other. The Christian life is not a contest to determine who will get first place. All of us started from the same place and we are able to go on with the Christian life only because of the strength which God daily gives us through Christ.

ASSURANCE GIVES POWER

When we accept fully the fact that God, in his grace, wants us to be saved, we can begin to work well with other Christians (Titus 2:11-14). This assurance provides the power which makes cooperation possible (Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 4:7). If we are uncertain of God's attitude toward us and think, no matter how unconsciously, that we must win a place of favour through our own good works, the pressure of that uncertainty will drive us to envy, strife, and the evils of comparison (Luke 18:9-14). It is only when we rely on God that we find ourselves free to work with others for him (Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:12, 13; 1 Timothy 1:12-17).

Christian assurance does not say, "I have worked hard for God therefore he loves me." Rather Christian assurance begins with the divine initiative, "God loves me; his love is the source and foundation of all that I want to do for him" (1 John 4:7,19). The Christian is God's child *now* (1 John 3:1,2). He does not have to say, "I am a child of God because I have grown this much."

He can only say, "I am growing—I can grow—because I am a child of God."

DESIRE TO DO MY BEST

There is one other point to remember. When we think of the marks on the kitchen door we know that parent is pleased to see growth—happy to see his children develop into strong, responsible adults. Their growth is an expected part of the total relationship. While the father's acceptance of the children should not be conditioned on the rate of physical or mental progress, that progress does have its place. But it is not only the father who will desire the growth of his children. In response to his love and interest in them the children themselves will do their best to reach a well-rounded maturity.

Spiritual maturity is a goal in Christian living. God surely wants us to grow in knowledge and in ability to serve him. The good works we do glorify his name and may also lead others to obey his will (Matthew 5:14-16; Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Peter 1:3-11). The appeal to righteous living is built directly on the "mercies of God" and demonstrates in life the power of God's way (Romans 12:1ff; 1 Peter 2:9-21). It is the Christian's desire to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour" (Titus 2:10). To gain these ends Christians will "stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). That kind of admonition will be effective to the extent that it comes as a fruit of the unity of Christians. And that true unity begins in front of God where we all stand both needing and receiving his grace.

Me Sick...Why?

J.P. Williams

Here I am, sick, flat on my back, almost as helpless as a baby; WHY? I think I can take it. I've had many hard knocks in life; but look at me now, I can't even get out of bed. WHY?

My life hasn't been perfect, I realize this, but you suppose it has been so bad that God is giving me what I deserve?

Illness, when it strikes suddenly, often catches one unprepared. With many it is a completely new experience. They have known many others to go through this experience, but somehow never expected it to happen to them. It's always someone else that is sick or hurt in an accident—never me. That is, until one day we wake up to find ourselves in a hospital surrounded by nurses, doctors and many strange machines. In the between x-rays, medication, and possibly surgery, we find a lot of time to lie on our backs and THINK! For many this is a time to re-examine their lives—their resources for living—both spiritual and physical.

As we re-examine ourselves, some of us may find we are face to face with the question, Why am I here? Perhaps you have already asked yourself these questions. Perhaps you have been searching your past to find what you have done so bad to be deserving of this punishment.

The questions that are coming to your mind cannot be answered in a brief article, but this one thing you can know which will relieve you of some real concern—your illness IS NOT proof of God's wrath upon you for something you have done. "The rain falls on the just and unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Sickness is impartial. It falls upon all men, both the rich and poor, saint and sinner alike.

The answer to your present illness is not to be found in some mistake for which God is punishing you. Sin is not directly the reason for suffering except as our selfish and wilful way of life leads us into that which is not healthy, bringing about wear and tear of our body, under which some organs at last break down and illness becomes inescapable. In such cases God has not waited for us to make mistakes and then, catching us, brought punishment upon us.

The ancient Hebrews believed all evil was explained by sin, and that a person's misfortune, whether sickness or otherwise, was

evidence of the wrath of God. Job was a "perfect and upright man," yet untold suffering fell his lot.

As you await your return to health, erase from your mind the idea that this is the punishment of God; and let a positive and helpful thought take its place.

Think of God as a loving, compassionate, merciful Father toward all mankind (2 Peter 3.9). In every body there are healing resources which go to work for us immediately when we are injured or become ill. These marvelous forces of healing are placed in your body by God, and are working in you at this very moment. By this you can be assured that God is not punishing you for your failures, but rather is on your side working that you may return to health and happiness. As you lie in bed, let your mind dwell on this thought. God is helping by placing these forces in my body, and by working through nurses and doctors.

Relax, and let tension slip away, replacing it with trust in God, resolving to accept His will in full obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Remember always, God has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

May God restore your health and renew your spirit with a determination to live for Him as He guides you through His Holy Word each day.

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