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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Who Is A False Teacher ?

There are many people in the world today who claim to be teaching God's word. Most of these are false teachers. They are able to deceive the average person simply because he doesn't take the time to investigate. He is impressed with their education, sincerity, and evangelistic zeal. Therefore the blind lead the blind and in the end both will be lost. How sad!

Most people want to think that all religious teachers are of God, but this is not the case. In this brief study we are going to note some of the warnings in the Bible and list some of the marks of a false teacher. Please take heed to this information.

Christ warned, "Then if any man shall say into you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christ's, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inso-much that, it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matthew 24:23, 24). Paul talked about those who preached another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel, posing as apostles, workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. He continues by saying, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is trans-

formed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15).

Now, let's notice some marks of a false teacher, and there are many. In the long ago, Moses wrote the words of the Lord, "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). The same principle would apply today. There are many who freely predict the day of the Lord's return, or claim that they can miraculously heal the sick, and do many other things. If that which they claim doesn't come to pass, and it never does, then such people should be labeled as false teachers.

Paul said to the Galatians, "But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:7-9). We have the gospel of Christ clearly revealed in the scripture. Paul informs us that it is based on the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Then the commands of the gospel are faith in Christ, repentance of all sin, confession of Christ as being the Son of God, and baptism for the remission of sins. (Mark 16:16; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38). Now, if anyone preaches something contrary to that then he should be marked as a false teacher.

Paul wrote the Roman Christians, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;

and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17, 18).

Furthermore, it can be established that those who are members of churches and wear names that you cannot read about in the Bible, are false teachers. The Bible teaches that Christ established his church (Matthew 16:18), that he has but one (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18), and it wears his name. (Romans 16:16; Acts 1:26). Others who may be marked as false teachers include those who claim to have received special revelations, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, can speak in tongues, perform miracles, and so on. We now have the word of God and it completely furnishes us unto every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). That means then that the miraculous age ceased with the coming of the Lord's word. (1 Corinthians 13; James 1:25). Faith is not produced now by seeing miracles but by hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17). Since those who make these claims are in man-made organizations, and oppose each other, they demonstrate that they do not have God's power working in them.

John wrote, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1). He goes on to say that if one comes without the doctrine of Christ, then "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 9-11).

My friends, be not deceived. Please go back to God's word to be sure that you have the truth. Read and study the scripture and do what it says and only then can you be sure that you are doing God's will.



**associate
editorial**

Who Is Jesus

Almost two thousand years ago Jesus made several claims

about himself. Were those claims false? Certainly not. In the first place, Jesus was a good man, it is commonly accepted; and a good man cannot lie deliberately. Secondly, Jesus possessed a powerful mind, as is very much obvious from his marvellous teaching, he was the Master Teacher, therefore he understood and knew what he was saying. Among others a certain lawyer confessed Jesus to be the Master (Luke 10:25). Nicodemus, a Pharisee, and a ruler of the Jews, acknowledged Jesus a Rabbi and said "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John 3:2). Thirdly, the resurrection of Jesus proves that all his claims were true. When the Jews challenged him and asked "What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" Jesus told them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:18, 19). He also said, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:40). Even though the Jews, after his death, made his sepulchre sure by sealing the stone and by setting a watch of guards, nevertheless, Jesus, as he had claimed, was resurrected. The record in the Bible says, that when Jesus was dead for three days, upon the first day of the week there was a great earthquake. Near the grave of Jesus, an angel of God descended from heaven, he rolled away the stone, and for fear the guards at the grave shook and became unconscious, as Jesus came out of the grave, and the angel pronounced "HE IS RISEN" (Matthew 28; Mark 16:16). The grave of Jesus was found empty on the third day after his death. Several hundred people saw Jesus alive as he was upon the earth for forty days before he ascended into heaven. The church of Christ and the Christianity itself stands today as a result of Jesus' resurrection. Because if it was proven false the church of Christ and Christianity would have vanished away from the face of the earth, in fact they would have never been founded and there would be no such thing today as the church and the Christianity.

In a single verse of the scripture at John 14:6 Jesus made five very powerful claims. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus is the way. Because he lived a perfect and sinless life upon earth.

was in all circumstances obedient to the will of the Father which is in heaven (Matthew 4; Hebrews 5:8, 9), thus leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21-24).

He is the truth. Because he revealed the true God. He was the Word who in the beginning was with God and was God; but became flesh, a man, and lived among people who beheld his glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1). He said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." (John 14:9, 10).

He is the life. Because he is the source of life. (Genesis 1:26). "All things were made by him (*Jesus*); and without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3). At John 6, before his death and resurrection, Jesus said, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed...I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (Verses 27 and 51). He also said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

Sin separates man from God, thus making him dead spiritually. But because Christ died upon the cross for our sins to be our propitiation (1 John 4:10), therefore when we come unto him by faith and obedience God forgives us our sins because Christ died upon the cross for our sins. (Romans 5:1; 6:1-6, 23; 8:1). That is why Paul could say to the Ephesians: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians 2:1).

"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Said Jesus. Apostle Paul in the Bible said, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of

reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now that we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sins; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Since Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9), he is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10), therefore he is the only mediator between God and men. (1 Timothy 2:5).

Only One

Joe Sponaugle

Most everyone understands what one is. One is not two or two hundred. One means one and no more. When you have one of anything that is all you have. The Bible tells us there is one God and Father of all, who is over all through all and in all. Eph. 4:6. Those who believe the Bible know that there is but one God. One God does not mean two or a dozen, does it? The Bible tells us that there is but one Lord. Eph. 4:5. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. John 3:16. God only has one begotten Son. There is but one Christ, who is the one Lord. Those who believe the Bible know there is but one Lord. The Bible tells us that there is but one Holy Spirit. Eph. 4:4. Again, all who have studied their Bible know that it speaks of only one Spirit. One still means one and no more.

The same Bible that tells us there is one God, one Lord and one Spirit also tells us there is but one body. Eph. 4:4. This should not be hard for us to understand because all of us have but one body and we have but one head upon that one body. The question that comes to mind is, what is the one body Paul is

talking about? Paul gives us the answer to this question in the first chapter of the Ephesian letter, verses 22 and 23, "and he (God) put all things in subjection under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all". Again Paul states in Colossians 1:18, "And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Thus Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares that the body of Christ is the church and the Lord's church is his body, over which he is the only head. One head for one body.

When Paul says Christ has but one body or church there is but one, not two or three hundred or more. Why is it hard for people to understand that Christ has but one church, when they can very easily understand that there is but one God, one Lord and one Spirit? It is not because the Bible isn't clear about what it says on this matter. The chief problem is that most people just do not want to believe what the Bible says on this matter. Jesus said to Peter, "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18. Jesus said, I will build my church, not churches. He did not say he was going to build or establish three or four hundred warring, factious denominations. The ones who will not accept the teaching of the Bible that there is but one body, one church, will also not accept the teaching of the Bible that there is but one God, one Lord and one Spirit. For the Bible either speaks the truth in all that it teaches or else it teaches no truth at all.

Christ died to save his body, the church. Paul speaks to Ephesian elders in these words, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28. Christ gave his blood for his church, not the denominations of men. Thus, he is only going to save his church. Paul states, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." Eph.

5:25-26. Christ loves his church, he sanctifies it and he cleanses it. Christ has but one church, he died for only his church and he is going to save only his church. One still means one.

On the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, Luke tells us, the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved, Acts 2:47. Which denomination did Christ add those saints to? Why he didn't add them to any because there were none at that time. His church was the only one there was. In fact, it was 600 years later before the first human, man-made denomination was established upon the earth. It was founded in the city of Rome, by the Pope of Rome. In spite of the 3 or 4 hundred denominations that we find in the world today Christ still has but one church. And all denominations put together do not constitute his one church. All through the New Testament one reads of only one church, for that is all that Christ had then and that is all that Christ has now. Many denominations claim that they are the Lord's church but claiming it and proving it are two different things. They can not prove by the Bible that they are the Lord's church and they know that and that is one of the reasons why they no longer will debate their claim in public.

As Christ added the saved to his church in the first century, he still adds the saved to his church in the 20th century. We do not have to worry about him making a mistake. For he only has one church. As the sinners in the 1st century heard the gospel of Christ, believed the gospel and obeyed the gospel of Christ, so one must do the same in the 20th century to be saved and added to the Lord's church. God's plan of salvation is the same today as it was then.

Are you a member of the Lord's church, the one you read about in the New Testament? If not, we want to urge you to trust in Christ and obey his gospel today. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. Rom. 10:17. One must repent of one's sins. Luke 13:3. One must confess one's faith in Christ. Rom. 10:10. Then one must be immersed into Christ, unto the remission of one's past sins. Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4 and Gal. 3:27. Being born

again of water and the Spirit, John 3:5, makes one a Christian and Christ adds such to his church, Acts 2:47. One is then a member of Christ's body, the church. One is then a citizen in Christ's kingdom. Col. 1:13.

The saved of the first century never joined the church of their choice, for there was only one church. Christ added them to his church. Today we have the choice of being a member of Christ's church or being members of churches that men have founded. But let us keep in mind that salvation is found only in Christ, Acts 4:12, and in his body, the church, Eph. 5:25-27. Jesus said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up." Matt. 15:13. The denominations of men will be rooted up when Christ comes because he did not plant them, he did not die for them and he is not going to save them. The Bible teaches there is but one God, one Lord, one Spirit and one body, which is Christ's church, which is composed of all the saved. There are no saved ones outside of Christ's church, for he adds the saved to his church, Acts 2:47. Are you saved?

Daily Living With Christ

Gene A. Ellmore

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." (Lk. 9:23).

There are some very unique contrasts to be observed in this passage of scripture:

1. Jesus predicted His Cross, then, He presented His disciples cross.
2. Jesus, cross was a logical necessity (Lk. 9:22). The disciples' cross was a matter of individual choice.

3. Jesus *must* take His cross; the disciples *might* take their cross;

4. Jesus' cross was *ordered* in eternity past; the disciples' cross was optional in the present.

5. Jesus' cross was *verified* before the foundation of the world; the disciples' cross was *voluntary* in the face of the present world system.

Jesus did not ask his disciples to do anything that He Himself was not willing to do. Therefore, to deny one's self and take up the cross daily was the acid test of discipleship then, and is the acid test now.

What is involved in cross bearing? "Love not the world...follow Me."

1. Tasks that we would formerly have *turned down*, we now *take up*.
2. The money we would have *gained*, we gladly give.
3. The life we would have *held*, we willingly *yield*.

Every new day brings a new cross, a new obstacle, a new decision, hence, cross bearing involves daily decision, definite decision. Jesus began bearing His cross from the cradle in Judea, and bore it daily until his death on calvary. If we would be like Him, we would do no less.

Will the desire to *daily die* for Christ deliver dividends for man? Jesus said : "But whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24). He promises : "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (Jn. 12:26). Such a promise produces joy now as well as salvation later : Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy" (Acts 20 :24). Feeling as the Apostle Paul felt, Christians are constrained to live daily with Christ.

"Lord, I have called daily upon thee" (Psa. 88:9).

The eighty-eight psalm is one of the most sorrowful in all the Bible. Some psalms begin with sorrow and end in victory, but this one begins with distress and ends in darkness. Yet, for one whose "soul is full of troubles—a man that has no strength," he never ceases to pray daily to the God of heaven. His prayer is neither spasmodic nor doubtful of ultimate fruition. How great a sufferer!

A greater Sufferer than the Psalmist passed through a more trying situation. He, too, called daily upon his Father in Heaven. No greater suffering has ever been experienced than that of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. The agony of Christ in the Garden is a solitary one. No one was near to offer comfort, His disciples had fallen asleep; his enemies were seeking his death. Following an intense, thrice repeated prayer, he went out to meet Judas and the traitor's tormentors with a courageous, yet calm and tranquil spirit. He had found his source of strength to meet the day's crisis in prayer.

Since the daily call of the Psalmist and Christ was their victory in trying circumstances, Christians today need to recognize prayer as one of the most effective weapons against the attacks of the enemy. Prayer is our first line of defence, our strength. It is here that our wills submit to His will, from which our strength and deliverance comes. He will lead us and strengthen us in the battle against evil. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace, to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Before no other throne can the believer find consolation and good hope (2 Thess. 2:16).

Daily prayer and daily living with Christ makes possible a life of fruitfulness. Jesus said, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (Jn. 15:8). The degree of fruitfulness is here linked with the degree of man's abiding in Him and asking of Him. Am I calling daily upon the Lord?

Baptism

Shelby G. Floyd

In the later part of his life, the apostle Peter mentioned the days of Noah, and the preparation of the ark, and then he said that only eight souls were saved in the ark, but it was "by water" The water that brought about the cleansing of the earth, and the destruction of the unbelieving world, was the same water that saved Noah and his family. They believed God's word and did what he said, and were saved by the water. The salvation of Noah and his family by water was an apt figure of how baptism saves us. Peter said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 3 : 20.) Baptism saves us: and when baptism saves us, then we have an answer of a good conscience before God, realizing that our sins have been forgiven.

In the English Bible the word baptism occurs the first time in Matthew chapter three. It is used in connection with the preaching of John the Baptist. The people from Jerusalem, Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, were baptized of John in the Jordan River, confessing their sins: (Matt. 3 : 6.) The baptism of John was for the remission of sins. (Mk. 1 : 4.) It was a baptism founded upon repentance, and unto a life of repentance. (Mk. 1 : 4; Matt. 3 : 11.) Many of the Sadducees and Pharisees who came to be baptized, were told by John to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Some of them rejected the baptism of John, and in so doing, they rejected the counsel of God against themselves. (Lk. 7 : 29-30.)

In this same chapter we read of Jesus, the Son of God, leaving his home in Galilee, and coming down to Jordan to be baptized of John. When Jesus asked for baptism, John at first refused, and told him that he needed to be baptized of him. Jesus told him to make an exception, for it was becoming unto them to fulfill the righteousness of God. Whereupon, John baptised Jesus; and after

his baptism he "went up straightway out of the water." (Matt. 3 : 13-16.) John baptized "for the remission of sins," but this was an exception to that general rule. Jesus was without sin; but still he wanted to be baptized to fulfill the righteousness of God.

Some persons have tried to see in this account of the baptism of Jesus evidence of sprinkling or pouring, but they are greatly mistaken. When Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water. This within itself is evidence that Jesus was immersed or buried in his baptism. There is no way that he could have come up straightway out of the water until he had first gone down into the water. The word baptism always means immersion, and never pouring or sprinkling. There are three different words in the Hebrew, Greek and English languages for the three different acts of pouring, sprinkling and dipping. Moses, in connection with the work of the priest under the Old Testament, used these three words, and made a distinction between each one. "And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and *pour* it into the palm of his own left hand; and the priest shall *dip* his right finger in the oil that is in left hand, and shall *sprinkle* of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord." (Lev. 14 : 15-16.)

Approximately 280 years before Christ, the Hebrew Old Testament was translated in the Greek language in Alexandria, Egypt. When the words in Lev. 14 : 15-16, were translated, *pour* was represented by the word *keo*, *dip* by the word *baptidzo* and *sprinkle* by the word *rantidzo*. When baptism is mentioned in the New Testament the word *baptidzo* is used, and never the words that mean to sprinkle or pour. Therefore, the Holy Spirit had in mind the action of dipping, when He commanded baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

There is a sprinkling mentioned in the New Testament, but it is the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The Hebrew writer said, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10 : 22.) That which is to be sprinkled is the heart; and it is to be sprinkled from an evil conscience, by the blood of Jesus Christ. (Heb. 9 : 13-14.) The sprinkling of the blood of Christ then refers

to the remission of sins. For every person must of necessity have an evil conscience until his sins have been forgiven. The worshipers under the Old Testament law of Moses had an evil conscience, because the blood of bulls and goats could not take away their sins. (Heb. 10 : 1-4.) But a person does not have a good conscience until after he has been baptized in water—until his body has been “washed with pure water.”

There is no mention in the New Testament of baptism being used in connection with sprinkling or pouring. The first mention of pouring for baptism is found in an uninspired word of the second century called, *The Didache*. The author is unknown; and since it is uninspired, it does not carry the authority of God with it. About 251 to 253 A.D., a man by the name of Novatian, had water poured all over him in his bed. This was not accepted as genuine baptism during that time. Novatian was not allowed to be an officer in the church because his baptism was questionable. This is definite proof that as late as the middle of the third century, immersion was still the only accepted act for baptism. But, according to the teaching of the New Testament, baptism is by immersion.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, and said, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6 : 3-4.) Baptism then is a burial, and is a likeness of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If a person has not been buried with Christ, he has not been baptized.

“I’LL GET EVEN WITH YOU, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

Tom McLemore

There are several things which human beings are inclined to do in certain situations. One of these is what the Bible often calls “return-

ing evil for evil." Why is it that the automatic reaction to someone who does hurt to us is to "get even?" I don't understand why we are this way, but one fact is clear God wants us to learn to practice just the opposite.

Peter put it like this: "To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead..." (1 Pet. 3 : 8, 9.) In the first place, Peter by inspiration stressed the importance of the right type of attitude to be had between members of the Lord's body. If all members of God's family were truly harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, and humble, Peter could have stopped here. But we often let ourselves slip and do mistreat and insult one another. Therefore, we must accept the fact that others may slip and mistreat us and determine that we are going to react in the way the Bible directs.

Paul said, "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone." (Rom. 12 : 17.) Again, "See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek that which is good, for one another and for all men." Our Master put it in this way: "...love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.....and just as you want men to treat you, treat them in the same way." (Lk. 6 : 27-29, 31.) Does this seem unreasonable? Contrary to natural inclination? Why not look at it this way: Suppose God had inclinations like we have. Every sin which man commits is against God.

All have sinned, Rom. 3 : 23. What if our God rendered evil for evil...What if he completely obliterated mankind instead of by grace offering for man a way of redemption? Where would we be then? Thus, when we do in such circumstances what the Bible had instructed that we do, we are practicing God's way in his dealing with us: rendering love and mercy—good for evil and rebellion.

Hence, we see that our attitude must not be characterized by revenge—"getting even", etc. But even more than that are we to

realize: Peter added, "But giving a blessing instead." Paul continued, "But seek that which is good for one another and for all men." Jesus went further, saying, "give him your shirt, too." Perhaps the most memorable expression of this idea is Paul's statement: "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing, you will heap burning coals upon his head... Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12: 20, 21.) In a sense, then, the best way to "get even" is to be nice and do good to him... heap those burning coals over his head. It may hurt his feelings, but you and he both will be better as the result of it. Nothing good has ever come from a grudge or seeking of revenge among brethren.

Which Hunger And Thirst

Brodie Crouch

Jesus said, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" Matt. 5:6. What cook has not at some time watched a really hungry person enthusiastically devouring her cooking? What person who has been truly thirsty does not know the meaning of the word "thirst"? Once after spending most of a night fighting a forest fire, I had the best opportunity of my entire life to learn what thirst really is. That person who is truly hungry and thirsty will do everything within his power to obtain the food and water he must have.

But Jesus says that we should desire righteousness, to do those things pleasing to God, to be filled with the truth of his word as a hungry person desires food and as the one who is thirsty craves for water. How few of those who profess to be Christians are really hungering and thirsting for the knowledge, the word and the will of God.

The hungry man loses no opportunity to secure food. He takes the food that is available and is grateful for that. He does not

complain that something else would be better. When people make the same effort to learn and obey God's word that the hungry man does to obtain food, God promises that we shall be filled. The reason more people do not find, study and obey the commands of God is they simply do not have a strong enough desire to do so. And when one does not have a desire to study and learn God's will, it is folly to say that one is a child of God. These words of Jesus should make us reexamine ourselves to see whether we really do love God and his word, whether we are indeed in the faith.

With the psalmist let us say: Blessed are they that are perfect in the way, who walk in the law of Jehovah. Blessed are they which keep his testimonies, that seek him with the whole heart. Yea, they do no unrighteousness; they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us thy precepts, that we should observe them diligently. Oh, that my ways were established to observe thy statutes. Then shall I not be put to shame, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. I will give thanks unto thee with uprightness of heart, when I learn thy righteous judgments. I will observe thy statutes; Oh, forsake me not utterly. Psa. 119:1-8.

Bible Vistas

Author Unknown

The Bible is not only many books, it is a literature. History, poetry, prophecy, philosophy, theology, oratory, humor, sarcasm, irony, music, drama, tragedy, strategy, love tales, war tales, travelogues, laws, jurisprudence, songs, sermons, warning, prayers, all are here. Was there ever such a literature?

The Bible begins with a garden and ends with a city. It starts with a morning followed by a night and ends with a day that shall know no right. It breaks the silence with: "In the beginning God," and it hushes the universe to sleep with: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." It finds man at the shut gates

of the lost Eden, and leaves him before the open door at the top of the road. It begins with: "Thou art cursed," and it ends with: "Whosoever will may come." On its first page is condemnation. On its last page is invitation. At the shut gate stands an angel with drawn sword, and at the open door the Spirit and the bride wait to welcome all who would enter the door which no man can shut.

The Bible breaks at dawn with God's voice saying: "Let there be light." It sets at dusk with God's truth proclaiming: "Let there be life." Between the two speak all voices that can breathe a prayer, plead a need, confess a sin, utter a warning, sob a sorrow, or sigh a penitent's tear. Between the two are the tragedies of hate, the follies of fear, the stain and shame of sin, the paralysis of doubt, the torment of despair, and the choke of the fog that ends it all. Between the two are the stories of nations, the acclaim of heroes, the fall of empires, the rise of kingdoms, the decline of dynasties, the tramp of armies, the crack and crash of civilizations, and the coming of him who is "the bright and morning star."

Accepting People Where They Are

Maxie B. Boren

It is not always easy to accept people where they are, and as they are. Too often we expect new born babes in the family (i.e., the church) to be fully mature, spiritually, almost overnight." But it just doesn't happen that way—

True, some folks grow and develop in the Lord faster than others. And some, on the other hand, seem to "take forever" to mature as Christians. But most people seem to "come along" at what we might call a "normal pace."

We must understand that people are different. Many variables are involved wherever people are concerned. There will always be different degrees of knowledge, different plateaus of understanding,

varying insights, diversified backgrounds, contrasting economic circumstances, and so forth.

The faithful servant of the Lord must learn to love others, and work with them as best possible, regardless of "where" they are in the process of spiritual development. Each one must remember, "I too am growing and developing; and as I need patience and understanding from others,, I must also be willing to extend the same to others."

The Bible says, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." *II Peter 3 : 18. It teaches us "to grow up in all things into him, who is the head; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."* *Ephesians 4 : 15-16.*

So let us accept each other as we are, and work with one another, in love, and help each other to gain more knowledge and understanding of Christ's will, that we might all together become stronger Christians.

Are You Lost In The Crowd ?

Paul Epps

One of the saddest scenes in the Lord's church is to look upon a person who is lost in the crowd. This person assumes no responsibility in the work of the church. He or she is depending upon the other members to see that the church stays alive and grows. There is a reason why one is lost in the crowd. It may be discouragement, family problems, financial problems, or one of several other things, and we need to be understanding.

One of the greatest needs in the church is to assist the ordinary

member to develop himself or herself for the cause of Christ. This means that we must help them to rise above their weaknesses, their discouragements, their problems, and to place themselves at the feet of Jesus, as it were, and to say in the words of the song, "Have thine own way, Lord, Have thine own way! Thou Art the Potter; I am the clay; Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still." With this attitude, one will not be lost in the crowd, but will find his or her place in the work of the Lord, rising above the petty and trivial affairs of this life.

To keep from being lost in the crowd, *one must realize the meaning of individual responsibility.* Christianity is an individual religion. Saving ourselves is the basic principle of the Christian religion. The apostle Peter told the Jews on the day of Pentecost, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." (Acts 2 : 40). After all is said and done, one must save himself. The apostle Paul gave this information to the Philippian brethren when he wrote, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2 : 12).

Christ does not expect groups, states, and nations to follow Him, because He knew that families, friends, and neighbours would be divided over Him and His teaching. But He does expect individuals to follow Him. I must follow Him; you must follow Him. On one occasion Christ discussed with Peter his (Peter's) martyrdom. Peter looked at John and said, "Lord, what shall this man do"? Christ taught Peter a lesson on individual responsibility when He said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" (John 21 : 22—NAS). Christ expected Peter to be faithful, regardless of what John did.

If you are lost in the crowd at the present time, you can remove yourself from this irresponsible condition by repenting of your neglect and begin to "work out your salvation" with the word of God supporting you. God loves you!

Know The Truth

Marvin Rainey

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF GOD'S WORD? Many do not

take time to think anything about the Bible. Among those who do think there is much controversy. It is unfortunate that so much controversy exists regarding the New Testament and the teaching of Christ. The message of the New Testament books is really not Difficult or hard to understand. It is possible to miss the simple message that Christ gives by trying to make the New Testament hard to understand. Have you made yourself believe that you cannot understand the New Testament?

The plain message of the New Testament is that God loves man and that He loves him so much that He gave His only Son to die for the whole world. Read John 3:16. Salvation through Jesus Christ is a matter of trust and obedience. God will judge man according to His word and by his heart and life. The New Testament is not complicated. We should not look for difficult and hard-to-understand theories and doctrines. The simple message of the Testament is that the gospel of Christ is God's power to save. Jesus commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:16). Jesus commanded two kinds of teaching when He commissioned the apostles (Mt. 28:18-20). They were to first tell the world how to obey the gospel and then teach those who were baptized how to live the Christian life. The apostles were to tell the new born babes in Christ that God's grace demands a change in their lives. Here is where too many fail. They fail to live a life in harmony with the message of the New Testament.

Some are confused when studying the New Testament because they do not understand that the gospel of Christ is a two-part message. They do not understand that one part is telling us what to do to obey the gospel and the other part is telling us how to live the Christian life. In failing to understand the two-part message it is easy to apply a passage that is intended for one who has already obeyed the gospel and apply it to one who has never obeyed. An example of this mistake is to apply the teaching in Acts 8:22 to one who has never obeyed the gospel. In Acts 8:22 Simon was told to "repent and pray." We must realize that Simon was a Christian, therefore this verse would never apply to one who has never obeyed the gospel. Study your Bible. The Bible is the Word of God. Pure and simple.

GOD IS DEPENDING ON YOU

S.D. Gordon, in his book "Prayer Changes Things", tells a story we cannot permit to die. He pictures an "imaginary conversation between Christ and the angel Gabriel following the Ascension. Gabriel asks the Lord what plans He has made to let the world know that He has lived, died, and risen from the dead. The Master replies, "I told Peter and James and John and some others down on the earth to make it the business of their lives to tell others. And the others are to tell others and those others yet others, and still others beyond, till the last man in the farthest reach has learned the story and has been taught, thrilled and thrilled by the power of it." But Gabriel thinks he sees a weak point in the Master's arrangement, and voices his opinion as follows: "Yes, Master, but suppose that after a while Peter forgets. Suppose that John loses his enthusiasm, and simply does not tell others. Suppose their successors down there in the twentieth century get too busy with other things, some of them good things—church things may be. Suppose they get so busy that they do not tell the others? What then?" In reply came the quiet voice of Jesus with thrilling confidence "Gabriel, I have made no other plans. I am counting on them." **YES HE IS COUNTING ON US! BEYOND ALL POSSIBILITY OF EXPLAINING IN WORDS MUST BE HIS CONFIDENCE IN US!"**

What Is The Chief End Of Man ?

W. A. Holley

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every good work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Eccles. 12:13, 14.)

Thus we have Solomon's summation of life. Man's purpose is not merely to indulge the flesh, for man is much more than flesh.

Being a twofold creation, composed of body and spirit, man's spirit is so much more than the body. (Matt. 10:28; 16:28; Eccles. 12:6, 7.) Thus the real object of man's life cannot be found solely in the physical and material aspects of his accomplishments. One is not wrong in thinking of things material, but one is fundamentally wrong in thinking that material things are the only things. Some seem to think that if they provide food, clothing, shelter, and secular education for themselves and for their loved ones, they have achieved their maximum purpose in life. But what folly! Countless millions have discovered that these things cannot really satisfy the soul! Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15.) A truer statement was never made! However attractive may seem the gods of this world (art, science and philosophy), such can never meet the needs of the human heart. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," said Jesus. (Matt. 4:4.) Dear readers, there is a life which follows this life, and the human heart in which God has set eternity, can never be truly satisfied with things of time and sense. After having tried and tested to the fullest extent the materialistic approach to life problems, Solomon's verdict was: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." (Eccles. 1:14.)

But what is the chief end of man? We believe that man's duty is one, yet manifold. We shall attempt in the following remarks to set forth the real purpose for man's existence in this world.

1. Man's end or object in life is to honor and glorify God, his creator. Man was created in the image of his creator. (Gen. 1:27.) Because of his intellectual powers, man is much more than an animal. (Psalm 8:1-8). Verily, man is the "offspring of God." (Acts 17:29.) When Jesus was asked about man's first duty, he replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." (Matt. 22:34-40). "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." wrote Paul.

Moreover, man owes an enormous debt of gratitude to many

for countless blessings which he was powerless to provide for himself. A normal sense of responsibility demands that this debt be paid. For example, man should be grateful to God who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things...for in him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:25, 28). Furthermore, man is a debtor to Jesus for salvation from sin: "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:2; John 3:16, 17; Heb. 2:9.) To the apostles and to other early Christians modern man is indebted for their "work of faith and labour of love," whose righteous examples contribute so much to his moral and spiritual progress. (Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 1:1, 2; 2:1-4.) And, does not man owe a debt of gratitude to his parents who loved him and cared for him when he was unable to care for himself? (Prov. 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Eph. 6:4.) The government is entitled to man's gratitude for its protection and stability which it has provided. (Rom. 13:1-7.) Surely, man is duty-bound to pay back that debt of gratitude which he owes to those gospel preachers and teachers, past and present, who have contributed so much to the loftiness of his moral, spiritual and intellectual attainments. (Rom. 1:14-17; 2 Tim. 2:2.) Verily, ingratitude disfigures man's countenance; but gratitude is that mark of beauty that gives angelic loveliness to his character.

2. Man must endeavor to fill his mind with the choicest and finest thoughts and ideals of earth. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Minds filled with corruption and obscenity partake of the rudiments of the world. A contaminated spring, however beautiful, cannot give pure water. Daily Bible reading is a must for that man who desires to see himself and society improve. (Acts 17:11; 1 Tim. 4:13.) In addition to the Bible, every home should contain good books and these books should be studied. A word of warning is in order: it is possible for one to get together finely bound copies of all the great literature, and still be intellectually poor. It is not how many books one may possess, but how many one has digested that enriches one's life. America is an enormously wealthy nation, but in a recent survey, the Book Manufacturing Institute said that twenty-seven per cent of all American homes have less than fifty books in them, and that thirty-five per cent do

not even have a book case. These figures shocked me. How do the homes of members of the church of Christ compare with these figures? Man is unable to meet his obligation to God and his fellow creatures unless he fills his mind with the wisdom of the ages!

3. Man's purpose should be to exert the greatest possible influence for good, not only for his own benefit but also for the benefit of others. God's ordained mission for man is that he make his influence felt in the earth. At the beginning God said: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." (Gen: 1:28.) Someone has said: "Man has been placed in the world in order that he may develop and expand his talents and capacities to their fullest extent. If he is to do so, he will need four things—knowledge, art, technical skill, morality, and religion; for truth must be known, beauty fashioned, good practiced, and God feared and loved." There is no better way to state man's chief end than to quote Holy Writ: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and do walk humbly with thy God." (Mic. 6:8.) Isaiah wrote: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isa. 1:16, 17.)

4. Man must prepare to meet God, for he cannot long remain in this world. (Amos 4:12; Rom. 14:12.) Death is certain and the judgment is sure. (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10, 11.) There is sin, "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God," and sin, demands punishment, unless some means by which the justice of God is satisfied can be found. (Rom. 3:23; 6:23.) The law of God must be honored and its majesty upheld. This necessitated the death of Christ upon the cross for our transgressions. (Rom. 3:23-27.) Jesus died upon the cross, thus suffering in our behalf, the penalties of the violated law. Only those who through an obedient faith escape everlasting punishment and enter into everlasting life. (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8, 9; 1 Pet. 4:17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.) Many conflicting voices call, but the voice of God can be heard and distinguished, if one is set on knowing the truth. (John 7:17; 8:32.)

Man has a soul to be either saved or lost. It is worth ten thousands worlds like this one. (Matt. 10:28; 16:26; John 5:28, 29.) Will you not begin now to prepare for life eternal? Tomorrow may be too late.

ALL

Fred E. Dennis

There are many words in the Scriptures that make an interesting and profitable study. The word "all" is such a study. The first quotation we want to introduce is Rom. 3:23. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." How true! But thanks be to God we have a propitiation for our sins, even Jesus Christ the righteous one. He had no sins but he took our sins and bore them upon the old rugged cross. How thankful we ought to be to God for his unspeakable gift!

All will die, That day is fast coming for each of us. Every time the watch ticks someone dies. It ticks 60 times a minute! There are 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day. Humanity is passing off the stage of action at the tremendous rate of multiple thousands a day. That would make one large city. That is how fast we are leaving this world. Friend, the watch will tick for you and me before long. Are we ready for that "tick"? It will be too late to get ready when the fever of death is upon your brow. Jesus said to be ready. Hear him: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Mtt. 24:44.) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22.) Just two men have escaped death. You will not escape unless the Lord comes before to go hence.

But thanks be to God, we ALL shall be raised from the dead. The blessed Christ gives us this assurance. Hear him: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that

have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29). You will note that the Lord said that the 'hour'. is coming when ALL shall be raised. He did not say "hours." He did not put an "s" on the word "hour." No, there will not be two resurrections. The righteous and the wicked are going to hear the voice of God and come forth.

Will that not be a great day when all the graves are opened? Our loved ones and friends and brethren and ALL shall come forth from the tomb. Some will be raised to everlasting life and some to everlasting damnation. Great day! Happy day! Sad day!

We might wish to escape the judgment bar of God, but we shall be there. There is no escape. "For we MUST ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10.) Everything will come out at the judgment. There will be nothing covered there. "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." (Matt. 10:26.) Here we may be able to cover some of our sins from the eyes of the people, but there all will be uncovered. "For we shall ALL stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Rom. 14:10.)

But ALL can be saved. No, not all will be saved, but ALL can be. The Lord wants the gospel preached to every creature in every age. Just before he was taken up he said "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16.) This is God's plan to save us from our sins. This is God's way of making Christians. This is God's way of induction into the kingdom of Christ. He has no other way. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19.)

Jesus wants all to be saved. He invites all to come to him. (Matt. 11:28-30). He is able to save all that come unto God by him. (Heb. 7:25.) He has tasted death for every man. (Heb. 2:9.)

When ALL walk in the light of God's eternal truth, ALL will be in fellowship. The fellowship is brought about by all walking in the light. There is no use of our talking about being in fellowship with anyone who is not willing to be guided by the word of God.

Not all members of the church will be eternally saved in heaven. We must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. We must live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:11-13.)

There are no spiritual blessings out of Christ. All spiritual blessing are in Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1:3.). Too many are wanting to claim spiritual blessing who are not in Christ. We are not in Christ until we have been baptized into him. (Romans 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:25-27.)

In giving the great commission to his apostles, the Lord said that the ones who are disciples are to be taught to observe all things that he had commanded. (Matt. 28:18-20.) Too many of the members of the church are not interested in observing ALL that the Lord commanded. We should peruse the Bible daily, looking for and learning the ALL things that have been commanded us of God.

When we sin we should repent. God commands this of all men. It is one of the hardest things in the world to get men to do, even those who are members of the church. We should not sin willfully, but the very best of Christians are overtaken in sin. They think things at the times they should not think. They say things they should not say. They do things they should not do. They may even go places they should not go. Instead of trying to justify ourselves in any sinful practice, we should forsake it and repent of the sin. It will take this to gain us that home of the soul. May the good Lord help us ALL to observe ALL He has commanded,

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