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## EDITORIAL



### "I Have My Own Church"

A few days ago I invited a man to attend our meetings and he said, "I have my own church." He meant by that, that he was a member of some denominational church and that he attended their meetings. I have heard that statement many times. It usually suggests that such a person is satisfied with what he has, that he has closed his mind to further study, and that he is not interested and therefore he doesn't want to be bothered. This is sad indeed.

I want to use this statement to make some observations:

1. Most people have the wrong concept of the church. They think of it only in the sense of a denomination or a number of denominations. They may further define it as Protestant or Catholic. This has become so popular that it is very difficult for the average person to think of the church in any other way, especially in the biblical sense. If you go to the Bible, however, you have an entirely different picture set forth of the church. There were many congregations, but one church. Speaking of the diffe-

rent congregations over the country, Paul in writing the Roman brethren, said, "The churches of Christ salute you." (Romans 16:16). At the same time, all of these congregations together formed the church. It was the one Christ said he would build (Matthew 16:18), and of course he did build it or establish it as recorded in Acts 2. All of these congregations, representing many places, were all one. That is, they were united; there was unity. (John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:1-6). If there was division in a congregation, as in the case of the one at Corinth, then the division was condemned. Paul wrote them, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10). With that in mind, then what about all of the division today, representing the many denominations? Has the Lord changed his mind about division? Did he oppose it in his day only to accept it in our day? I think when we understand what the Bible says about the church, and we put forth an effort to obey the Lord and to be the church we read about in the scriptures, then we will be members of that church and not members of some denominational church. If enough would do that then denominational churches would cease to exist. They do not belong to the Lord anyway, and when one acknowledges this then surely he would not want to be a part of such.

2. A denominational church is a man-made church. It is an imitation of the original, of the Lord's church. It is counterfeit or bogus. It is not the original. It is not the genuine, one true church. A denominational church represents only a part of the whole. It is said that all of the denominations make up the Lord's church. That is false since all of the denominations had their origin with man. Christ did not promise to build these churches and neither did he build them. One and all of them therefore came from man. They are classified in the scriptures as sects, factions, heresies, and divisions. The curse of the Lord is upon them. They stand condemned. John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." (2 John 9). Paul said to his Roman brethren, "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). Paul said to the Colossian brethren, "Wherefore if ye be dead from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (Colossians 2: 22, 23). We could go on and on with scripture references that condemn the teachings of men, and that which it produces, but why would anyone want to be a member of a denominational church when he can be a member of the church of Christ, the one and only church that we may read about in the Bible?

3. Denominational people always refer to their particular denomination as being their church. They express personal ownership. This within itself tells us that something is wrong. If it belongs to them, or some man, then that means that it does not belong to the Lord. But concerning Christ's church, he said he would build it. (Matthew 16:18). He claimed personal ownership. That means that if it belongs to him then it does not belong to me, you, or anyone else. He not only promised to build it, but he kept that promise as recorded in Acts 2 and throughout the rest of the New Testament. But what made it his? Paul said that Christ died for the church. In comparing husbands and wives and Christ and his church, he said, "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25). What does it mean when it says that Christ gave himself for the church? It means that he died for it? And he died for it because he loved it. Would Christ have died for something that was not important? Would he die for the church and then be pleased for one to reject that church in favor of some denominational church? My friend, who died for your church? Christ didn't, and as far as I know the founders of the different denominational churches did not die for theirs. But Christ loved his church and gave himself for it. How much do you love that church? Evidently you don't love it or you would not be satisfied with some man-made church. Now you may refer to that church as being your church, but you cannot say that Christ's church is your church.

Even if you were a member of the church of Christ it would not belong to you. Christ is the sole owner. That is, he died for it, and in so doing he purchased it with his blood. Paul, in speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28). A thing is of importance according to its purchase price. If you don't pay much for something then you are not bothered all that much even if you lose it. But if you pay a high price for something then that means that it is very important to you and you would get very upset if you lost it or if it got destroyed. Christ thought enough of the church to give his own blood for it. That means, he put a great deal of value on it. Again, Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:20). But instead of someone buying you or purchasing you to make you their own, you say that your church belongs to you. There is something wrong somewhere, and I think you can see what is wrong. There is a big difference in the Lord's church and your denominational church. But again, the church belongs to Christ because he is its saviour (Ephesians 5:23), he is its head (Colossians 1:18), and to denote further ownership, it wears his name, that is, both the church and its members. (Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). If we had more space we could enlarge on these last points, but I ask you to consider them carefully.

There are several other thoughts that come to my mind when I think about people talking about their church. One is, that such people seem to take pride in the fact that they have their own church. But again, when one considers the origin of the denominations, why they exist, their teaching, and their competitiveness with the Lord's church, then it is a false pride, pride that is based on ignorance and deceptiveness. Actually, to become a member of a denominational church then one is at the same time rejecting Christ and his church. Certainly that is nothing to be proud about. Also, when one boasts that he has his own church then he is letting it be know that he is satisfied, that he doesn't want to be bothered, and that means that he is not interested in further study.

But how can one ever learn the truth with that attitude? Sometimes, one may think he has the truth when he does not. That is why we must ever keep an open mind and to be willing to study the scriptures. If we have the truth, it will not hurt anything to continue to study it, and as a matter of fact, we should and must. But if we don't have the truth then through a study of it, if we love the truth and desire to know it, then we may learn God's will and obey it that we may be saved and be a member of the church that we can read about in the Bible.

I would like to invite you to consider these things seriously and I pray that one day that you can say, "I am a member of the church of Christ."



*associate  
editorial*

## "The Church Of Christ Does Not Believe In The Old Testament"

The church of Christ have often been accused of not believing the Old Testament. There are some who believe that we can today follow certain commands of the Old Testament, such as giving of tithe, tenth part of ones income. The ten commandments of the Old Testament are used in most churches in worship services. Many would try to justify the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship today from the Old Testament. The church of Christ, however, teach that today we are living under the New Testament of Christ, and therefore we cannot do any thing today which was commanded under the Old Testament law, we cannot worship by the Old Testament today. On the other hand, the church of Christ believes that the Old Testament

is the word of God just as much as the New Testament is the word of God. The Bible consists of two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament, and all of the Bible, sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, is the word of God. Before the New Testament came, the Old Testament existed. But when its purpose was fulfilled it was taken away by God himself and in its place he gave us his New Testament. In the book of Hebrews in the New Testament, we read, "In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." And, "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." (Hebrews 8:13; 10:9).

The word testament means a will or a covenant. Thus, the Old Testament was the old will of God, and the New Testament is the new will of God. Suppose if I write a will that after my death all my possessions should be given to one of my children. But then after some time I destroy that will and write another, in which I state that all my possessions should be equally divided among all my children. Now which of my will would be considered valid? Of course, the new one. The old one was also mine, but it was cancelled, because I made another. The same is true of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Now, consider the following:

The Old Testament law was given to Israel or the children of Israel. Exodus 19:1-6 states: "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice, indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine; And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." At Exodus 20: 1, 2, where we have the account of the ten commandments, we read, "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Exodus 34:27, 28, says, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." And then in Deuteronomy 5:1-6 we read this account: "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God, made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." Thus we see, the Old Testament, the first covenant God made with the children of Israel, whom He brought out of the land of Egypt from the bondage.

The Old Testament law was given "till the seed (Christ) should come", it was a schoolmaster. Hear what the Apostle Paul said in his epistle to the Galatians, who were trying to follow the law of Moses, the Old Testament. He said, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, he that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that

we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." And then the Apostle asks the question: "Wherefore then serveth the law?" And he continues, "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:10-29). In the same epistle the Apostle said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." (Galatians 5:4). We cannot be justified or saved by the law or by following the Old Testament law. The Old Testament has served its purpose. It was a schoolmaster to them who were under the law. It was given to bring people unto Christ, so that we might all be saved by faith in Christ and therefore the Apostle said, "But after that faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

Therefore God took it, the Old Testament, away, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Colossians 2:14). And, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." (Ephesians 2:15). At Romans 6:15 the Apostle declares that we are not under the law. Romans 7:4 says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." And then in verse 6 we read, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Read also 2 Corinthians 3:6-17.

According to Hebrews 9:15-17 the New Testament of Christ became effective after his death on the cross. Today we are living under the New Testament of Christ. When we obey the commands of Christ then he saves us, and in his New Testament he has told us on what day we should worship him, how we should worship and serve him. At 2 Timothy 2:15 we read, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." A lack of Bible study has resulted in many errors and wrong conceptions among the believers of Christ. To be in the right path we must rightly divide the word of God, and therefore we must study the Bible daily. Finally, even though today we are not under the Old Testament law, that is, we cannot follow the commandments written therein, but the Old Testament still plays a very important roll in our Christian life. The Apostle Paul in Romans 15:4 says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." The things written in the Old Testament are today for our learning or example. Under that law those who disobeyed God's commandments were punished by Him, and those who were faithful to God were rewarded and blessed by Him. In the same way if we will follow his New Testament today then he will bless us, but if we reject his will for us today then we will be punished by Him. (John 12:48). In the last book of the New Testament we read, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of

this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 1:3; 22:18, 19).

## Why People Are Unhappy

BEN S. FLATT

Are you happy? Really happy? Think about it! If someone smiled at you, would you smile back. If asked, "Are you happy?" you would say, "Yes!" But are you?

We should be interested in eternal life (Mark 10:30), but we also need the happy, abundant life now. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) said, "Blessed is the man...blessed is the man..." He was saying, "Happy is the man who follows the right way." Some seem to think that a Christian must be sad, but he should be the happiest person in the world. Why do so many, even those who claim to be Christians, commit suicide? Why are people depressed and unhappy?

Christ gave his life for our salvation; he made it possible for us to be saved; he wants to be a personal saviour; yet, too many religious people are unhappy. Why?

### LOOKING AT LIFE FROM THE WRONG VANTAGE POINT

Seeing the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia from the Skyline Drive gives a better perspective of its beauty than looking at the valley from a point down in it. Life is better understood by trying

to look at its entire purpose instead of getting bogged down with just what is happening today.

God sees each of us from the vantage point of our being ready to meet him. We need to back off and see each day as a part of the whole. Suffering, persecutions, and failures can then be more easily accepted. (Romans 8:28).

Most of us have the wrong sense of values. What makes a person rich? What constitutes true happiness? One man requested that he be buried in his gold Cadillac, with the air conditioner running. As he was lowered into the huge grave, the remark was overheard. "Man, isn't that living!"

How wrong one can be about the needs of life. A house as big as the neighbour's, the newest car in the community, land to will our children, or a large bank account will not bring happiness. (2 Corinthians 4:18). Finding peace in a Christian home and the satisfaction of doing good for others will.

Far too many are "gadget oriented," being tied to material things and earthly matters. Would you be willing to go to heaven today if you could? If not, you may be at the wrong vantage point. (Matthew 6:19-21).

### VACUUM CREATED

Unhappiness is caused for some by a vacuum, which is created by pushing out the bad in life and failing to fill it with good. We must give up anything which conflicts with righteousness. Certainly there can be no compromise with sin. Impure speech, immodesty, immorality, and all sins must be avoided, and Christians will surely take a stand against these. What happens, however, is that some give up the bad and never fill life with good works. Such people have just enough religion to be miserable.

The First Psalm describes true happiness. The happy man will avoid the "counsel of the ungodly, the way of sinners, and the seat of the scornful," but he will also "be like the tree planted by

the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit."

To be a Christian, ungodliness and worldly lusts must be denied: however, it is important to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:12).

We must "lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us," but we must also "run with patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1).

The person who gives up the bad and fills his life with the good will have happiness. He won't miss what he lays aside because his life is made full in service and good works. The vacuum will be filled, and he can be happy.

## WORKING OUT OWN STANDARDS

Insecurity and unhappiness exist because people are trying to work out some personal standard of right and wrong rather than except what God has already determined. Unwarranted time and effort are used, and one worries about whether or not he is right. We just need to be glad that God has spoken and accept Him at His word.

It would be difficult to preach if we had to use our own judgment for right and wrong. Confusion would exist when one tried to remember just what he said the last time on the same subject. Using the Bible as the complete guide removes any problem, for it teaches the same thing today that it did yesterday.

Some young people are miserable because their parents don't care enough to set reasonable restrictions. "Can I do this or go there?" the young man asks. "No, it's not best for you," Dad replies. The young person then says, "I didn't think I should; I just wanted you to tell me I shouldn't."

God has given us instruction about salvation, worship, service, in fact, every phase of the Christian standard is revealed. Accepting his word will overcome any worry about what standard

is right.

A man had two mules. He wanted a way to tell which was which. He cut the tail off one, and that worked for a time, but the tail grew back. He then trimmed the mane of one, but the mane grew out again. After much deliberation, he finally decided that the WHITE mule was two inches shorter than the BLACK mule. He had his standard all the time; he just did not use it.

### TEMPORARY EXPERIENCES

Many religious people are unhappy because they are depending on some temporary emotional experience in place of a permanent relationship with Christ. This attitude has been prevalent in the drug culture of our country. Someone wants a "trip" or a "high"; he gets the drugs and has that emotional high experience. Everything seems fine for that moment, but the drug wears off, and the results are worse than before the experience.

It is possible for one to get so worked up in religious emotions that a spiritual "high" seems present, only to find a short time later the low valley of reality. This approach can bring extreme unhappiness. Jesus said, "Take up your cross DAILY." (Luke 9:23).

## Churches And Cancer

W.T. Hamilton

A healthy body is composed of healthy cells which function according to the directions given by the head. If something goes wrong, and the cells begin to multiply without regard for their purpose and function in the body, something radical and immediate must be done or the malignancy will eat away at the general health of the body bringing a long, slow, torturous death. Without early and complete treatment, terminal cancer is inevitable.

Paul spoke of the church as the body of Christ (Romans 12:4, 5). He described her work as the work of a human body (I Corinthians 12:12-27). Some churches have a malignancy.

Any part of the body which does not contribute to the general health of the body is malfunctioning. When a little group of members get together to form a "cell group" (or prayer group or encounter group) it can be good ONLY IF it is done to edify one another, to encourage each other to support the elders and the work of the church, and to be a part of the team — to contribute to the health of the body.

If the "cell" is meeting to criticize the church, complain about its work, and to gig the elders and preachers, the cancer is beginning to take hold. Malignant cells grow fast and wild. Snide remarks and picky criticisms soon run into subversive activities of various kinds. When the church becomes the object of the critics darts, when it is held in contempt by those who claim to be its friends, when it is undermined by its own members, it is time for radical surgery.

If these things are ignored, the papers will soon report: "After a long illness..."

## Perversion Of The Gospel

G.F. Raines

Paul said to the Galatians: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8).

Many people "will not endure sound doctrine" and have

foolishly turned "away their ears from the truth unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

Although the truth in the pulpits of Christendom has always been scarce, the supply has always exceeded the demand!

The Bible says that we must proclaim "all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) for the reason that God has decreed that man shall live spiritually "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God". (Matt. 4:4).

Half-truths are as deadly and abominable as naked lies. Some kinds of rat poison are ninety-eight per cent wheat, but the mixture kills as surely as the poison alone. A mixture of seven ounces of wholesome food and one ounce of arsenic will kill as surely as the ounce of arsenic alone.

"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." (Prov. 23:23).

## What Advice Would You Give ?

When someone has just become a Christian and just started out in the Christian life, what advice would you give that person about Bible classes? Would you say: "Now this church has Bible classes every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, but they aren't really important. Yes, I know the preacher stresses them, but I don't pay much attention to what he says." Or, would you say to your ten year old daughter (or son), "Honey, I know you would like to go to your Bible class this morning or tonight, but I want to read the paper, and those classes aren't too good." No you wouldn't think of giving that kind of advice. But wait! Did it ever occur to you that some of you are giving that kind of advice by your neglect of Bible classes? You see, "actions do speak louder than words."

Please consider what your actions are saying to new converts,

to other members and to your own family.

## Christ In You

How can you lead to Christ your boy  
Unless Christ's method you employ?  
There's just one thing that you can do  
It's let that boy see Christ in you.

Have you a husband fond and true?  
A wife who's blind to all but you?  
If each would win the other one  
That life must speak of God's dear Son.

There is but one successful plan  
By which to win a fellowman.  
Have you a neighbour old or new?  
Just let that man see Christ in you.

The church that hopes to win the lost  
Must pay the one unchanging cost;  
She must compel the world to see  
In her the Christ of Calvary.

## Does Faith Always Save ?

**Delton Haun**

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."*  
(Acts 16:31).

**What is Faith?**

a. It is believe, trust in, rely upon. In Hebrews 11:6 the words

faith and believe are used to express the same idea, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"

- b. Faith and believe are the noun and verb forms of the same Greek word, *pistis* and *pisteuo*. To have faith is to believe; to believe is to have faith. They are similar to the words see and sight. To have sight is to see; to see is to have sight.
- c. To have faith (to believe) is to trust. Our word believe is a synonym for the word faith.

### We Are Saved by Faith

- a. "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God.*" (Eph. 2:8).
- b. "Therefore being justified by faith." (Rom. 5:1a).

### There Are Degrees of Faith

- a. Little faith. (Matt. 6:30).
- b. Great faith. (Matt. 8:10; 15:28).
- c. Strong faith. (Rom. 4:20).
- d. Dead faith. (Jas. 2:20).
- e. Faith may be increased (Lk. 17:5).

### Some Had a Faith That Did Not Save

- a. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him." (John 12:42a).
- b. "The devils also believe, and tremble." (Jas. 2:19)
- c. "Faith without works is dead." (Jas. 2:26).

### How Is it Possible Faith Doesn't Always Save?

- a. There is a living faith and a dead faith, both a saving faith

and a non-saving faith. A faith that obeys is a saving faith. A faith that does not obey is a dead faith.

- b. A profession of faith while refusing to meet the Lord's conditions of pardon is a non-saving faith.

#### **This Means:**

- a. The promise is to those who have a saving faith.
- b. Where there is no obedience to the Lord's commands when such obedience is called for, there is no saving faith.
- c. A profession of faith is not enough. Faith must respond.

#### **What Response Is the Alien Sinner To Make To Be Saved by Faith?**

- a. Be convicted of sin. (Acts 2:37; 2 Cor. 7:10).
- b. Repent. (Acts 2:38).
- c. Confess faith in Christ. (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37).
- d. Be baptized (immersed) for the remission of sins. (1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

#### **Conclusion**

- a. There are really two kinds of faith; one saving, the other non-saving. Non-saving faith claims salvation before baptism. Saving faith claims salvation on meeting the conditions of pardon given by Christ. These are: conviction, repentance, confession and baptism. To remain faithful after baptism means to trust Christ (which includes serving Him).
- b. Sinners repent UNTO life. (Acts 11:18). They confess UNTO salvation. (Rom. 10:10). They are baptized INTO Christ. (Gal. 3:27). UNTO carries them toward pardon. Baptism takes them INTO Christ where they receive pardon.
- c. Faith is sometimes used as a comprehensive term to represent our attitude and response toward Christ. A mistake is sometimes made of reading those passages in which sinners are

said to be saved by faith (where the word is used comprehensively) and making it mean faith only (faith before obedience). "*Faith without works is dead.*" (Jas. 2:26).

- d. Faith does not always save. Faith that responds to the Lord by obeying Him will save.

## Priesthood Of Believers

Ivie Powell

The writer of Hebrews in chapter seven points out that Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. Concerning our high priest the record says, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 5:14-15).

While there was an office for the priest under the old law, the priesthood of believers under the Christian dispensation does not denote an office, but rather a relationship which we have with Divinity.

All who obey the gospel by faith (Jno. 8:24), repentance (Lk. 13:5), confession (Mat. 10:32) and baptism (I Pet. 3:21) for the remission of sins are added by God to His spiritual family, the church. (Acts 2:47). All who are in God's family are priest. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 2:5). Again Peter says, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (I Pet. 2:9).

As priests Christians can offer up prayers through their advocate Jesus Christ (I Jno. 2:1). For no man is to stand as

mediator between God and man save the man Jesus Christ! "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5).

Christians have the tremendous blessing of being able to Commune with the Father daily. Even at best we will fall and stumble in this walk, but thanks be to God that we as priest can go to him through our saviour Jesus Christ.

Friend, have you obeyed the gospel that you might have this relationship with the Father?

## Know The Truth

Marvin Rainey

**CHEAP CHRISTIANITY.** Everybody is looking for bargains. Advertising is geared to the notion that everything is "Special Priced" or "Reduced for Quick Clearance." Many people are looking for "Bargained Priced" religion. In today's religious world the Gospel message has been so diluted that it is not the same gospel presented by our Lord. This can be called cheap Christianity. What is cheap Christianity? Let me cite some examples of it in order to help you get a picture of what I am talking about. Cheap Christianity is offering forgiveness without demanding genuine "fruits worthy of repentance." It is "church membership" without regard to personal commitment to Jesus Christ or obedience to New Testament commands. Cheap Christianity is Christianity without sacrifice, self-denial or consecrated discipleship. Cheap Christianity is allowing and urging a man to call himself a "child of God" and, at the same time, live like the devil himself!

The New Testament doctrine of salvation involved strict demand on the individual. Man must do something in order to be saved. He is not a passive onlooker. He must repent of his sins and be immersed in water in order to have them forgiven. (Acts 2:38). The commands of the New Testament demand a

radical change of attitude with reference to sin. It is not a cheap thing! Some people just don't want to give up certain sins. Others aren't willing to be baptized just because the Lord said to be baptized. These people want salvation on an unconditional basis. They do not want to pay the price!

Cheap Christianity is being offered by many religious groups and many people are accepting it. The Type Christianity which is presented on the pages of the New Testament is anything but "cheap" and "easy." It is demanding and challenging! So demanding is the life required of one who would follow Christ that the Saviour counseled men to "count the cost" before starting out! (Luke 14:28-30). The Christian religion demands that one submit his will and life to the one who has died for his salvation. (II Cor. 5:15). Don't be content to accept just anything in religion. Accept only what is in the Bible.

## Christians Only—Without A Handle

John Mays

Most people when asked if they are a Christian will answer, "Yes, I am a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, etc." If asked why the Baptist or Methodist, etc., they will say, "I am a Christian first and Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc., second." But wise, sincere people should ask the question, "Why the handles?" As we read the Bible, we will find none of these brand-name Christians. Let us be willing to accept God's Word and obey it.

Jesus intended for there to be one church and all Christians be members of that one church. In Mathew 16:18 Jesus said, "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." From Acts 2:47 we learn that all the saved are added to that church Jesus built.

In John 17 20,21, Jesus said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Surely we all can look at the religious world and see that it is not what Jesus prayed for. What makes the difference between the church which Jesus built and denominations? It is simply the man-made creeds, which the denominations abide by. The Bible does not produce different "Kinds" of Christians any more than watermelon seed produce popcorn or potatoes. Seeds produce after their kind. (Gen. 1:11). The seed of the kingdom of God is the Word of God. (Lk. 8:11).

Notice some contrast between the church and denominations. Christ founded the church; denominations are founded by men. Christ is the only one who has authority to legislate for His church; in denominations men legislate and often change the doctrines and rules of faith. They shift with the times and fit their doctrines to satisfy men. In the New Testament we find certain names used of the church; in denominations names of human origin are used. Christ is head of His church (Col. 1:18); humans are the head of denominations and make their laws and regulations. Jesus purchased His church with His own blood (Acts 20:28); denominations are not purchased with blood.

Jesus prayed that all who believe in Him would be one. This belief is more than accepting the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. It is more than calling Him Lord. To be one means unity in doctrine and practice. In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In Luke 6:46 He said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Many are deceived into thinking they are Christians when they are not. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:8).

In Acts 26:28, "King Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." What "Kind" of Christian do you think Paul was trying to persuade him to be—a Baptist,

Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Pentecostal or one of the many other brands? The truth is Paul had never had heard of these different religions and brand names. They came to be hundreds of years after the death of Paul and the other inspired men. They did not originate with God but with men. Paul was trying to persuade Agrippa to be just a Christian.

Today we who are Christians, members of the church of Christ, should try to persuade others, both religious and non-religious, to be just Christians. This is done by teaching and preaching the gospel of Christ in its purity and simplicity. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Peter said, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto the unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Pet. 1:22,23).

One must hear the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). He must believe it and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. (Mk. 16:15,16; John 8:24). He then must repent of his sins. (Acts 17:30). He must confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus. (Rom. 10:9,10). He must be buried with Christ in Baptism (Rom. 6:3-6). He must then live faithful unto death. (Rev. 2:10). Have you obeyed the Lord from the heart? (Rom. 6:16-18).

"...And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26).

## Saul Of Tarsus

Jim E. Waldron

Contrary to what you have heard many times, Saul of Tarsus was not saved on the road to Damascus. Jesus certainly appeared to him in the way. (Acts 22:16). Also Saul acknowledged Him as

Lord when he said, "what shall I do Lord" (Acts 22:10), but Jesus replied, "arise and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:6; 22:10).

In the city Saul "was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink." (Acts 9:9). The time was spent in prayer (Acts 9:11). If he was saved he wasn't going on his way rejoicing as the nobleman from Ethiopia was after believing and immersed. (Acts 8:26-39).

In Damascus the first thing he was told to do was "arise. and be baptized (immersed), and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16).

This was three days after having seen the Lord and after three days of fasting and prayer. Wonder why preachers don't tell sinners today: "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name". Now-a-days they say "go on praying until you feel something" or "hold up your hand" or "sign a card." Somehow the simplicity of "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16) misses them.

## If Salvation Is By Faith Only Can One Be Saved And Not...

1. Add the Christian graces: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love? 2 Pet. 1:5-9.

2. Bear the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance? Gal. 5:22, 23.

3. Worship God in Spirit and in truth? How can one worship in spirit and in truth and do nothing more than "trust in Jesus?" John 4:23,24.

4. "Worketh righteousness" as only those who do "worketh righteousness" are acceptable unto God? Acts 10:34,35.
5. Be saved with devils, for devils also believe? James 2:19.
6. Do the will of God? Hebrews 5:9.

## What Man Has Done To God's Commands

Clifford Dixon

Contrary to what some teach Christ does have commandments. It is true that He suffered the penalty for our sins but He has given certain stipulations for us to receive this salvation which He so freely offers. One needs to read Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47, in order to see the preaching and the commands of the Great Commission of Christ. Then we need to realize that Jesus said, "If ye love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). To realize that throughout the New Testament we are exhorted to keep His commands. Read Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; Hebrews 5:8, 9; James 1:22; Rev. 22:14; I John 2:3, 4; I John 5:3. In the face of this, look what men in their philosophies have done to the commands of God.

1. The command to hear the gospel men have concluded is IMPOSSIBLE unless one is already a Christian. The parable of the sower in Luke eight chapter emphasizes that it is hearing and are acting upon the word that produces God's people. The good soil those who hear the word and bring forth fruit with patience (Lk. 8:15). We are told to take heed that we hear. (Lk. 11:28). We are also to take heed how we hear (Lk. 8:18). We are to ensure that we open our ears to the truth of Jesus Christ if we are to be saved (John 6:68; Mk. 16:15, 16). Faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17), so without hearing there could never be faith in the Lord regardless of what men say about it.

2. Men have **MISUNDERSTOOD** the command to believe, concluding that because certain Scriptures say we are saved by faith that it means salvation by faith only. It is true that Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). However, where does this say "he that believeth only hath everlasting life"? It is true that Paul told the Jailer to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:31). But where is the evidence that he only believed and was saved? If one reads this account through verse 34 he will see that the Jailer also repented and was baptized.

3. Many have hesitated to obey the gospel because of the command of repentance which they look on as **HARD**. No one is exempt from repentance. (Lk. 13:1-5). Repentance, while in itself is a change of the will of man, requires a change of life, including forsaking the world and setting one's affections and determination on the things of God. Repentance is hard but its wages make it worthwhile because when one through faith and repentance obey the commands of the Lord the gift of God is eternal life (Rom. 6:23). It is better to suffer reproach for the Lord than to suffer the fires of hell. It is truly worthwhile to repent.

4. Then the command to confess Christ has been **REARRANGED** by men. Instead of the simple command of confession of faith in Christ. (Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37), men have had the candidates for conversion to confess that "God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins." This is the confession of a lie because the Lord does not pardon sins until we have gone through the waters of baptism. (Rom. 6:3, 4).

5. Men have **REJECTED** the command of being baptized for the remission of sins as taught in Acts 2:38 and other Scriptures. It is true that all claiming Christianity have some form of baptism, yet in the main men have denied the purpose of baptism. It is designed by the Lord to put us into the death of Christ where He shed His blood and where we are cleansed by the efficacy of the shed blood. (Rom. 6:3, 4). Men try to take up people who lived under Moses' law, like the thief on the cross, as examples of those

saved without baptism. The Lord didn't give the command until after His death and resurrection.

6. Men have FORSAKEN the command of God to worship though the Lord has told us not to forsake it. (Heb. 10:25). Excuses like, "I'm on vacations," "I had to work," "I don't believe the Lord will mind," "I'm too tired," and other excuses are given rather than being faithful to assemble to worship.

7. Men have NEGLECTED the commands of God. We are told "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). In verse three the question is asked, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation...?" The answer to this is that there is no possible way to escape.

Friends, don't listen to men, just listen to the Lord, obey his simple commands, and trust him for the promises.

## Where Did It Come From?

Maxie B. Boren

By definition, the universe is "the whole body of things; the entire cosmos—the totality of the observed or postulated physical world." We all know that it exists, and yet the magnitude and complexities of it transcend our mental capabilities. Our minds probe for the "explanation" of its existence. How did it come to be? Where did it come from?

Atheism has advanced varying theories and hypotheses in attempting to answer. All of these are based on a materialistic philosophy entirely, and "rule out" any possibility of a supernatural causative factor. It believes that somehow, someday, at sometime, differing elements and materials (the existence of which it cannot account for) acted together by blind chance to produce the orderly universe and life itself. Nothing could be more illogical!

On the other hand, faith in an all powerful and wise God, whose creative genius brought everything into being, is ten thousand times more plausible and reasonable. Thus, the Biblical account, which states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (*Genesis 1:1*), is indeed creditable.

True, the whole spectrum of thought relating to the universe and its origin is so profound as to be overwhelming to our finite minds. And numerous questions that emerge must go unanswered. But just think of the unanswered questions from the atheistic viewpoint.

Where did it all come from? The answer must be—**GOD!**

## What is the Gospel?

J.C. Choate

The gospel means glad tidings or good news. (*Romans 10:15*). It is based on the fact that Jesus died, was buried, and was resurrected. (*1 Corinthians 15:1-4*). How could that be good news? In that Jesus died that we might be saved and have hope of eternal life. (*Romans 5:8; John 3:16*). Through his resurrection he assures all mankind of a resurrection, and those who have obeyed him a home in heaven. (*John 5:28,29*). What does obedience have to do with the gospel? Christ has commanded that the gospel be taken into all the world and preached to every creature, and "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (*Mark 16:15,16*). Then we are told that the Lord will come to take vengeance on those who obey not the gospel. (*2 Thessalonians 1:1-9; 1 Peter 4:17*). Do you believe the gospel? Have you obeyed it?

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