

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :

J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor :

SUNNY DAVID

Published by Church of Christ, Box 3815,
New Delhi-110049

Pleading For The Restoration Of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 14

September 1983

No.5

EDITORIAL



The Importance Of Proper Relationships

Relationships are very important in daily life. A child must be properly enrolled in a school to have the right to attend and to obtain the education desired. One must not only apply for a job, but be duly accepted, and then do the required work, to obtain a salary. To have the privileges, rights, and benefits of a given country, that person must be a lawful citizen. And on and on we could go with hundreds of similar illustrations.

Likewise, the marriage relationship is equally important. This is contrary to the modern day thinking of some. They would throw marriage out, having men and women to live together, bear children, and so on, just like animals. This type of thing is meant only to satisfy the lusts of men and women who want to escape the responsibilities that go along with lawful marriage. Nevertheless, there is a high price to pay. The woman in particular is the great loser. She will end up in all probability in being rejected by her lover, perhaps with a child or two to try to support, and with

little sympathy from the general public. The offspring also is left without a legitimate father and name and is destined to go through life being classified as an illegitimate child. On the other hand, God's arrangement allows man and woman to come together in marriage, have children, and therefore for the husband and the wife to accept their responsibilities to each other and to their children. The children are equally blessed to be born of lawful parents, to have a father and mother who love them and care for their needs, to have a family name, and to have the respect of those around them. This is a proper relationship which carries with it both responsibilities and blessings. There is a great contrast between those who are in this proper relationship and those who are not. For instance, a child cannot claim just any man as his father or any woman as his mother. If he does so, he will be rejected and thus be denied the privileges and rewards that are extended to children by their rightful parents. The only way a child then can receive what should legally and lawfully come to him is for him to look to his own parents in the one and only relationship that is recognized both by God and man, that is, where one's own parents respond to the needs of their child or children. The same thing is true with the husband and wife. To go outside of that relationship for love and companionship is both an injustice to themselves, their children, others that are involved, and it is a sin against God himself. Christ said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matthew 19:9). Paul admonished the husbands to love their wives (Ephesians 5:23) and for the wives to submit themselves to their husbands. (Ephesians 5:22). Not only so, but the scriptures say that the children are to be brought up in the way they should go. (Proverbs 22:6).

The very same principle is true with Christ and his church, with God and his children. Some want the benefits and blessings of a Christian, of a child of God, and yet they have not obeyed the Lord, they are not in Christ's church or the family of God or they are not citizens of the Lord's kingdom. There are those who think that these are trivial matters and it doesn't matter what you do just so long as you are honest and sincere. They think

you can be a member of any church, wear any name, travel any road, worship any way you desire, but you can still have God's blessings, be treated as a child of God, and have the hope of eternal life. But there is a lot more to it than that. To receive the benefits and blessings that God has promised, then one must be a child of God, a member of the Lord's family, and comply with all of the conditions that God has set forth in his will. Those who obey the Lord, as he has specified, are in position to be rewarded accordingly. Those who are unwilling to do so, will be denied. Christ has said that one must believe and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16). When one does that then the Lord adds him to his church. (Acts 2:47). Being in Christ (Galatians 3:26, 27), and in the body of Christ, or the church (1 Corinthians 12:13), then one is entitled to all of the spiritual blessings that the Lord has promised to his people. (Ephesians 1:3). There is simply no way, however, to obtain these blessings outside of Christ and his church. Why can't we understand this? We can understand the importance of relationships in other areas of our life.

Sometimes we hear preachers and others saying that one can be saved by merely praying to God for forgiveness. This is another case where one does not recognize the necessity of a proper relationship with God. For our prayers to be heard and answered by God the Father then we must be his children. If we are not his children, then he is not our spiritual Father. If he is not our Father, then the devil is our Father. How, then, could we call upon God to save us and make us his children if we are not his children and he is not our Father? We can't. Therefore we cannot be saved in this way. The Bible says that God heareth not sinners. (John 9:31). It says, rather, that we become children of God through obedience. Paul wrote the Christians in Galatia, "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." (Galatians 3:26, 27). Who are those who are baptized? They are the ones who hear the word of God because faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17). They are the ones who believe in God because we are told that without faith it is impossible to please him. (Hebrews 11:6). They are the ones who are willing to repent of their sins. Christ said that one must

repent or perish (Luke 13:3), and Paul says that God commands all men everywhere to repent. (Acts 17:30). They are the ones who are willing to confess Christ as the Son of God. When the man from Ethiopia wanted to be baptized, Philip told him that he could if he believed with all of his heart. He then confessed that he believed that Christ was the Son of God. (Acts 8:37). So after all of this, then one is to be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), to have the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38), to have his sins washed away (Acts 22:16), and to enter Christ (Romans 6:3, 4), and to be a child of God. (Galatians 3 : 26, 27). As children of God, and God being our Father, and thus having the proper relationship, then we may call upon our Father in prayer with the expectation that he will hear our prayers, and will answer our prayers, provided they are according to his will, and therefore in our interest. John wrote to the Christians of his day, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14, 15). Prayer then is for the Christian. It is one of the blessings that comes to one for being a Christian. If the non-Christian had the same access to God as the Christian, then what advantage would the Christian have over the non-Christian? But the Father-son relationship, spiritually, is like the father-son relationship, physically. We know that just any child cannot approach a father with some request in the sense that his own son can. The difference is that one is the son and the other is not. If we can see that in an earthly setting, surely we can see the same principle in relation to God and his children. Certainly God responds to his children in a different manner than he deals with the people of the world.

In these ways, then, we can see the importance of relationships. We must be in the proper relationship with God, Jesus, and the church to be saved and to be a part of God's family, the church. By so being then we are in position to receive all the blessings, rewards, and the treasures of heaven itself that the Lord has stored up for his people. What kind of relationship do you have with Jesus? Will he welcome you one day as his child or will he dismiss you as one that he knows not? Please take a close look at your situation and do whatever is necessary to make your relationship right.



**associate
editorial**

The Christian's Hope

It is a great blessing to be a Christian. A Christian is a follower of Christ. One who knows that God loves him so much that He gave His only begotten Son for his salvation. One who knows that his soul's salvation cost God's Son his precious blood. He knows that he has been reconciled with God through the atoning death of His Son Christ and as such he is now a child of God, one who can pray to his Father with hope and confidence. He lives with hope knowing that Christ is with him and that God through His word leads him to do right. He hopes that Christ one day will come back, as he has promised, (John 14:1-3), and he will go with him to live where he will live before God forever. He also dies in hope knowing that the Bible says: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Revelation 14:13). A Christian's life is a life of hope and confidence. He can say, "I know", with confidence.

The apostle John wrote this to his fellow Christians: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins.....If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness..... We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins... And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." (1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1-3). By walking in the light of God's word a Christian knows that his fellowship is with all the saved on earth, and that the blood of Christ continue to cleanse him from his daily sins. He knows

that Jesus is with God as his advocate who mediate for him, and he is the propitiation for his sins.

Then the apostle said to them, "Beloved now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2). He says, we know that now on earth we are the children of God, but we also know that when he, that is, Christ shall appear we shall also be like him, in our spiritual bodies. What a great thought! To be like Christ, God's Son! And he says that we know that we will be like him. A Christian is Christ-like. He wants to live on earth as Christ once lived on earth, and therefore he expects to be like him in heaven. In verse 14 he says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Again, we know! We know that we have passed from death unto life. The cause of death is sin, because of sin people are separated from God and therefore are dead in their sins (Isaiah 59:1, 2; Ephesians 2:1). But since a Christian by faith has accepted the death of Christ for his own sins, therefore he knows that he is passed from death, and that he is no longer dead in sins and trespasses, but he lives for God through Christ forever. A Christian knows that he will never die. He looks at the physical death as a departure of soul from the body. (Philippians 1:23).

Again, at 1 John 5:14, 15, he says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." What a great confidence! Being children of God Christians can pray to God with confidence that God will hear them. Of course, they need to ask Him according to His will. Our prayers should be based on the will of God. We see this confidence in Christ when he prayed to God in Gethsemane he said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26:39). He wanted the cup to pass from him, "but not as I will", said Jesus, "but as thou wilt." And when the cup came before him he drank it gladly, realising that it was the will of God for him that he should drink it. This is what exactly the apostle John is writing to his fellow Christians. He said,

we have confidence in Him that he will hear us, and after we have prayed we should believe that our petitions have been granted. God always hear the prayer of His children. His answer may be "Yes" or "No." But He hear, nevertheless.

The apostle Paul also wrote this: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28). A Christian knows that God controls every thing and that whatsoever He will do that will be for his good. They that love God, to them is the promise that ALL THINGS would work together for their good. Whether sorrow or joy, all things work together for their good. The apostles in the beginning didn't like the idea that Jesus, their Master, should die on the cross, and when he did die his death brought to them sorrow and tears for a while. But when he arose from the dead and told them the purpose of all his suffering and death, the record says, "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." (Luke 24:52; cf. 44—49).

Again, Paul said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1) For a Christian his body is like a tabernacle or tent, he knows one day it will be perished being earthly. But he knows too that once this tabernacle is dissolved and his spirit departs from this earthly house of body he will go to God where he has an house not made with physical hands but eternal in the heavens, where he will live with God through all eternity. What a great blessing it is then to be a Christian. Those who are not Christians need to think upon these things seriously, and should decide to become Christian, so they could also say with other Christians "we know."

You Should Not Be Batised

Francis David

Often people criticize the church of Christ by saying that they are always preaching about baptism. Well, they are not wrong in saying this because we are doing it and we will do it, because our

Lord has commanded us to do it. When Jesus was upon this earth, he commanded his disciples that they should go into all the world (to all nations) preach the gospel to them and baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:18, 19; Mark 16:15-16). Baptism is a command of Jesus and therefore cannot be rejected at any cost, since it is connected with our salvation.

Now those of you who have not been baptised, I would like to tell you something and that is "YOU SHOULD NOT BE BAPTISED". But you may ask why? If you have not understood the real purpose of baptism then please do not take this step. Just Going into water to make yourself wet without having proper understanding of the gospel would be of no use. I am saying this because some people just go into the water and after coming out of the water don't know what's that for. Anyone who wants to be baptised should fully understand the gospel of Christ and the commands of the gospel. There are some pre-requisites to baptism and one must know these before taking a decision for baptism. Let us see what are these pre-requisites?

1. You should believe that there is a God. You need faith in God for without faith it is impossible to please him (God): for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. 11:6). So, if you do not believe that God is your creator, you should not be baptised.

2. You need to believe in Jesus. Christ says, if you believe in God then you should believe also in me. (Jn. 14:1). You must believe and confess Christ as the Son of God. The Bible Clearly says that Christ is the Son of God. Many people do not believe Christ as the Son of God and therefore baptism is not for them. Jesus said, that ye shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins. (Jn. 8:24).

3. You need to repent of your past sins. Repentance means to turn from wrong direction to the right direction. Apostle Peter while preaching on the day of Pentecost said, Repent and be baptised for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38). Jesus also said

about repentance, He says, I tell you Nay: but except you repent you shall likewise perish. (Luke 13:3). Repentance is required before baptism. If someone wants to remain in the past sinful life, he should not be baptised.

My friend, if you are willing to obey the Gospel by being baptised in the watery grave, I would urge you to understand the points which I have discussed in this article. If you will properly understand all pre-requisites to baptism, and then obey the gospel, I'm sure the Lord will accept you as his child.

Bail or Jail?

K.J. Raju

The above two words are very familiar with everybody. **BAIL** means a person who stands surity for getting released an accused and for his appearance before the court whenever needed. **JAIL** is a place where the convicted are sent. Nobody wants to go to jail inspite of the seriousness of the crime, yet wants to remain on bail because the life in jail is known to everyone. On bail, an accused though a security risk to the society shall enjoy all the social privilege whereas in jail he shall be deprived of all such things. Thus, the difference between Jail and Bail is clear.

Now, let us see the effect of these two words in our Christian life. Let us examine ourselves as the apostle Paul repeatedly warned in his different letters in the New Testament and judge ourselves where do we stand? Have we committed any offence so that somebody may stand surity to get us released on bail? The scope of sin is very wide as per the Bible. It says, even if someone just think bad in his mind, he has committed sin. In that case everybody is a sinner and everyone requires somebody who would stand surity until the day of judgment so as to evade the jail term. Who is capable of standing surity? The man who led a sinless life and the saviour of the world Jesus Christ.

Christ is standing between man and God. He has provided us bail thereby giving us an opportunity to prepare ourselves to face the ultimate trial. In this world, the services of an advocate can be hired but on the final judgment day when our fate will be decided by God, no such hiring business shall be allowed. We shall be judged as per our deeds. That is why, my friends, make use of the present period which Jesus has provided by shedding his blood on the cross of calvary. That blood is our Bail which has given us time to think again and to change our way of life by obeying him.

As you know, an accused who is released on bail may be sent to jail again, if he repeats the same offence. In the same manner, a Christian, who has once taken the privilege of this bail offered by Jesus, may lose his faith again and turn to his past practices. In this case he would be certainly committed to custody because this is the time where one has to confess, repent and turn from his wrong. Bail is normally granted by courts, mainly to prepare oneself fully to defend by adducing proper evidence and to furnish required material. Likewise, we must strengthen the hands of our pleader Jesus Christ by doing what he says to defend our case strongly before God so that our destiny may be Heaven and not Hell.

Suppose, you have been arrested and kept under police custody for a small offence that you have committed. All your respect gone and prestige plundered. You are in a great shame, mentally depressed and unable to do anything to save yourself from the clutches of the police. Then, one of your friends comes forward, stands surity and gets you released on bail. What a great friend he would be. 'At that particular moment how would you react? Would you like to repeat such offences and go to jail. No. Never, You would take an oath not to do so in future. In addition to that you would maintain good behaviour and peace to show the world as well as the court that you have reformed yourself by availing full advantage of the Bail period.

My dear friends, the way is clear. Choice is yours. God

wants that all his people be with him in heaven and for that purpose only He sent his only Son Jesus into this world. This is the best opportunity. As long as you are in this world you are free from all botherations because Christ has stood surity for you. You are at liberty to enjoy but we should so live whereby our bail be not withdrawn and comitted to jail. I wish that everyone who read this small article would try to take advantage of the opportunity provided by God in Christ Jesus. By believing in Christ and repenting of sins and by being baptised for the forgiveness of sins one can be saved from sin. This is the promise that God has given us in his book the Bible. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). So why not act and accept God's grace now?

Are You Ready To Be His Slave?

Gary C. Hampton

Yes, he did do a terrible thing to you. No, it does not seem right. Yes, he probably should be punished for the wrong he has committed against you. But, are you ready to pay the price for hating him and seeking vengeance? Someone has well said:

"The moment you start hating a man, you have become his slave. He controls your thoughts, invades your dreams, absorbs your creativity, and determines your appetite—he affects your digestion, robs you of your peace of mind and good will, and takes away the pleasure of your work. He ruins your religion, nullifies your prayers, and you can't enjoy a vacation anymore. He destroys your privacy when you eat. He is close beside you while you drive your car, affects your attitude on the job, and distracts your mind, your tone of voice when you speak to your boss, your wife or your child. Do you want to be a slave and hate him?"

Hatred is a work of the flesh and will cause one not to inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21.) "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

(Verse 24.) Hatred can also bring about physical disorders. S. I. McMillen, M.D., in his book *None of These Diseases*, says, "The preponderance of evidence favors the view that a disordered emotional life is the primary disturbance in cases of colitis." He goes on to say one hospital conducted personal interviews with patients suffering from it and found 96 percent had resentment of an individual as a primary personality trait.

No wonder Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44.) Our love for our enemies will prove we are God's children, as verse 45 goes on to say, and save *us* from untold suffering! Paul told the Roman brethren, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:19-21.)

Despite what our enemies may do to us, we must love them. The love commanded is not an emotional love. Instead, it is a mental commitment to look out for other's needs above my own. This may save the soul of my enemy and turn him into a dear fellow soldier. Certainly it will cause us to please God and potentially save us some physical hardships.

The Conversion Of Cornelius

Benny Tabalujan

The Acts of the Apostles contains the remarkable history of the establishment, growth and development of the church of Christ in the first century. Within this record is the detailed account of the conversion of Cornelius, occurring several years after the church first began in Jerusalem, possibly about AD 40.

The conversion of Cornelius marked a turning point in the

progress of the church: he was the first Gentile Christian. All through Acts, the apostles and disciples executed Christ's final command, "*to preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15.) They began with the Jews on Pentecost (Acts 2), then the Samaritans (Acts 8:5-25), followed by the Ethiopian eunuch—who was probably a proselyte (Acts 8:26-39), and then finally with the Gentile Cornelius. This progression from Jew to Gentile is critical in that it reflected God's unchanging plan for man: one gospel for all nations.

Cornelius was a centurion, an important military commander in the Roman garrison in Caesarea. He was also a devout man, full of benevolence, a man of prayer who was acquainted with, and revered Jehovah God. (Acts 10:2.) But although he was endowed with these commendable virtues, God still told him to send for the apostle Peter "*who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved*" (Acts 11:14.) The inference is that no matter how virtuous and godly a person may be, he still needs the gospel of Christ to be saved (cf. Romans 3:23.) Here, the necessity for the gospel as the only means to salvation is emphasized. Faith, morality, or piety alone cannot save. Even the vision of an angel of God was not sufficient to save Cornelius; it merely pointed the way to Peter, through whom he was to learn the gospel of Christ.

The sending of this vision can be considered as an example of God's providence working to spread the one gospel to all nations. God's providence answers the sincere prayers for truth of people like Cornelius, but it must be noted that His answer is never in the form of a direct personal revelation of His will. Cornelius might have prayed for salvation, but God did not reveal the saving message of the gospel directly to him. Rather He used the agency of man, in this case, Peter, to make His will known to Cornelius. This is in stark contrast with modern beliefs that God will answer prayers of sincere seekers of truth with an immediate divine revelation of His will. The fact is that all the examples of conversion in Acts involve man preaching the gospel to his fellow man. What must be remembered is that the gospel was planned and paid for by God; it is now to be preached by man.

Although the gospel is essentially simple to comprehend,

there is one particular aspect of the conversion of Cornelius which may appear confusing to some, namely, the Holy Spirit baptism. In preceding chapters of Acts, we read of people who, after hearing the gospel preached, believed, repented of their sins (Acts 2:37-38), confessed Christ's name (Acts 8:37), and were immersed in water (Acts 9:18) to become members of the church. From Acts 2:38, we know that as soon as these people were immersed, they received the "*gift of the Holy Spirit*" (cf. I Corinthians 6:19) as a seal and pledge of God's promise to redeem them. (Ephesians 1:13-14.)

In the case of Cornelius, however, there was an anomaly. Even as Peter was preaching to them, "*the Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word.*" (Acts 10:44.) The Jewish Christians with Peter were astonished: this was a baptism of the Holy Spirit similar to that which only the apostles experienced on Pentecost (Acts 11:15, cf. 2:4.) unlike the "*gift of the Holy Spirit*" which all Christians were promised to receive. Further, and even more surprisingly, this baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred to Gentiles!

Many people today have taken this event singularly out of context to teach either that a baptism of the Holy Spirit (which, for example, enables a recipient to speak in tongues, as the apostles did) is sufficient to make one a Christian, that it is necessary before one could be a Christian. Neither is true.

This baptism of the Holy Spirit did not negate the need for Cornelius and his household to be immersed in water as a condition of salvation, for subsequent to the Holy Spirit baptism, Peter "*commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord.*" (Acts 10:48.) The real meaning of the Holy Spirit baptism in Cornelius' case must be read in the whole context of Acts, with special regards to the theme of the progress of the gospel from Jews to Gentiles mentioned earlier. Peter and the other Christians interpreted that baptism of the Holy Spirit as a sign of God's APPROVAL that the gospel was also to be preached—and was applicable to—the Gentiles (Acts 11:17-18, Galatians 3:27-28.) It was a unique, once-for-all event to verify that the one gospel is indeed for all nations!

Thus the baptism of the Holy Spirit (as distinct from the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit) is neither sufficient to make one a Christian—since Peter also commanded water baptism subsequently, nor it is necessary to make one a Christian—since it was only a special act of God performed for a special purpose at a critical point in the progress of the gospel.

The case of Cornelius is a wonderful testimony that God has always had one gospel for all mankind. It shows how His providence will ensure that all earnest seekers will find that one gospel, and that the plan of salvation found in that gospel is applicable to all. It is only when we believe in God (Hebrews 11:6), repent of our sins (Luke 13:3, 5), confess Christ before man (Matthew 10:32), and are immersed in water to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), that we can be called Christian. Now there is no more distinction between Jew and Gentile; both can wear the precious name of Christ—truly, the gospel is for all!

One Way

Allen W. Burris

“How do you spell your name? Very rarely do people ask me this question. Most people spell it the way they think it is spelled. My name is “Allen”, not “Alan” or “Allan”. If not spelled “Allen” is it correct? Even if a person thinks, believes, or feels that “Allan” or “Allan” is correct this doesn’t change the fact that there is only one spelling for my name. To find out how to spell my name you should ask me, not your neighbours or your friends.

I read in my Bible “*one Lord, one faith one baptism...*” (Ephesians 4:5) I believe it means ONE Lord, ONE faith, and ONE baptism! Yet, looking around I see a plurality of “lords”: money, alcohol, sports, etc. I see a plurality of “faiths”: Anglican, Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness; the list could go on and on! Also I see a plurality of baptisms: sprinkling, pouring and immersion. Since there is ONLY ONE Lord, ONLY ONE faith, and ONLY ONE baptism someone is wrong! They think, they

feel and they believe they are correct but that does not change their error. *"There is a way that seemeth right unto man: but the end thereof are the ways of death."* (Proverbs 14:12.) To find the one Lord, one faith and one baptism, should we ask our neighbour, our friend, or even our preacher? No! We should study the word of God, the Bible. Don't trust your feelings or other men; study the word of God which is truth. *"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:32). Are you truly free?

Calling On The Name Of The Lord

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 26:16) 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 being immersed did (Acts 8:26-39.)

In Damascus the first thing he was told to do was *"arise, and be baptised (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 praying. 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.

"I'll Bet You That Gambling Is Wrong!"

R.V. Rutherford

I once read the above title on a notice advertising a youth meeting. The humour in it caught my eye. (Read it again.) There is a great truth expressed in the simple statement "Gambling is wrong." Gambling is nearly as old as man upon this earth. It has been found in one form or another in almost every society from the very earliest of times. Throughout the history of Christianity God-fearing men and women have strongly opposed every form of gambling on moral and Scriptural grounds.

While there is no specific statement in the Bible saying, "Thou shalt not gamble," sincere Bible students recognize that a number of Biblical principles are violated by gambling. The sin of covetousness is the very basis of gambling. (Colossians 3:5.) Gambling caters to the desire to "get rich quickly" and with a minimum of effort and investment. It circumvents God's will that every man "*labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*" (Ephesians 4:28.) Gambling appeals to man's selfishness and greed. It is the opposite of love and the golden rule. (Romans 13:10; Matthew 7:12.) It is a desire to get that which belongs to another without giving just recompence.

Just as evil companionships corrupt good morals (I Corinthians 15:33.), the evil of gambling can be seen in the company it keeps. Statistics are available (I have a thick folder of them in my files) to show that gambling contributes to crime, liquor consumption (with all its attendant evils), the break-up of marriages, and suicide.

What then should be the Christian's attitude toward gambling? Not many Christians will go to a casino for a night of gambling or bet on the horse races. But what about gambling on a small scale such as buying a lottery or raffle ticket in a fund raising drive for some worthy cause? What is the Christian to do? Support the cause by buying a ticket and thus participate in gambling? Or refuse to buy a ticket and thereby decline to help a needy cause?

The end never justifies the means! *Shall we do evil that good may come?* (Romans 3:8.) The Christian's answer must be a resounding "God forbid!" Gambling is either right or wrong! If it is wrong (and we have already shown it is), then it is just as sinful to gamble for a Re 1.00 prize as it is to gamble for thousands of rupees at the casino.

Whenever I am asked to buy a lottery ticket for a worthy cause, I kindly refuse. However, I will make a direct contribution to the cause, ask for a receipt, thereby helping the good cause without violating Christian principles, and, as a "fringe" benefit, receive another deduction for my income tax.

Let us remember, brethren, that we are different from the world and not compromise with its vices, whether great or small. *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9.)"*

The Jewish Sabbath Versus The Christian Day Of Worship

Leslie G. Thomas

The Bible clearly teaches that there is a difference between the Jewish and Christian dispensations (cf. Hebrews 1:1, 2; Matthew 17:1-5; Acts 3:22, 23), and there is an abundance of evidence in the New Testament which clearly shows that all typical and

ceremonial institutions of the age of Moses were abolished in and through the death of Christ. (see Ephesians 2:14f.).

The fact is, the entire law of Moses ceased as an authoritative system to be obeyed, when the law of Christ became operative on the day of Pentecost, following his ascension, as may be learned from the following scriptures: Romans 7:1-6; II Cor. 3:7-11; Galatians 3:19-25; 4:21-31; Hebrews 8:6-13; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:3.

The New Testament also teaches that Christ is the sole mediator for the Christian dispensation; and that no one can go to God except through him (1 Timothy 2:5; John 6:44-45; 14:6). All worship and service, therefore which are acceptable to God, must rest exclusively upon the authority of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23).

Any one who is familiar with the teaching of the New Testament will readily admit that there is nothing in Christianity, which could in any way be commemorated by the observance of the seventh-day sabbath. No disciple of Christ, following the Lord's coronation, ever kept the seventh-day sabbath as an authorized act of obedience, insofar as the inspired record goes.

The people of God in Christ, on the contrary, were instructed not to allow any one to judge them, that is, set in judgment on them, regarding the observance of things which were authorized by the law of Moses, including the seventh-day sabbath (Colosians 2:16-17; cf. Albert Barnes, *in loco*.)

Furthermore, the edict of Constantine, regarding the Lord's day, was not for the purpose of changing the day of religious observance from the seventh-day sabbath to the first day of the week. The emperor simply authorized the people of his realm, who were not followers of Christ, to observe the day of worship and service, which the Christian people were *already* keeping. (See M'Clintock and Strong; *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Volume V, page 508f.)

“Writing Out Loud!”

Bob Hurd

I Corinthians 2 : 9 “But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Ever got down? Ever feel like the life we live is not worth while? Ever wonder if living for God has any benefit? We see folks all around seeming to have a grand time. Carefree, careless, no thought of tomorrow, living in the depths of sin with no fear of reprisal. It is tough to sit and watch people seem to be happy, and not desire the same thing they have. However, all one has to do is examine the end of their life. Was it worth it to start the trek down booze ally? Ask the alcoholic! Was that little “joint” worth it, and could you handle it? Ask the one who has been hooked on the hard drugs...it all started innocently! Is the life of loose morality worth it...ask the man or woman who has abused themselves with every opportunity. Never to be satisfied with the purity of singleness in marriage, their life is a constant quest of another and another...heartache and misery are their constant companions. Lonliness is their real companion. These grow old early, age too soon, and when the flower of youth is gone, are cast aside for someone new or younger.

No matter the things that enter the life of a Christian, sickness, death or suffering, these words of Paul comfort us. Life is no “bowl of cherries”, as the world tries to sell, it is often painful, sad, and heart breaking...but if one is a follower and lover of God, there is the fine line of difference. Paul had a thorn in his side... but Jesus told him that His grace was sufficient. Millions today are in some way handicapped, but they love God and because of this, He blesses their lives. The text says that we know not what God has prepared for us. The book of Revelation tries to put into human terms the blessings awaiting after this life is over. We may all die this year, we may have to face some of the most severe trials ever...but if we love and trust the Lord...WE WILL WIN! Isn't it great to be a Christian!

Why Will The Majority Of People Be Lost?

Paul Epps

The above title is a sad question to discuss, yet Jesus said, "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." *Matthew 7:14.*

The majority of people will be lost, but it is not because our God is powerless. The gospel of Christ is that which saves, "for it is the power of God unto salvation..." *Romans 1:16.* Also, God is not partial to any person or to any nation *Acts 10:34.* Neither is our God impatient, for He "is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." *II Peter 3:9.*

The answer lies in man, whom God placed upon this earth for the purpose of revering him. Let us notice a few reasons why the majority of people will not enter into heaven.

1. **THEIR GREATEST DESIRE IS NOT HEAVEN.** I doubt if we can find many people who really want to live eternally in hell, writhing in anguish and pain. The trouble is that they want other things more than heaven. Their main goal is money, pleasure, prestige. It seems that many want heaven, but they want to go on their own terms.
2. **THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR MIND TO THE TRUTH.** Prejudice will cause many to be lost forever. Jesus said about the people of His day, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see...and hear...and should understand...and should be converted, and I should heal them." *Matthew 13:15.*
3. **THEY THINK THAT SINCERITY ALONE IS SUFFICIENT.** If this were true, the apostle Paul would have been

saved while fighting the church. He said, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." *Acts 23:1*. Yet, with all of his education and zeal, and with his 'good conscience', he was sadly mistaken.

4. **THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO SURRENDER THEIR ALL.** Two men were discussing the Bible, and one said to the other, "I'd give half of my life if I knew the Scriptures like you do." The other man replied, "That is what it cost me." It takes study to prepare one's self for heaven—knowing the truth and obeying it. *Philippians 2:12*.

"They Prayed And Then Said Rhoda Was Mad"

Delmar Elam

There was a first century prayer meeting going on at the home of Mary, mother of John. They were praying to God and asking that Peter might be delivered from prison where Herod had placed him. (*Acts 12:5*).

We read *Acts 12:15* and come across what seems to me a remarkable happening and a unique lesson on lacking faith in prayer.

"And they said unto her, thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel." They prayed for Peter's deliverance from prison and when God delivered Peter from prison and to their doorstep they accused the damsel Rhoda of being mad when she reported to them that their prayers had been answered and that Peter stood at the gate. Man, Doesn't that sound like many of the prayer sessions of the modern saints! I fear we often pray and when God answers with an affirmative we can't believe it and start calling people mad and start talking about angels or a host of other possibilities why it couldn't be possible.

Modern day prayers must be asked in keeping with the will of God for man today. (Jn. 14:13-14) We should never ask God to do that which his New Testament law would not allow because that isn't praying according to His will. To pray in the name of Jesus is to ask according to His will. However, when we pray and ask according to His will the least we should do is believe that God can and will answer that prayer and then have sense enough to recognize it when it obviously stands right before us.

Poor Peter continued standing out at the gate knocking and most likely wondering—what's wrong with these folks? While inside they're trying to explain away the answered prayer that stood at the gate knocking, requesting entrance. They finally opened the gate and the Bible says, "they were astonished." Perhaps one of them in their astonishment may have thought, "Well, can you believe that, Peter has somehow escaped! I wonder how he did that?"

When the answer of our prayers stares us in the face let's not call people mad or speak of their angels, or even be astonished. ".....the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." We twentieth century Christian need to learn to pray and then go open the gate!

Able To Build you Up

Dalton Key

We do not doubt for one moment the Bible's inspiration. Neither do we question its accuracy. Yet our obvious neglect of this book reveals our apparent distrust in the Bible's usefulness. Like Timothy, we need to be reminded that holy scripture, inspired of God, "is profitable." (II Timothy 3:16.) God's word is still "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword." (Hebrews 4:12.) His gospel remains "the power of God unto salvation." (Romans 1:16.)

Paul emphasizes the Bible's usefulness in issuing his closing

commendation to the Ephesians elders. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts 20:32.) Yes, the Bible is a profitable book, a book able to build us up. Let's observe a few examples.

The Bible builds us up in times of temptation. If we intend to defeat Satan in battles of temptation, we must use "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17.) This effective method was used by David (Psalm 119:11), and by our Lord. (Matthew 4:1-11.) Satan flees from the presence of God's word. A wise soldier would not dare enter battle unarmed, with inadequate weaponry. Just so, the wise child of God will not face the "fiery darts" of Satan unprepared. Donning "the whole armour of God", the Christian boldly takes up his spiritual sword, the Bible. (Ephesians 6:10-17.)

The Bible builds us up in times of sorrow and bereavement. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4.) "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (I Thessalonians 4:18.) "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." (II Peter 1:4.) When our hearts are brought low by the sorrows of life, we look with comfort to the safe shelter of divine promise. He has promised to be our shepherd (Psalm 23); to be with us (Matthew 28:20), and to prepare a better place for us. (John 14:1-4.) There is no real comfort in the bottle, whether it be the booze bottle or the pill bottle. For the child of God, true and lasting comfort comes only from the true and lasting book of God.

The Bible builds us up in times of spiritual death. Greater, stronger faith is built upon the foundation of greater Bible knowledge. (Romans 10:17.) The word of God, as spiritual food, enables us to grow into full spiritual maturity. (Matthew 4:4, I Peter 2:2.) When we fall, falter, and fail, God's book shows us the way out—the way up. It encourages strength and manly maturity. (Ephesians 6:10; I Corinthians 16:13.) It helps us back up by showing us the examples of others who have fallen and yet come back into full and useful service to God. The Bible helps

us out of spiritual famine by showing us the example of Christ, our perfect example. (I Peter 2:21.) Our starving souls would do well to feast upon the nourishment of God's book, the Bible!

This book which sets upon our shelves collecting dust is the key to life. As Christ, the chief cornerstone, was a rejected and ignored stone, being discarded by religious leaders of his day, so it is with the Bible. It is the very cornerstone to a better, fuller, more productive life; yet it is relegated to the junk heap of life. Brethren, let's not neglect this book which is able to build us up! With David, let us say, "Oh, how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97).

Balanced Preaching

John Waddey

Observation declares that many a preacher fails because of a lack of balance in his life and work. Good men of talent and dedication are lost to the Lord's work because their imbalance has neutralized or destroyed their work. As we train men to preach the gospel, this scriptural balance in life and work must be continually stressed.

A preacher should be sure but not cocky. Paul knew whereof he spoke (II Timothy 1:12), but he was an humble man. Confidence inspires an audience to listen; cockiness turns them away in disgust.

Be bold but not brazen. Boldness is a virtue in preaching (Acts 4:13). To be brazen indicates intemperance, lack of good judgment and poor taste. God's man will carefully weigh each word chosen and each thought expressed.

Be kind but not compromising. There is the temptation in being diplomatic to become unable to take a stand against sin at all. One can be kind and considerate and yet uncompromising with sin and error. Jesus exhibits this balance in the case of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11).

Preachers must contend for the faith without becoming contentious. The first is commanded (Jude 3); the latter is condemned as sinful (Titus 3:10). The church has suffered tremendously from preachers who were contentious in the name of contending for the faith. Often they were merely contending for their opinions or for recognition.

Be firm, but don't be stubborn. There is a vast difference between being "steadfast and unmovable" for truth and righteousness (I Corinthians 15:58) and being stubborn. Stubbornness is as idolatry (I Samuel 15:23). It brought deadly judgment upon the nation of Israel (Jeremiah 11:8). Stubbornness seems to be a common malady among preachers. If not cured, it can be fatal.

Learn to be relevant in your preaching but not at the expense of neglecting the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16). God's truth is timeless and the most relevant preaching is solidly based on the first-century gospel. (Matthew 24:35).

Your preaching should be scholarly but never over the heads of the common people. Every preacher should strive to know all he can about every passage of scripture. The acid test of effective preaching is not how well one has mastered the ancient languages or the logical formulas, but if the children can grasp his message and know their duty. It is still the common people who are the most receptive. (Mark 12:37).

Use some humor in your preaching, but do not be frivolous or clownish in the pulpit. Jesus no doubt drew smiles with his example about straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel (Matthew 23:24). But surely there should be a clear distinction between a comic and an evangelist of Christ. Ours is the world's most important message. It must not be hidden in the roar of laughter.

Put the kingdom of God first in your life (Matthew 6:33), but never neglect your family. Pity the man who saves a thousand others and loses his own children to Satan. Above all else, Noah saved his wife and children. Sadly, we have seen some brothers

violate their charge to their wives (Ephesians 5:28) in the name of serving the Lord.

Always be willing to sacrifice for the Cause, but do not encourage your brethren to be negligent to do so. If you do everything, they will be tempted to do nothing. Learn to lead them in service to God. If you bear all the burdens, you will not help them to grow spiritually. Paul learned this lesson at Corinth (II Corinthians 11:6-9).

Preach the Word! (II Timothy 4:2). Preach all the Word! (Acts 20:27). Preach the truth in love! (Ephesians 4:15). Let your moderation be evident to all (Philippians 4:5).

What Are You Doing With Your Money?

B.C. Goodpasture

All resources should be obtained honestly. Those who come into the possession of money dishonestly sooner or later will pay for their dishonesty. Judas betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of money, but his heart was so tortured with the fires of remorse that he returned the price of his treachery, with the awful confession, "I have betrayed innocent blood." The rich men of James 5 had filled their coffers from the toil of their underpaid, or unpaid, labourers, and the consequence of their crimes were upon them. But it is not enough to obtain money in the right manner.

The rich men about whom and to whom Jesus spoke, so far as the record indicates, came into possession of their wealth by no fraudulent means. The rich young ruler is not charged with dishonesty. The rich farmer of Luke 12 and the rich man of Luke 16 are above reproach so far as the manner of obtaining their wealth is concerned. Whether they inherited it, married it, or by toil and industry made it, we do not know. The manner of obtaining their money is not the point under consideration. It is

not enough to obtain money honestly. Having obtained resources rightly, there is the obligation to use them properly.

The three rich men in question made their grave mistake—not in the *manner they obtained* their wealth—but in the *way they used it*. There are three factors which contribute to the making of money. The person who immediately possesses the wealth contributes his part. Society contributes its part. A man, with no contact with society, is incapable of making money in the usual sense of the term. And, in the third place, God contributes his part. Now, if all three parties are involved in the making of money, should they not all be considered in the use and distribution of it? Here is where the rich men in question failed. One said that he would pull down his barns and build greater; and there bestow all his grain and goods and say to his soul that it had much goods laid up for many days. In his plan, neither society nor God was considered. Another was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. He was not interested in his fellow man or God in the use of his resources. Seemingly, the humble desire of Lazarus to be fed of the crumbs of this rich man's table was not granted. It was nothing to him if Lazarus, sore-covered and dog-licked, died of hunger and exposure at his gate. And for God and his cause he had no thought nor gift. And the rich young ruler *kept*, for a brief time, his wealth while the cry of the needy was unheard and the voice of the Lord was disobeyed. Significant it is that all these made their fatal mistake in their *use* of their money. What a lesson for us—what a warning to us!

Brother, what are *you* doing to help the poor and preach the gospel? Will the Lord be pleased with the use you are making of his blessings?