

THE BIBLE TEACHER

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With Just A Few Words

Have you noticed in reading the scriptures that in just a few words Jesus could say, plainly and clearly, what he wanted to say? He didn't have to go into great detail to make an explanation. He simply knew what he wanted to say, he said it, and that was it.

In contrast, man comes along and writes volumously on what Jesus or other inspired writers said. They often blow a text up, go to other statements to support it, and end up teaching things that are just the opposite of what they started out with, provided the reader can even understand what they are trying to say. This is where we need to stop everything and return to God's word, letting the Lord speak to us and tell us what he wants us to hear. If we will accept that, and do what he wants us to do, then we will be right, but not until.

To illustrate the point, let us turn to the scripture itself and see what it says on various subjects :

1. On salvation, Christ said : "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16). Man then comes along and

says that the Lord didn't really mean what he said. According to the doctrines of men, Jesus was saying, rather, that one must believe to be saved and then he should be baptized to show that he is saved. The question, however, is not what does man say, but what did Christ say? Is it not clear what Christ requires if we want to be saved?

2. Concerning the way faith is produced in one's heart, Paul wrote, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10 : 17). Man often explains that faith may be produced by what one sees or hears in addition to the word of God. But the scriptures do not agree with this doctrine of men.
3. Baptism is defined as being a burial. Paul says, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Colossians 2 : 12). Man defines baptism as being either sprinkling or pouring or a burial. Which definition will you accept?
4. In explaining how man becomes a member of the church, we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2 : 47). The average person talks about joining the church. Adding or joining? Which is right according to the scripture?
5. Man thanks God for all of the churches, which represents division, but Christ prayed for unity. Hear him, when he 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." (John 17 : 20,21). Are those words of unity hard to understand?
6. We are told by men that it is possible for humans to be head of the church, but Paul tells us that Christ is the head of His church. He says, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all," (Ephesians 1 : 22,23). Who do you suppose is right?

7. In today's world such sins as homosexuality have been brought out into the open and practiced. Those who would oppose such behaviour have been depicted as being narrow minded and advocating discrimination against their fellow man. But the scripture has something to say on this subject and we would do well to hear it. The inspired man of God wrote, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6 : 9,10). Whether we like it or not, these and other sins are condemned by God and those who refuse to repent of them cannot be saved and go to heaven.
8. There is a great amount of divorce and remarriage in our world today. Most of those who engage in such are living in adultery. Instead of acknowledging this, even many religious people have attempted to explain away the things that Jesus and other inspired writers had to say on this subject. But listen to this simple statement by Jesus: "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). Man may reject this, try to explain it away, and go on and do as he pleases, but after all is said and done, God's word still says the same thing. Go back and read it again and see if it doesn't.

My friends, we could go on with many other similar statements. The fact is Jesus and all inspired writers spoke the truth. Once it was said, that was enough. Neither are there any contradictions in what was said. We either accept it or we reject it. To try to change it or to explain it away only brings condemnation to us and to any others who would accept our conclusions.

I want to invite you and encourage you to go to the scriptures for the truth. Read it and study it but accept what it says. If it doesn't fit your ideas or former teaching, don't try to change God's word but change your thinking and life so they will be in harmony with what He says. Only then can you be right, because God's word is always right.



associate editorial

Mad, Sad, Or Glad?

Comparing His word with the rain God, through the prophet Isaiah said, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that groweth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isaiah 55 : 10,11). Emphasising the power of God's word the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, at Hebrews 4:12 wrote: "For the word of God is quicker and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Therefore, Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, exhorted Timothy to "Preach the word." (2 Timothy 4:2).

The word of God is powerful and when preached and taught plainly and sincerely it certainly brings result. However, it makes some people mad, and some sad, and others glad. Those who become mad at the preaching of God's word are the ones who want to continue in their sin and wrong practices. Since the word of God condemn such things therefore they get mad when they hear the word. These are the people who represent the crowd which stoned to death the evangelist Stephen. (Acts 7). Stephen condemned their sin and they got mad at him and stoned him to death. Today such people might not do what they did to Stephen then, but they resort to other things to show their madness, anger and resentment. They might quit coming to the services or quit the church, might begun to find fault with the preacher, might scoff at

his preaching, etc. Once I preached to a congregation about giving, because I felt it was not giving as the Bible teaches. Of course, the collection went up and it was more than what it used to be on previous Sundays, but there was one member in the congregation who did not like what I preached, because he was not giving according to his income. His resentment was obvious on his face and to show it more clearly he began to put in the collection only two rupees from that Sunday onward. After a few months, on another Sunday morning, I was again speaking to the same group of Christians, and I said something more on the scriptural giving. This time he put only fifty paise in the collection, of course, to show his anger. I am afraid, if I get another opportunity in future to speak to the same congregation about giving, this particular member might quit giving altogether. Should one quit preaching because of such people? "Preach the word," said Paul, "be instant in season, out of season; rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2).

There was a certain rich man who once came to our Lord with the question: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Since this man lived under the Old Testament law of Moses, Jesus told him to keep the law. The rich man's reply was: "All these have I observed from my youth up: what lack I yet?" "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come take up the cross, and follow me." But the next verse reads, "And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17:22). Those who love their possessions and themselves and their mother, father, daughter and son more than the Lord can never be happy by hearing the Lord's word, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth the son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.....If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother; and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:26; cf. Matthew 6:33). No doubt, some today go away sad and grieved after hearing God's powerful word because they are not ready to give up the love of the world.

But what the Lord said then is true also today: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' (Matthew 10:39).

When Peter and the other postles first preached the gospel, in the city of Jerusalem, to a large crowd of more than three thousand people, the record says, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). What a grand attitude ! You know what Peter had preached to them? Of course, he preached Jesus unto them, but he had charged them by saying, "Him, being delivered by the detirminate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (2:23). But after hearing that Jesus, whom they had crucified, is the Son of God and that he died to save them, they were cut to the heart, they realized their sin and were extremly sorry and asked, "What shall we do?" that is, how can we be forgiven or what should we do to be saved from our sin? We note that Peter's reply to them was the same what Jesus had asked them to preach everywhere on earth, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (2:38; cf. Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46,47). But especially note verse 41 which says: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." They had gladly received the word of the Lord and did what they were commanded to do. They didn't get mad at what they had heard, neither were they sad when they were told to repent and be baptized, but they were glad, and gladly they received the word of the Lord and obeyed it. Because they were convinced that if they would do what the Lord has said then they will be saved and will have the eternal life in heaven as He has promised. What is your attitude toward God's word? How do you hear?

Now Or Never

Francis David

Thank be to God that we are still alive by his grace and mercy. Thousands of persons die daily and that means they have gone for ever. They cannot come back. But the Bible says that blessed are they which die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13). One of these days we have to leave this world. The thing is that when we die, whether we be in the Lord or without him? The word of God clearly says that we all have to die once and after that we have to face the judgment (Heb. 9:27). Have you obeyed his will? Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ in order to be saved?

When we go to the Bible, we read about a man whose name was Felix. Apostle Paul preached to him the gospel, but after hearing little, he told Paul that please stop now, I don't want to hear more and I will hear thee some other time. We know that that next time or chance never came for Felix. There are many in this world who are like Felix. They always act like Felix. They never reach to the point of obeying the gospel. Perhaps you are the one who is doing the same thing. After receiving so many issues of the Bible Teacher and having knowledge of the gospel, and knowing what one has to do to obey the gospel, you are putting off your salvation. How sad it is, that the people like Felix die without the gospel of Christ which has the power to save the sinners (Rom. 1:16). My, friend, you have the time and opportunity upon this earth to obey the gospel....Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (II Cor. 6:2). The day you hear the gospel, you have an opportunity to obey the same because you may not have the second chance. We have a notable character in the New Testament in Acts chapter 8, where we read about an Ethiopian man. This particular Ethiopian man serves as a very good example for those who are putting off their salvation. When Philip preached to him about Christ, we see that he responded immediately and as a result he obeyed the gospel at the spot without arguing with the preacher. Do you know why did he do it? Because he knew the necessity of obeying the gospel.

Will you obey the gospel now? the decision is yours. We urge you to obey the gospel by believing in God and his Son Jesus (Heb. 11:6; John 14:1); confess Christ as God's Son (Matt. 10:32); repent of your sins and be baptised NOW (Acts 2:37). Now is the time for you to become a child of God and have his great salvation, because you may NEVER have the chance again to do so. Think about it seriously. Obey the Gospel. Act now.

Unity

W. Edwin Kearley

Paul wrote, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4 : 3). Unity is essential to peace. Unity is necessary to please God. Jesus prayed for unity among his followers. He 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, and the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one." (John 17 : 20-22).

A lack of unity is a contributing cause to infidelity and atheism. It has always been a fault of man to allow the sinful acts of man, who professes to follow God to reflect on God. Though there is no justification for so doing. Christians should not be divided and lead men astray by their faulty lives.

What are some of the causes of disunity? (1) A lack of respect for the standard of authority is one cause of disunity. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write what he breathed into their minds. After promising the apostles he would build his church, Jesus said, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." (Matthew 16 : 19).

Peter tells us this revelation was complete in the first century. He informed, "According as his divine power Hath Given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (2

Peter 1 : 3). **Hath given** is past tense. No new revelation can be expected.

What can we expect to receive from that which is revealed ? Paul tells us, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect (complete (A.S.V.), thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3 : 16-17). The New Testament is scripture as well as the Old Testament.

The word of God must be rightly divided. Paul taught, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, Rightly Dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2 : 15). This is very important in bringing about unity. There is no room for a private interpretation. Peter stated this truth, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." (2 Peter 1 : 20). God does not tell one person something and tell another something which contradicts what he had told the first one.

There are certain rules one must follow to correctly interpret God's word. There have been three dispensations of time. They are the Patriarchial age, the Mosaic age, and the Christian age. During the Patriarchial age, God spoke directly to the father of the family. Patriarch means father. God then gave his law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. During this period, God spoke to man through the law and the prophets. During the Christian age, God speaks through his Son. Jesus declared, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28 : 18).

On the Mount of transfiguration, Moses, Elijah, and Jesus were transfigured. Peter wanted to build a tabernacle for each. But while Peter was speaking, a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17 : 5).

Division is so wide spread that most religious people have accepted it as being necessary. The inspired John wrote, "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath

both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9). Doctrine does matter. Division over matters of the doctrine of Christ is sinful.

However, there must be an allowance made for the growth of all of us in our knowledge and practice of God's will. There must be freedom of discussion. Open discussion is the medium of unity if we are willing to let the Bible be our standard of authority.

The Bible must interpret itself. It teaches by direct commands. Some commands are specific commands. They limit the sphere of activity. The command, "Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16 : 15) is specific. Only the gospel is to be preached and it is to be preached to every creature.

Other commands are general. The command to "Go into all the world" is general. We are not limited as to how we are to go. Even in the days of the apostles, the apostles used every means of transportation that was available. We are at liberty to use the pulpit, radio, T.V., the printed page, film strips, flannel graphs, puppets, chalkboards, etc. . . . , to preach the gospel. This command involves advertising, a place to preach and hear the gospel and the convenience of the place to meet. The general command leaves actions to opinion and wisdom.

In the first century, there is no record of church ownership of property. The church at Troas met in an upper story. (Acts 20 : 8). The church met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila. (Romans 16 : 5; 1 Corinthians 16 : 19). Paul addressed Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and "thy church in the house." (Philemon 2).

Since buildings are built by the wisdom of the church, their use is left up to the wisdom of the elders. Since they are wise men, it would not be used to do anything wrong in and of itself.

The early church practiced fellowship. We read of the church in Jerusalem as "They continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." (Acts 2 : 42).

Jude had condemned some who were imitating Cain's, Balaam's, and Korah's sins. He then said, "These are spots in

your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear . . ." (Jude 12). The revised version reads as follows, "These are they who are hidden rocks in your love feasts with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves." Adam Clarke commented, "Among the ancients, the rich members of the church made an occasional general feast, at which all the members attended, and the poor and the rich ate together. The fatherless, the widows, and the strangers were invited to these feasts, and their eating together was a proof of their love to each other; such entertainments were called love feasts. The love feasts were at first celebrated before the Lord's Supper, in process of time they appear to have been not at any substitute for it." (Clarke's Comments on Jude 12, Clarke's Commentary Pg. 954).

Paul's rebuke of the Corinthian church was an abuse of both the Love Feast and the Lord's Supper. (1 Corinthians 11 : 17-22).

The Joy of Soul-Winning

Dub McClish

Soul-winning is the most important work in the world. It alone was the sufficient cause for the Word to become flesh and dwell among men. (John 1 : 14; Luke 19 : 10). After Jesus provided means through his atoning blood by which souls may be won and saved from sin, he sent his disciples out upon the incomparable task of soul-winning. But soul-winning is not merely a task or duty, although it is certainly that. It is a surpassing privilege that brings a manifold joy each time a soul is won by the gospel.

Soul-Winning Brings Joy To Heaven

"Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15 : 10). Since the first sin, the whole interest of heaven has been the redemption of the human race. God spent several centuries bringing his plan of redemption to fruition. (Galatians 4 : 4). Would it not be the wonder of all wonders if the heavenly hosts

were indifferent when men choose to obey the gospel and be saved? The populace of heaven is no less thrilled when the redeemed go out seeking the souls of those yet lost. How much joy have you brought to the angels?

Soul-Winning Brings Joy To The Soul-Winner

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm 126 : 6). There are many joys and thrills to be experienced in the Christian life, but only one outshines that of becoming a Christian : sowing the seed and reaping the harvest of the soul of another !

Soul-Winning Brings Joy To All The Saints

When Paul and Barnabas reported the conversion of many Gentiles, "they caused great joy unto all the brethren." (Acts 15:3). There are some few who could care less if the gospel is taken to the lost, but most saints rejoice greatly at the news of every soul won, regardless of who won it. The genuine heart can never be jealous or indifferent to the success of others in winning souls.

Soul-Winning Brings Joy To The Soul Won

After his baptism, the Ethiopian eunuch "went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8 : 39). The joy of the discovery and obedience of truth, the release from the guilt of sin, the entering into a new life and the hope of eternal life all combine to make the moment of conversion a source of incomparable rejoicing ! No wonder Solomon said, "He that is wise winneth souls." (Proverbs 11 : 30).

Coming In—Or Going Out?

Edsel Burleson

The apostle Paul once told the elders of the church at Ephesus "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20 : 35). Jesus told his disciples, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be

your servant : even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20 : 26-28).

One of the great problems among the Lord's people is wanting things coming our way. Many, seemingly, have never grasped the concept of service. Some must have it going their way or they take their "marbles" and go some place else.

How wonderful a work would be if each person involved would determine to serve rather than be served, and fully realize that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Several years ago Mid McKnight told the following true story about a San Antonio preacher that illustrates this truth in a beautiful way.

The preacher drove his new car given him by his brother, downtown to tend to some business. When he returned to his parked car, he found a small, very dirty, urchin admiring the car and softly rubbing his hand over the brand new satiny finish.

"Do you like it ?" The preacher asked, smiling. "Yes, sir," the boy replied. "Is it yours ?" "Yes," said the preacher. "My brother gave it to me."

The boy hesitated, then unexpectedly replied : "I wish I could be a brother like that."

The preacher was nonplussed because he had certainly expected the lad to say, "I wish I had a brother like that."

The preacher, his heart melting, then asked the boy if he would like to take a ride. But the boy answered simply : "I am too dirty." "You may be dirty on the outside, but you are mighty clean on the inside," the preacher responded. "I think it would do my car good for you to ride in it." They got in the car and soon the boy began to urge that the preacher take certain streets. It was easy to see the lad wanted the preacher to drive through his neighbourhood.

It was understandable that the boy would want his playmates to see the shiny, new car that he was riding in, so the preacher

complied and soon found himself in an alley outside of a run-down garage apartment.

The boy jumped out of the car and ran quickly up the steps. In a short while the preacher heard footsteps returning. They were far more laboured than when they were going up. The first thing he saw were the dirty bare feet of his little street friend and the next were the lifeless, withered legs of another boy, whom he learned was his little friend's brother, being carried down the steps.

Seating his brother on the bottom step, the boy said : "Harry, see, it's just like I told you. One day I am going to buy you a car just like that."

He then looked up at the preacher and explained : "You see, mister, Harry can't walk. I go downtown and look at all the nice things in the store windows and come home and try to tell Harry what it is all about, but I can't tell it very good. Some day I am going to make enough money to buy a car for Harry so he can see for himself."

Where is our attention centered ? Upon things coming our way ? Or, upon that which makes the other person happy ?

The Cross Of Christ

John G. Shaver

The peerless apostle Paul relates, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). By the cross of Christ is not meant the mere wood on which he was crucified. It is superstition, and not piety, which is strengthened by handling and contemplating crucifixes. The word of God is void of any authority for the use or venerating the sign of the cross. By the cross the apostle refers to the suffering and death of the Redeemer, that death by which atonement was made for the sins of the world. To glory signifies to boast, or delight in. Three propositions will place the subject of the text in its fulness before us.

First, those things highly prized by others were despised by the apostle. There is an obvious tendency in the human breast to boast of something other than God. The Jews boasted that they were the children of Abraham. So also might Paul, but he did not. Pious ancestors will not avail, unless we possess their virtues and excellencies of obedience to God's will. The Pharisees boasted of their great superiority over others; they were those separated ones, the peculiarly holy of the people. Paul, in his ignorance, no doubt gloried in this; but when he was enlightened by the gospel, the spirituality of the law and his own sinfulness were made manifest. Spiritual pride and glorying is monstrous in the sight of the Lord. Who can stand in the Divine presence? Who is justified when God judges? Now Paul affirms that he is "less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8), and that now Jesus is all, and he is nothing. Men often boast of their learning and talent. So might the apostle, but he did not. With regard to education, it had been under the distinguished Gamaliel. Paul possessed a mind of the highest order, yet of these things he did not boast. Men often boast of their civil distinctions and immunities. So might Paul. Besides being exalted as a distinguished and zealous Pharisee, he was a Roman citizen. Yet, however others might exalt in these things, Paul did not. He cared not for the wealth and honors of this world, for all these things he counted as dross for Christ.

Second, that which was treated with the greatest contempt was the object of the apostle's glorying. Everything connected with Christianity was hateful and odious, both to the Jews and pagans, especially the preaching of Christ and him crucified. In the estimation of the people, the person and rank of Christ were contemptible. His doctrines were so—humility, meekness and mercy. His condescension was so—the minister of the poor and of the vile. The universality of his gospel was so, especially to the Jews. Hence, when he referred to the widow of Sarepta, and to Naaman, they tried to cast him headlong. His disciples were so; they were lowly fishermen. But most of all his cross was so. In this his reputation and station in life were assailed. He now became as a slave, his character was vilified, he was ranked with malefactors. Hence his cross everywhere was a stigma upon his followers; and has been so everywhere and to this day, that the carnal mind has hated and despised his cross. Yet this was the apostle's object of

supreme love and glorying. He wrote and preached about it everywhere.

Third, The apostle had the highest possible reasons for glorying in the cross of Christ. From these reasons we must select the most interesting and prominent. As we look at the cross of Christ we see the curse removed from our guilty and helpless world. But how could he redeem the world? How could he roll away the black cloud of divine displeasure? By becoming a curse for us. He was tried and sentenced, enduring the painful death of the cross, standing in the place of transgressors. We see that all the blessings of salvation flow from the cross. There is pardon (Col. 1:18), there is peace (Col. 1:20-21), and there is sanctification or holiness (I Jno. 1:7). The cross of Christ furnishes us with our plea in prayer, a way of access to God. What is the great argument which renders prayer effective? It is the finished work of Christ upon the cross. Here all the covenant of peace was ratified; here all the fulness of salvation was obtained; here all the promises of God are fulfilled. There had been no grace, no mercy or hope, but for the death of Christ. The sinner would have had law, justice, holiness and truth against him. We see the cross of Christ as the great incentive to the love and service of God. The unselfish love of God kindles ours. When we observe what the cross really is we find that we are not our own, but we are bought with a price and give ourselves to God in complete submission to his will. We see in the cross the only constraining power to induce us to exercise love and mercy to our fellow-man. With an understanding of the cross we cannot be revengeful, haters, malevolent or evil.

What think ye of the cross of Christ? Do you, as Paul, glory in it? These are evident signs: faith in him who died on that cross, and in his gospel (Jno. 8:24; Mk. 16:15-16; Heb. 11:6), repentance of the sin that has separated us from God (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30), confession of him who died on the cruel cross of Calvary (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10), baptism into him who died on that cross (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27), and a grateful devotedness of ourselves to his service and glory (Rev. 2:10). The rejectors of the cross of Christ must perish. There will be no other Saviour, no other remedy for sin. Is it any wonder that Paul, with a contrite and loving heart said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ....."?

An Adequate Library

John Waddey

Folks who know the author know that he is a connoisseur of fine books. Some 8,000 volumes fill his shelves. Yet all of these volumes would readily be sacrificed if necessary for the one book that is superior to them all. Sir Walter Scott put it well when he said, "There is but one Book!" referring to the sacred volume. Patrick Henry said, "There is a Book worth all other books in the world!"

Even if the Bible were the only book in one's possession he would be able to be a knowledgeable man, for it is a multifaceted book that provides wisdom for many fields.

I. The Bible is my *History* book. It alone tells me of the origin of the race and the origin of sin. It relates the beginning of the Jewish nation, that remarkable people who left their mark stamped on the world's record. The Bible records the beginning and development of the Scheme of Redemption and the earthly life of Jesus. It reports the beginning of Christianity and its early trials and triumphs. It is especially valuable in that it tells me God's plan of history. Through it I know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men and setteth over them whomsoever he will (Dan. 4:25). Although I do not know what the future holds, I do know who holds the future, thanks to my Bible.

II. My Bible is my *Law* book. It sets forth the perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:25). It teaches me the proper code to live by, i.e., "the will of the Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Jesus says we will be judged by his word in the last day (John 12:48).

III. My Bible is a book of *Philosophy*. Philosophy is the love of wisdom. It is the science which investigates the facts and principles of reality or truth. Philosophy has to do with practical or moral wisdom. Jesus affirmed that God's word is truth (John 17:17). Isaiah challenged his generation to look to Scripture and if men do not speak according to this word, there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:20). In the 19th Psalm, David eulogized the Scriptures saying, "the ordinances of Jehovah are true and righteous altogether, more to be desired are they than fine gold..." (vs. 9-10).

The man who searches for *truth* will find it in his Bible. Isaac Newton wrote, "I account the Scriptures of God the most sublime philosophy."

IV. The Bible is my *Psychology* book. It tells me about mankind. It explains our origin and nature. We were created by God in his own image (Gen. 1:26-27). It explains the universal problem of sin (Rom. 5:12). It helps us understand the effect of sin on man's soul (Eph. 2:1). Scripture provides answers to the problems and needs of the race. The secret of how to be happy and contented in life is set forth (Phil. 4:12-13). The path to freedom from condemnation is given (Rom. 8:1-2).

V. My Bible is my *Political Science* book. It sets forth my policy toward men of other races and nations. It forbids respect of persons (Jas. 2:9). I must make no distinction between men on the basis of race or wealth. There are only two classes of men: those saved and those lost (Acts 10:34-35). My duty is declared. I must preach the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15-16).

VI. The Bible is my *Accounting* book. It informs me that I personally have no assets to offer for my salvation—only liabilities. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:23). All of our righteous deeds are as filthy rags when laid before God (Is. 64:6). But Christ paid the price to balance my books. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus, once for all (Heb. 10:10). When I obey his prescribed will my account is paid in full, since I have remission of my sin (Acts 2:38).

VII. My Bible is my *Management* book. It instructs me how to manage my time, my business, my home and my life. I am to seek God's kingdom and righteousness before the temporal things of life (Matt. 6:33). As a parent I must nurture my children in God's ways (Eph. 6:4). With Christ in charge, all my management problems are over. Christ lives in us and chooses our changes for us (Gal. 2:20).

VIII. The Bible is my *Finance* book. It shows me how to prosper. If I give unto God, it will be given unto me: "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over . . ." (Lk. 6:38). It tells me what place God should occupy in my financial program. He must receive "the first fruits" of my income (Prov. 3:9). When the Macedonian Saints learned this they were blest

indeed (II Cor. 9:1-5). It tells me that I must learn to give purposefully (II Cor. 9:7).

IX. The Bible is my *Insurance* book. It reveals to me the only insurance that will last for eternity. The ordinary kind of life insurance pays off to my survivors when I die. The Bible offers an *eternal* life insurance. The benefits consist of eternal life in the heavenly realms. "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). We have a hope that is like an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast . . . (Heb. 6:19). Our Bible sets forth the conditions for enrollment and the premiums thereof: unflinching trust in the Lord (Heb. 11:6), a renunciation of sin (Acts 17:30-31), and immersion into the one body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). Such will wash away all sins (Acts 22:16) and secure for us all the privileges of divine sonship (Gal. 3:26-29).

"Holy Bible, book divine
Precious treasure thou art mine
Lamp to my feet and light to my way
To guide me safely home."

Will You Listen to God's Word or Man's?

Roger Shiflet

In Matthew 15:8-9 Jesus Christ spoke of some people whose worship was empty because they taught their own doctrines rather than God's doctrines. Today people who claim to follow Christ still disregard God's teaching when it conflicts with their own doctrine or creed. It is very sad that many people fail to study the Bible for themselves choosing rather to entrust their soul's salvation to the creeds and teachings of human religious leaders. They listen to men rather than to God. In this article we will look at several popular religious doctrines which are not taught in the Bible and which, therefore, we must not believe.

Often men will say that one church is just as good as another. But God's word teaches that God has authorized only one church.

The church is like a bride to Christ, (Ephesians 5:31-32), and Christ has only one bride, not many different brides. Christ "purchased" only one church with his blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-27). Furthermore, Jesus promised to build but one church (Matthew 16:18), not many different churches which teach different doctrines. If we desire to please Christ, we should not establish, support, or hold membership in any church which teaches doctrines different from what God's word teaches. May we not disregard the word of God in this matter.

Also, man will sometimes say that people can go to heaven no matter what they believe and practice religiously, just as long as they are sincere and honest in what they believe. Sincerity and honesty are necessary for pleasing God, but they are not sufficient alone. A person can lose his soul by sincerely following the false teaching of men. Listen to what the Word of God says: "*Enter ye in at the strait gate [a gate which has its sides close together] : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it . . . There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Matthew 7:13-14; Proverbs 14:12). Before he obeyed the gospel of Christ, the apostle Paul was honest and sincere in what he believed, but he was still wrong. In Acts 23:1 Paul said that he had always lived in good conscience before God (in other words, he had always done what he thought was right). And yet in I Timothy 1:13-15 he describes himself as having been a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, and an unbeliever. For many years before obeying the gospel, Paul had been very religious, but misguided; dedicated, but in error; sincere, but mistaken; honest, but wrong. Being sincere in our beliefs is not sufficient. We must sincerely accept God's way rather than the ways of men.

Also, men will sometimes say that a person is saved by faith alone, apart from any works of obedience. But this error is answered in James 2:24: "*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*" In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a great list of Old Testament men and women who were blessed by God because of their faith. Not one time was the blessing received before the person's faith was demonstrated by his

or her actions. Again the apostle Paul furnishes a good example on this point. Paul was on the road to Damascus when he came to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 9:1-9). But he was not saved at that point. We know this because: (1) He asked what he must do (Acts 22:10); (2) Jesus told him to go into the city where he would be told what he "*must do*" (Acts 9:6); (3) Ananias came to him and told him, "*... arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16). So it is today. Only when a sinner's faith in Christ motivates him to repent of his sins and be immersed in water can he have his sins washed away.

Also, men sometimes say that once a person is saved, sin cannot again overcome him and cause him to be eternally lost. But in Luke chapter 8, Jesus told a parable about the different ways in which people respond to the gospel. In verse 13 he said that some, when they have heard God's word, receive it with joy and believe for a while. But in time of temptation, they fall away. Furthermore, Paul said he had to control himself so that his conduct would not cause him to be rejected (fall away from Christ and be lost) (I Corinthians 9:27). Through the apostle Peter, God warned Christians to be diligent lest they fall (II Peter 1:10). It is possible for a Christian to be overcome by sin and be lost. To whom will you listen—God or man?

Also, men sometimes teach that a sinner can be saved without baptism. But God through his word says, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). Notice also that redemption and salvation are found only in Christ (II Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:7). The only way a sinner can enter into Christ is by being baptized (immersed) into him: "*Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Romans 6:3-4). "*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). It is certain that no sinner can be saved without the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5. And that "one baptism" is immersion in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:36-38).

Finally, men will sometimes say that a person can be baptized by having some water sprinkled on him or by having some water poured on him, as well as by being immersed. But notice how God's word shows that baptism is immersion: (1) There is "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5); (2) Baptism requires "much water" (John 3:23); (3) Baptism involves going down into the water (Acts 8:38); (4) Baptism is a burial (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4). Only immersion in water fits all these requirements and descriptions.

A person must not let a man-made doctrine replace God's word and keep him from doing what is right in God's sight. May God help us at all times to love, honor, obey, and teach his holy word.

Spiritual Gifts and Signs

R.C. Oliver

Jesus said : "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17-18).

Though Jesus taught that these signs would follow them that believe, and though these signs did follow the early believers, as any acquainted with the Acts of Apostles knows, whether or not they were to be perpetuated in the church is something that Jesus did not personally say. This was a subject that others sent out by him were to reveal. (John 13:20).

Paul wrote much about spiritual gifts and signs and their real purpose in the church; however, even Mark says the Lord worked with the believers "confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20), thus intimating that these signs might be a temporary arrangement, for once the word had been confirmed it would need no further confirmation. Let that be as it may, Paul, who did indeed "write . . . the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37), has written clearly upon the subject.

In fact, Paul wrote that he did not wish to have the brethren ignorant concerning these very matters ! (1 Corinthians 12:1.) So, if one wishes not to be ignorant concerning miracles, gifts, and signs, he should read and study those sections where the very purpose of the apostle was to clarify and explain these subjects. In reading what he writes here one will find that Paul introduces the gifts themselves in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, closing the chapter by exhorting them to "covet earnestly the best gifts." At the same time Paul announced to them that he would show unto them "a more excellent way" than that of spiritual gifts.

In chapter 13, Paul introduced the way of love, which is indeed a more excellent way, for he says that love is abiding; whereas, the spiritual gifts were to pass away. When that which is perfect is come, these spiritual gifts, these things in part, were to all pass away, and only faith, and hope, and love would abide. But even of these three which are to abide, love is the most excellent ! Love is enduring. Love is eternal. So, practice love, even while you may covet the best of these spiritual gifts which are soon to pass away was what Paul was saying to them.

In chapter 14, the apostle showed how they were to use these spiritual gifts while they remained in the church. This is but a brief review of what the apostle says in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12, 13 and 14, where he deals specifically with spiritual gifts, but what he wrote is sufficient to clear up the matter to every person who honestly studies what he has said.

A less used reference dealing with spiritual gifts is in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus. In Ephesians 4:8, it is affirmed that when Jesus ascended upon high, he "gave gifts unto men." I think it will be to the reader's profit to observe that Jesus gave gifts unto men; it does not affirm that he gave men ! The men to whom he gave gifts were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

Now, why did he give these gifts unto these men ? Ephesians 4:12 tells us that it was (1) For the perfecting of the saints; (2) for the work of the ministry; and (3) for the edifying of the body of Christ.

It should be observed that this was before the new Testament had been written and these men needed these gifts so as to be prepared to teach the church what the church needed to know, as well as to demonstrate that they had indeed been sent of God.

Now, what about the perpetuity of these gifts? Were they to be a permanent part of the church ministry, or were they to be temporary? The next verse, Ephesians 4:13, explains. They were to be in the church "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the fulness of Christ."

This verse harmonizes with Paul's: "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" in 1 Corinthians 13:10. One should notice that the man is now mature, or full grown; therefore, the spiritual gifts, which in the Corinthian letter Paul compares to children's toys, are to be done away. So these gifts were to last till the church reached maturity, till it had the seed of the kingdom placed within it, so that it, apart from the miraculous, could reproduce and perpetuate itself. When this mature or perfect state was reached, then these gifts were to be done away.

After almost two thousand years, can anyone intelligently question whether or not the church has reached its maturity? Is it not yet a full grown man? I doubt that anyone can honestly contend that the church is yet in its infancy, and, if not, then being mature, it should have put away these childish things long ago!

After these things in part, these children's toys, were put away, a period of faith, hope, and love was to abide. Can anyone who is aware of what is truly taking place today deny that this is indeed the very period in which we live? We can and do have faith today. We are inspired by hope today. And we do and can experience love today. However, of these three, love is the greatest, for love will continue to exist in eternity. Let us therefore think love today, believing that "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

In summary we have briefly reviewed the two main sections of Paul's treatment on spiritual gifts, which he compares with

childish things or children's toys. In this review we have learned that spiritual gifts were to remain a part of the work of the church until that which is perfect is come, or until the full manhood of the church was reached. This maturity having long since been reached, the church should have long since put away childish things, the spiritual gifts, which Paul compares to children's toys, and turned itself to greater tasks. We now have faith, hope, and love abiding with us, but the greatest of these is love. Let us resolve to work with these things that abide, so that we might glorify the Lord and be a helper to man. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:17).

Can One Prove That The Lord's Supper Must be Observed Every Sunday?

James Meadows

Some say that God has left the time of observing the Lord's Supper in the realm of human judgment. If God has done this, then it is the only memorial in which he has so acted (cf. Exodus 12:3; Leviticus 23:15-16). By advancing step by step it is easy to establish what God has revealed about when the Lord's Supper is to be observed.

FIRST, the early church assembled. Paul said to the Corinthians, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place." (I Corinthians 14:32). Paul and Barnabas assembled a whole year with the church at Antioch (Acts 11:26). The Hebrew writer admonishes Christians to "not forsake the assembly..." (Hebrews 10:25).

SECOND, the early church assembled on a stated day which was called "the first day of the week." (I Corinthians 16:1,2). The church at Troas came together upon the first day of the week to "break bread." (Acts 20:7). The first day of the week is "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). It was on this day that Christ was raised from the dead (Mark 16:9); Pentecost was celebrated (Acts 2:1; Leviticus 23:15, 16); the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit

(Acts 2:1-4); the church was established (Acts 2:1-47); and the gospel was fully preached as a fact (Acts 2:1-47). It is fitting that the 'Church of the Lord' (Acts 20: 28 ASV) should assemble around the 'Lord's table' (I Corinthians 10:20, 21), to eat the 'Lord's supper' (I Corinthians 11:20), upon the 'Lord's day' (Revelation 1:10).

THIRD, the early church met upon the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper. A stated purpose of the saints assembling upon the first day of the week was to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; 20:7). The Corinthians came together on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1,2) to observe the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20). The church at Corinth came together (I Corinthians 14:23); they came together on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:2); they came together to observe the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20). Since every week has a first day, then the early church assembled every first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper.

Eternal Life

Bobby Key

There are four facts that we hate to face. Fact one: We are growing old. Fact two: We shall reap what we sow. Fact three: We must die. Fact four: The Judgment is certain. We are all disturbed by these stubborn facts. However, we must face them honestly in order to grow old gracefully, reap a good harvest, face death courageously, and stand approved in the last day.

Death would be unbearable if it were the end of everything and only the blackness of nothingness lay ahead. But death may be swallowed up in victory (I Cor. 15:24). Every normal and thoughtful person is interested in eternal life. Perhaps none of us is able to fully comprehend it, but we all want to experience it.

Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent" (John 17:3). When the average person is asked to define eternal life, he will likely say, "a life which will never end." However,

Jesus was discussing a certain kind of life. Duration is not the only feature which describes the meaning of eternal; quality must also enter into the definition. If we expect to live with God forever, we must have a quality of life.

For a better understanding, we need to know that the words "life", "soul", "character", and "personality" are used in describing the same thing. All four designations belong to the same individual and if he enters heaven at the last day, he will enter with his life, soul, character, and personality. Not one of them will be left behind. (McGarvey's Class Notes Vol. 4, pages 73-74.)

When any person is born again (John 3:3-5), he is redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and a new is imparted into him (Rom. 6:3,4). He becomes a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). This redeemed soul is expected to spend the remainder of his earthly existence developing that life and growing a character which God can take into the society of heaven. God wants his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

The Bible tells us what God did to make us partakers of His Divine Nature, and then tells us what we must do to make the process complete. Eternal life is the ultimate result of this happy combination.

Since Christ is the "author of life" (Acts 3:15), the quality of life which lasts forever is found only in Him. He is able to grant eternal life to all those the Father has given Him (John 17:2). "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12). "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his Son" (I John 5:11). There is no life, physical or spiritual apart from Christ.

Christ is our life. He is the way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). The Christian may enjoy an abundant life on this earth while he awaits the eternal life in heaven. We are not now in actual possession of eternal life. "In hope of eternal life" (Titus 1:2) is the promise of the Father. As long as we are in the flesh it is possible for us to lose our life (soul), however righteous we may have been at any given time. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36, ASV). One who will not obey the Son, in a very practical sense, is an unbeliever.

Whose Fool Are You?

Dalton Key

The world has never thought much of Christ or his church. The early church was persecuted from the very beginning. Her leaders were dragged before the council, beaten and threatened not to preach in the name of Jesus. Acts 4:5. It was not long until the persecution had become widespread, causing the early Christians of Jerusalem to be scattered abroad. Acts 8:1-4. Stephen, Acts 7 and James, Acts 12, were both martyred for the sake of Christ. Tradition has it that Paul, persecuted often and severely, was finally beheaded by command of Nero. The first century church of Christ chose purity over popularity.

Looking down in disdain upon the oppressed church, a sinful world has shrugged and said: Such foolishness. Surely, only a fool would give his life in death for a Master he could not see. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock and unto the Greeks foolishness, I Cor. 1:23. The word foolishness here is translated from the Greek word *moria*, from which our moron is derived. Paul accuses the world of looking upon the Christian religion as moronic and upon Christian people as morons. Alluding to this distorted conception, Paul later proclaims, We are fools for Christ's sake, I Cor. 4:10.

Serving and praying to a God we cannot see; trusting in blood, shed nearly two thousand years ago, to wash away sins; earnestly desiring a heaven which we can not adequately describe in human terms; shaping our lives in imitation of a poor, persecuted peasant who lived centuries ago, a world views all such as nonsense, foolishness.

I read of an eccentric old man who made a wooden board. On the front he had written, I'm a fool for Christ's sake. He would wear it on the street and go up to saloon doors where the men inside laughed at him. Here was a self-proclaimed fool. They laughed, until he turned around; for on the reverse side he had written, Whose fool are you? I would rather be thought a fool for Christ's sake than be a fool without him. How about you?

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