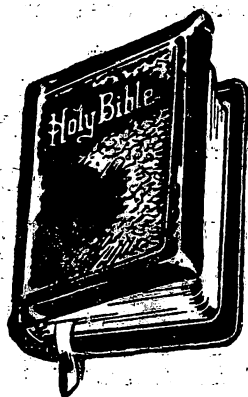


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Editorial

The Kind of People the Lord Needs

We get letters all time from people who are offering their services to the Lord's cause. The only thing is that one hundred percent of these individuals are looking for some financial help. That is, they are willing to serve the Lord if they are given a salary. What if there is no salary? Then they look to other sources. Such people do not love the Lord. They are not interested in souls. They are not even interested in their own soul. They are but hirelings and they stand condemned by the Lord himself. (John 10: 12, 13)

If one loves the Lord and is determined to obey him then he will preach and teach God's word whether he is supported or not. One doesn't have to be a full time worker in order to preach the gospel. As a matter of fact, the Lord needs people who love him and the souls of men enough that they will take a secular job to care for their material needs, and then in their spare time, on holidays, etc., use the opportunities they have to spread the gospel of Christ. One such person will do more good than a hundred of the other kind.

You will remember that Paul was even willing to labour with his own hands to be able to continue in the work of the Lord. It is true, that he did receive some support from his brethren, but he was also willing to do the other. The Lord needs more tent-makers today and fewer of those who would rob God in the name of religion.

The Lord's church in India is still young. Compared to the masses of people here, it has only a few in number. It is not yet strong enough to think about supporting local members as preachers. At least, this is true in the Delhi area. So what must it do? It must be patient and continue to work and grow, looking to the day that it will be strong enough, numerically and financially to support its own preachers. Even then though this matter of supporting preachers should not be over-emphasized. From every point of view, it would appear that the church is much stronger where all of the members feel their duty and responsibility to teach others, and do what they can, rather than to fall into the rut of looking to one man or two to do the work for the whole church.

Again, so many people who come expressing an interest in the gospel usually have ulterior motives. It doesn't take long to find out what they are really after. This often times amounts to a job, a loan, or some kind of material help that they must have immediately. To hear them tell it, it is a life and death proposition. If some help is given then they move along and that is usually the end of it. If the help is not given, then they merely move over to the next source. These people are not honest and sincere. They have no interest in religion except to use it to their own selfish gain. It is very difficult to ever reach such people with the truth.

The Lord needs people who are genuinely concerned about their souls. They realize that they are sinners. They know they are lost. They have a desire to be saved. They are honest and sincere. On hearing the truth, they want to obey it. Not only so, but they will obey it. Then it is not a matter of what they can get, but what can they do for the Lord. They want to help to further the cause of Christ. They therefore do what they can. Again, let it be emphasized that these are the kind of people the Lord needs. With these kind of people the church can grow.

What kind of person are you ? Who are you ? What are you ? What category do you fall into ? Are you interested in serving the Lord or seeing if you can use the religion of Christ to obtain your own material gains ? Is your emphasis on the material or the spiritual ?

Please keep in mind that the Lord's church is in the world but it is not of the world. It is made up of human beings with material needs but it is a spiritual organization. It is not in the give-away business (materially) but its purpose is to share Christ with a lost and dying world. The material gains of this life are but side blessings, but our goal is to reach heaven, the home of the soul.

If you are genuinely interested in your soul—if you are truly want to be saved—if you are sincerely want to live for the Lord—if you are willing to share the gospel with other whether you receive anything or not—then the Lord needs you. If you are not interested in these things then the Lord is still interested in you. He wants you to know his will to learn the true values of life, to be converted, and to be saved. Then you will be different—you'll be a new person. You'll also be the kind of person the Lord needs.

The Church

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18). Jesus, who has all power in heaven and in earth also said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". (Matthew 16:18).

If we really believe in Christ then we must believe in his words as he said. Who's church did he promise to build, and how many did he promise to build? He said, "I will build my church". Is it difficult to understand? Surely not. It simply means that he promised to build HIS CHURCH, and that he promised to build ONE CHURCH, just one. The word church comes from "ekklesia" which means the called out. In other words, the church is made up of those who are called out from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Lord. (Colossians 1:13).

The church is also called "the Body of Christ" (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18; 1:24). "But now are they many members yet but one body". (1 Corinthians 12:20). "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Romans 12:4,5).

The Lord's church is composed of Christians, it's members. The church is not made of different denominations, sects or institutions. On the other hand, the Bible condemns divisions. In 1 Corinthians 1 we read of the church at Corinth. The church here was failing because there were men who were religiously dividing themselves into various groups and parties. The Holy Spirit condemned this party spirit and said, through Paul, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or

were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:13). The answer to these questions is "No". Surely Christ is not divided, and that no man was crucified for the sins of the world but Jesus, and that all were baptized in the name of Christ. Men who wear such human names religiously other than of Christ, are guilty of dividing Christ. The Bible speaks of such men as being carnal. (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Apostle Paul said that we should mark them and avoid them which cause divisions (Romans 16:17,18).

The New Testament frequently declares that there is but one body, and that this one body is the church. All Christians are instructed to: "Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives." (Ephesians 4:3).

The church of Christ is a spiritual institution, the greatest institution in the whole world. It was so precious to Christ that he purchased it with his own blood. (Acts 20:28). Christ loved it and gave himself for it. (Ephesians 5:25). Christ came to this sinful world for the purpose of building the church. It was established in Jerusalem, around A. D. 33 (Isaiah 2:2,3; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2), Christ is its founder (Matthew 16:18), and the church wears his name. (Romans 16:16; Ephesians 1:22,23). The members of the church of Christ are called Christians. (Acts 11:23; Acts 4:12).

If you are not a member of the church of Jesus Christ, then you are lost, without hope. Because Jesus is the Saviour of the church. (Ephesians 5:23). Therefore to be saved one must become a member of His church. How does one become a member of the church of Christ? The Bible says that one must believe in Christ (John 3:18; Hebrews 11:6), must repent of his sins (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3), must confess Christ (Romans 10:9,10) and must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3; 1 Peter 3:21). When a person obeys these commands of the gospel, then and only then does the Lord add him to His church. (Acts 2:47).



Is Church Attendance Necessary?

—Cleon Lyles

The question of loyalty in the assemblies of the church was not discussed until some thirty years after the beginning of the church. The first time any of the writers suggest that people were beginning to fail is recorded in Heb. 10:25, "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh." Before this time people were anxious to attend all the services of the church. Their love for the church was so great that they had an assembly every day. Just why they began to fail is not stated, but we may be able to find the reason in the events of their day and the peculiar things about human nature.

The problem may have come about because of fear. There was much persecution. However they had their enemies during the thirty years before that time. It is possible that they were losing interest. Somehow we are a people who become excited while a thing is new and then gradually become careless when time goes by. When we first become members of the church we could hardly wait from one week to the next. We really wanted to worship then. But as we became used to it we began to neglect it. Some may have begun to doubt necessity of regular attendance. Of course such a doubt did not come from knowledge of what God wanted. People sometimes doubt the necessity of worship today, but it is not because they are well versed in the scriptures. Just the opposite is true. Those who doubt are usually the people who seldom study their Bibles and do not attend teaching services often enough to learn much. It is possible that these early Christians became dissatisfied with the preacher, or elders, or Bible

teachers. Sometimes that is used for an excuse. The Lord is neglected because of our dislike for an individual. We do not know that any of these reasons existed, but most of them do today. People are still neglecting the assemblies.

The early church felt the necessity for many assemblies. They assembled each Lord's Day for worship. "Upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). "Upon the first day of the week let each one lay by in store" (I Cor. 16:2). Thus we are sure of a regular worship assembly. But they also assembled for mutual edification, which was a daily assembly. "And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46). Four purposes for assemblies are stated in one verse. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42). Thus we have teaching, fellowship, worship and devotion. With this in mind we are not at liberty to say which assembly Paul said not to forsake. We have no right to say he had any one in mind. When he said "forsake not our own assembling together," he no doubt spoke of any assembly. We have an expression like this about another matter that we understand. "Upon the first day of the week the disciples met together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). Now which first day did the writer have in mind? You answer, every first day. Surely that is true. Now use the same reasoning concerning Heb. 10:25 and you will come out at the same place.

The command for worship and fellowship arises out of the need of man as a spiritual being. Man needs to worship. One of the bitterest wails you ever heard concerns a man's natural desire to worship. Although he knew only idols, yet he said "Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more?" (Jud. 18:24). This desire for worship must be satisfied. If we will not learn to seek our satisfaction with the true God, then we

will squander it on something else, and be lost. From the heart of one who had learned to worship the true God, there comes this statement, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Psa. 84:2).

The mind and body need employment. They perish without it. No reader needs to have this illustrated. What is true of the mind and body is also true of our religious nature. When the Jewish nation had almost completely tumbled in, one thing that kept it alive was, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another" (Mal. 3:16). They kept up their meetings together. Jesus recognized the need of such. Hence he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". It would be well just here that you read the verses that follow Paul's statement concerning the assembly. From verse twenty-six to verse thirty-two of Hebrews we learn how one can fall who neglects his God. Sins wilfully. Rejects atoning sacrifice. Treads under foot the Son of God. Counts the blood unholy. Does despite to the spirit of grace, and faces a fearful judgment. The man who neglects the assemblies, neglects God.

Several questions often enter our minds when we discuss things of this kind. One asks, "Which assembly is the most important?" I am afraid to say. If one is forced to make a choice between them because of circumstances, naturally he should choose the day of worship. No one can go to heaven without worshipping God. If one is deprived of worshipping God on Lord's day, he had better get rid of whatever is preventing him. But those who are not forced to make a choice have no choice. Do we think the Lord will be pleased with us if we had rather be somewhere else than to assemble with his children? Many of us who inconsistently argue that we do not have to attend any assembly but the Sunday morning assembly, and are permitted to neglect it when something special occurs, will join ourselves to clubs which call meeting only a few hours before they assemble, and we will feel it our duty to drop everything and be there. Do

you suppose the Lord ever compares our feelings in such matters with our feelings for his assemblies? Because we want to go to heaven, it might be well to do some serious thinking just here.

(o - o)

What Is The Plea Of The Church of Christ?

—Corl H. Bates

Many people are misled as to the nature and purpose of the plea of the Church of Christ. In fact, to many it is the **misunderstood church**. Many statements you may have heard are made plain when you understand why they were made. What then is the plea of the church of Christ.

I. It is a plea for a complete return to the Bible for authority in religion. The matter of authority is central to its plea. The New Testament is a complete and perfect guide for those who would follow Christ. (II Tim. 3:16): The motto of a popular magazine published by members of the church of Christ is "First Century Christianity in the twentieth century". Moses Lard, a famous gospel preacher of the 19th century, put in these words, "The restoration was to consist in holding precisely and only what is taught in the word of God and in founding our practices strictly thereon... the final end to which the restoration should look is a complete return to primitive Christianity in doctrine in practice and in spirit." **Lard's Quarterly 1836.** By having a thus saith the Lord for all believed, taught and practiced members can readily invite an open Bible investigation on any Bible question.

II. It is a plea for Bible unity. Everyone today sees this need. History has demonstrated that we cannot have unity so long as men cling to human traditions and creeds. The Bible is an inspired creed and the manuals are uninspired creeds that divide the world and hinder the progress of Christianity...Our motto should be, truth first and unity second and unity only in truth. This is why churches of Christ say to "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent". In matters of opinion men should have the greatest possible liberality but in matters of faith there must be unity.

It is simply a matter of going back to the first century and tracing the plan of unity set forth by inspired apostles. Are you contributing to division by espousing a human creed?

III. It is a plea for Christ's plan for his church. It should be obvious that the wrong name, the wrong creed, the wrong plan of salvation, the wrong worship and the wrong organization could not result in the right church. It is also obvious that the right name, the right creed, the right plan of salvation, the right worship and the right organization could not result in the wrong church. Why not be safe and follow the Bible pattern.

IV. It is a plea for the dignity of Christ's church. Many say, "It doesn't make any difference which church you belong to". Then why not belong to them all? Others say, "A person does not have to be a member of the church in order to be saved". If so, what good is the church? (Acts 2:47) My friends, Jesus did not build and die for a non-essential institution. I want to be a member of the church that Jesus built and for which Paul preached. The church of Christ is not a denomination and it is a church that is over 1900 years old. The same process that makes you a Christian adds you to this glorious institution.

V. It is a plea to restore the Bible plan of salvation. In the book of Acts we have about nine concrete examples of conversion. They are examples for us today. Please consi-

der carefully the following principle. The only way you can be sure that your conversion is genuine is whether or not it is like those in the book of Acts. The church of Christ asks men to go by the Bible instead of feelings in conversion. Is your conversion like the multitudes on Pentecost? To what church did they belong?

Why not attend the services of the church of Christ in your community and diligently compare what you see and hear with the Bible? INVESTIGATE and see if the truth is being taught. If it is then why not embrace it.

(°)

How the Holy Spirit Converts man

By Mac Layton

That all conversions are begun, directed, and completed by the power of the Holy Spirit cannot be denied. However, the question of how the Spirit effects conversion, whether directly or through agency, has been, and is still, a controversial matter.

Direct Operation

A "direct operation" of the Spirit is declared by many. This idea has descended to our age from the old doctrine that man is totally depraved in heart and soul and must have a miraculous spiritual operation to turn him from sin to his Heavenly Father. But that the Holy Spirit works through the agency of the revealed Word of God is the plain and irrevocable teaching of the Sacred Scriptures. Still, while proclaiming that the manner of the Spirit's working in the Christian age is through the power of the written Word, we must not be guilty of thinking the Spirit Himself is not active in our conversion.

Conversion Is Change

Conversion is the process by which man turns from sin to God. It is the "change" from the old life in sin to the new life in Christ. Conversion is not something done on us or for us, but something which is done by us. Conversion is not to be confused ; it takes place in our mind, while forgiveness takes place in the mind of God. In the process of conversion there are no new faculties or powers imparted that are felt in any **physical** way. Any theory which takes away the written Word of God in conversion, or that abrogates man's responsibility or accountability, cannot be true.

Converts Through the Word

Jesus declared that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin (John 16:8-11). He said the Holy Spirit would testify (John 15:26-27). He said the Holy Spirit would **speak**, revealing the truth, and certain things to come (John 16:13).

The Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12). The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:14). The Gospel is the power of God to save (Rom 1:16) We know, we know Him if we keep His commandments (1 John 2:3-5). Hence, the truth stands out vivid and undeniable : **The Holy Spirit converts men through the revealed and written Word of God in the New Testament !**

Each of the Divine examples of conversions in the book of Acts shows beyond doubt that the Holy Spirit converts men through the Word of God.

The Three Thousand "when they heard this" 2:37-38

The Five Thousand "Many heard the word believed." 4:4

The Samaritans..... "They believed Philip preaching", 8:12

Simon..... "believed also 8:13.

The Treasure "Philip preached unto him Jesus" 8:35-38
Soul or Tarsus "Shall be told thee what to do" 22:12
Cornelius "Words whereby thou shalt be saved" 11:14
Lydia..... "Heard attended to things spoken" 16:14
Jailor .. "Spake unto him the word" 16:32
The Corinthians..... "Hearing, believed were baptized" 18:8
The Bereans "Received the word" 17:2
The Twelve "When they heard this were baptized" 19:5

No Direct, Visible Operation

If the Holy Spirit operates in a direct way, apart from the written Word, why are there no Christians in some lands ?

If the Spirit operates directly on some, and not on others, God, becomes a respecter of persons.

No one in the New Testament ever prayed for a direct, miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit.

If men are converted without the Word of God today, how are we to distinguish between the claims of so many contradictory groups who each claim to have the Spirit ?

If the Holy Spirit operates and converts separate from the Word of God. How can we be judged by the Word in the last day ?

A direct operation takes away personal responsibility and accountability.

A direct operation of Spirit would contradict the plain passages of the Bible which tell us the Gospel is the power to save (1 Cor 1:21; Rom. 1:16 ; John 6:44 45).

The Holy Spirit is promised only to sons of God, those who obey Him, never to alien sinners (Gal, 4:6; Acts 5:32):

A direct operation of the Holy Spirit would violate the nature of man as given by God. God never violates man's freedom of choice.

Fickle Feelings

How strange that men should rely on fickle feeling rather than the bed-rock assurance of the Written Testimony of God. Some say they feel happy because they are saved; others say they are saved because they feel happy! But the only evidence of pardon vouchsafed to the sons of God is the testimony of the Spirit in the New Testament.

The Spirit bears witness with our Spirit that we are the sons of God. (Rom. 8:16). He reveals the terms of pardon. We obey. Thus we have the testimony of both our spirit and the Holy Spirit. Hence, the only infallible course to follow is to obey all the commands of the Spirit in the New Testament.

Why Be Baptized?

Volumes have been written on the subject of BAPTISM, but after all has been written and all has been said God's Word still reads:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
Mark 16:16

If YOU believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and want to be saved you need to be baptized. Jesus, himself,

placed baptism squarely between belief and salvation. "He that BELIEVETH and is BAPTIZED shall be SAVED . . ."

AGAIN GOD'S WORD READS:

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16

These words were spoken by God's messenger (Ananias) to the *believing, penitent* Saul to tell him what he needed to do. Read Acts 9:1-18; 22:6-16. IF YOU have sinned, you need to be baptized as a *penitent* believer to "wash away" your sins. If Saul was commanded by God to be baptized to wash away his sins, how can anyone entertain the idea that baptism has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins? God's word still reads, "... be baptized and wash away thy sins..."

AGAIN GOD'S WORD READS:

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal 3:27

IF YOU want to get *into Christ*, where all spiritual blessings are found (Eph. 1:3), then be "baptized into Christ."

AGAIN GOD'S WORD READS:

"... baptism doth also now save us . . ." I Peter 3:21

IF YOU want to be saved, then be baptized.

WON'T YOU:

- ★ Believe on Jesus. John 8:24 ; Heb. 11:6
- ★ Repent of your sins. Acts 2:38 ; 17:30
- ★ Confess the name of Christ. Matt. 10:32 ; Rom. 10:9, 10
- ★ Be *buried* with Christ in Baptism to wash away your sins. Acts 8:36-39 ; 22:16 ; Romans 6:3-5

IF YOU WILL, you will become a saved person and the Lord will add you to his church. Acts 2:41, 47.

Which fits the Bible?

One Need Only check the Bible requirements of baptism to see the definite ACTION involved.

| Bible Baptism Requires | Sprinkling Requires | Pouring Requires | Immersion Requires |
|---|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| ★ Water, Acts 10:47 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| ★ Much water John 3:23 | | | ✓ |
| ★ Going down into the water, Acts 8:38 | | | ✓ |
| ★ Coming up out of the water, Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:39 | | | ✓ |
| ★ A Burial, Romans 6:3, 4 | | | ✓ |
| ★ A Resurrection, Romans 6:5; Colossians 2:12 | | | ✓ |

Sprinkling and pouring do not fit the Bible description and requirements of baptism. Both are without Divine authority or approval.

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