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Can one be saved outside of the Lord's Church?

Recently a man told me that a preacher had said to him that unless he was a member of the church of Christ he would go to hell. He resented this statement and therefore used it as an excuse for not becoming a Christian. I studied with him for a while, showing him what the Bible clearly teaches, and then he was ready to obey the Lord in order that he might be added to the church that he had previously opposed.

What does the Bible say about the importance of being a member of the Lord's church? Must one be a member to go to heaven? What about those who are not members? Will they be lost? First of all, let me explain that it doesn't matter what I think about it. Neither does it matter what others think about it. We could say that one must be a member of the church of Christ to go to heaven, but that wouldn't make it so. On the other hand, there might be those who would declare that one can go to heaven without being a member of the church, but simply their saying so does not make it so. Further, one's actions cannot be accepted as proof of salvation being inside the church or outside of the church. The thing that does count is what the Bible says on this question as well as on all other matters that pertain to our salvation. Whether accepted or not, the word of God must have the final say on these points.

Again, we ask, what does the Bible say? To find out let us turn to the Bible itself. Christ says, after he had been confessed as the Son of God, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). So Christ was to build his church, and Acts 2 says it

was built. But it was the Lord who claimed that it would be his, and according to the statement itself, there would be but one. Just the fact that Christ would build the church would be enough to emphasize its importance, but to stress further the oneness of it, let us turn to Ephesians 4 : 4. Here Paul writes, "There is one body..." But what is the body? Whatever it is, there is just one. Now let's turn to Colossians 1 : 18 and let Paul identify this body. Speaking of Christ, he says, "And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." So he says that the body is the church. Then in Ephesians 1 : 22, 23 he says that the church is the body. Either way you look at it then, the body is the church and the church is the body. But remember that Paul says that there is one body. That means then that if there is one body, and it is the church, then there is but one church, and that is exactly right. Which one is it? The one that Christ promised to build. Then what about the many denominations? They are man-made and therefore are not of the Lord.

To show the importance of this church, let us now go to Ephesians 5 : 25. Listen to what it says: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." What is the writer saying here? He is saying that Christ loved the church so much that he was willing to die for it. Acts 20 : 28 says that he purchased the church with his own blood. In Ephesians 5 : 27 the same Apostle Paul declares that the Lord will eventually return for this church. Now the question is: Would Christ die for something that was not important? Surely not. Further more, would he shed his blood to purchase something that was worthless? Never. Finally, would he be returning for a church that is unimportant? No, and a thousand times, no. The conclusion then would be that the church is important. But how important?

Turn with me to Ephesians 5 : 23. Here Paul says, "For

the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church : and he is saviour of the body." Please note that he says that Christ is head of the church, and that he is saviour of the body. We have already observed that the body is the church and therefore he is saying that Christ is saviour of the church. But if Christ is saviour of the church, where must one be to be saved ? In the church, of course. But if one must be in the church to be saved, then what will happen to those who are not in the church ? They will naturally be lost.

But someone is ready to say, "I am not a member of this church and I am saved." This is impossible, for Acts 2 : 47 tells us that the saved are added to the church. That means that if one is saved that he is a member of the one church of the Bible, and please do not confuse this with the various denominational churches of our day because they are not only different but they are opposed to one another. If one is not a member of this church then he is not saved because if he was saved he would have been added to it by God. It is just that simple.

Are you a member of the church that you can read about in the Bible ? If not, then you are not saved. Even if you were a member you might still be lost because of your unfaithfulness, but you definitely must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved and to go to heaven since Christ himself is saviour of the church. This is not what I say or what any other man teaches, but what the Bible sets forth. We pray that you will accept it.

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

Is Christ Divided

Contention arose in the wonderful church at Corinth. Some of them were claiming to be of Paul, some claimed to be of Apollos, still others claimed to be of Cephas (Peter), and then there were some of them who opposed human names and

claimed to be of Christ. Thus the church at Corinth was divided into four different parties: Paulites, Apollosites, Cephasites, and professed Christians. To this falling church, Apostle Paul puts the questions: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Since some of them were claiming to be of his party, he goes on to say that he was glad that he had personally baptized none of them, lest some should say that he had baptized in his own name. The Apostle earnestly exhorted them that they should maintain unity. "Now I beseech you, brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Read 1 Corinthians 1:1—17.

If Paul was here today, he certainly would have to ask millions of people, "Is Christ divided? was Wesley or any other man crucified for you?, or were ye baptized in the name of Luther or in the name of some other man?"

Denominational churchanity is flatly opposing the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ. He prayed for the believers, "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 17:21).

In the days of Apostles it was sufficient to state "I'm a Christian." Today when one asserts that he is a Christian, the question is immediately asked, "What kind?" In those days one would have definitely been identified by stating his or her membership in the church of Christ. Not so today. Now one is asked various absurd questions: "Which church?" "Catholic or Protestant?"

Causes for the existing of denominational churchanity are plural. However, the one and main cause is that people have departed from the original pattern. Instead of following the

simple teaching of the New Testament, Men are accepting and following human creeds. Instead of being "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3), men are trying to maintain the unity of denominational churchanity in the bond of contradictory human doctrines. Man-made dogma and today's adulterated Christianity have produced miserable divisions among the believers of Christ. The growing faith of hippism and yippism in the West is the outcome of today's divided Christendom. People are frustrated, with all of the confusion and division that exists in today's so-called Christianity, to the extent that many of them are becoming infidels. For sure, the Lord is not responsible for all of this. The denominational world is reaping the harvest of the same seed they sowed. The disciples in the first century sowed the pure seed, the word of God (Luke 8 : 11), and therefore the result was Christians and members of the Church of Jesus Christ. (Acts 11 : 26 ; Romans 16 : 16). Without seed there is no harvest, and seed produce plants after its own kind. Different kinds of seed are being sown, consequently there are hundreds of kinds of crops existing in divided Christendom.

The Bible teaches that there is but one church, one faith, one baptism. However, advocates of denominationalism teach and preach a plurality of each of them. Denominational churches differ with each other over the plan of salvation, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, justification, name of the church, origin of the church its work and mission, church government, worship of the church. They tangle over the character and personality of God, Christ, and Holy Spirit.

No, Christ is not divided, neither his body, the church. (Colossians 1 : 18). The Lord hates those people who sow discord or division. (Proverbs 6 : 19).

With Paul the churches of Christ today are pleading to all men everywhere to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and that all followers of Christ should be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Our plea is to come back to the Bible, believe and practice what

it teaches. Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Pictured by the Cross

By **Dillard Thurman**

The cross of Christ stands forth as the pivotal point in God's revelation. The "law and the prophets" had looked forward to that which transpired there. So had all the offerings and sacrifices which man had presented from the time of Adam. Pictured in the cross of Christ were many things, and we do well to turn back to look at the cross.

It Pictures the Cost of Sin

The terrible blackness that was to clothe the crucifixion was indicative of the blackness of sin which demanded the death of God's Son for our redemption. The awfulness of sin is pictured in the merciless cry for the life of Jesus. The tragedy of sin can best be weighed by noting the price of redemption. "For the love of God constraineth us : because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. 5:14-15). Thus while we were "without hope, and without God in the world" Christ paid the terrible cost in our stead, "that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2:16). In our stead, Jesus paid the price for sin : "For he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes we are healed." (1 Pet. 2:24). Sin must be sinful, indeed, to demand such a sacrifice for redemption !

It Pictures God's Love For Man

Nothing pictures the interest of God for man more graphically than the cross. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.....For God commendeth his Love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:6-8). "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (Jno. 3:16). God's righteous judgment decreed that sin should be punished, but He loved us so much, He gave His Son in our stead! All the rich provisions of benevolence which God daily bestows on the world may be ignored by ingrates: but no heart which accept the story of the cross in trusting faith can remain untouched! "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (2 Cor. 7:10). How many sinful hearts have been touched by this moving love story of the cross of Christ!

It Pictures God's Appeal To Sinners

The very strongest appeal is pictured in the cross of Christ. God wanted to melt the hearts of the impenitents, and it is in the story of the cross that this is done! "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. 5:10). It is with nailpierced hands that Jesus beckons, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28). How strong this appeal as we recall His words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jno. 15:13). That appeal must never be minimized not neglected. Paul declared, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:17-18). No greater appeal was possible than the cross, so Paul further stated, "For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him

crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2). Let the whole world see this appeal as we picture it in the cross !

It Pictures the Perfection of Christ

The perfection of Jesus is pictured in the cross. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8-9). "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor ; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him...in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:9-10). Even though He had lived perfectly, it was yet by His death on the cross that Jesus Christ became the perfect Saviour ! Humble He complied with the will of His Father : "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:8). Jesus knew before the price to be paid, and said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." (Jno. 10 : 17-18). He voluntarily offered Himself for us ! Later it is written, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2). He endured the torture of a shameful death, knowing that He could thereby redeem us. Here was perfect love !

It Pictures the End of the Law

The cross Pictured also the end of the law of Moses. By His crucifixion, Jesus was successful in "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." (Col. 2:14). "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell ; and, having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself." (Col. 1:19-20).

It was only by the cross that this peace and reconciliation could have been pictured for us. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ; for to make in himself of twain one new man so making peace ; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. 2:14-16). It was by the cross that the law, a partition wall that separated Jew and Gentile, was taken away, that both might enter Christ to be a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). Notice the benefits this brought us : "Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:19-20). The law was taken away for something far better. (See Heb. 7-12; 18-19; 8:7-8; 10:9).

It Pictures A Separation

The cross of Christ pictures a separation for all Christians. Referring to this Paul wrote the saints in Rome : "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection ; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. 6:5-6). Paul also wrote, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14). This picture is seen in our lives when we can say, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20). "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing : and I will receive you." (2 Cor. 6:17). "If ye then be risen

with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Col. 3:1). The cross pictures this kind of separation for all who would be followers of Christ !

It Pictures A Cross for Me !

The cross of Christ also pictures a cross for me. As my Lord bore the cross for me, I must also bear one for Him. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23). Jesus doesn't promise a life on flowery beds of ease. There is a cross to be borne if a crown is to be worn.

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,

And all the world-go free ?

No, there's a cross for every one,

And there's a cross for me !"

The Way It Is Right And Cannot Be Wrong

by **Nehemiah Gootam**

1900 year ago the disciples came together to break bread on every first day of the week. But man has spoiled this Christ ordained institution by turning it over to the clergy. Several denominations in our country break bread (observe Lord's Supper) once a month or once in three months. And yet every denomination agree that it is right to break bread every week because of its scriptural authority in Acts 20:7. They agree to it but do not want to change their way of tradition. But the pity is we are traveling on one way road and when the life is over there is no way to correct our mistakes.

There are people that call themselves as Penticostles, Church

of South Indians, Lutherans, Baptists and etc. They think these are the names that God's people should wear but God definitely had not authorised them to be called with such names and we will not find them in the Bible. God's people in the gospels were called the children of God, friends and disciples. The Lord while ascending to heaven commanded, "to go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Isaiah prophesied that "these disciples shall be called by a new name." (Isaiah 62:2). Accordingly in Acts 11:26 we find "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

The word "Christian" here means in Christ. The Christian is a new man. "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature, the old things are passed away behold they are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17). A man who is in Christ must wear Christ's name. "For neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). They may say that there is nothing in a name but we are sure that the same verse tells us that there is something in a name. Also we read from 1 Peter 4:16, "But if a man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God in this name." Since there is no salvation in any other name except the name of Christ, we must be satisfied by calling ourselves as Christians and nothing more, nothing less or nothing different. We must leave out all the denominational names. This is the only way that is right and cannot be wrong.

Faith alone is a wholesome and comfortable is their common slogan. In other words this slogan says a man can get into heaven even without baptism. If so can a man get into these churches by faith alone? No. Can a man get into the Baptist church without baptism? No. So they think it is easy to get into heaven rather than the Baptist church or the other churches. Peter says, "Give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure," (2 Peter 1:10).

Some people sprinkle and call it a baptism. The word

“baptism” actually means immersion. A penitent believer must be baptized (Mark 16:16). The act of baptism should resemble the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us read from Romans 6 : 3, 4 where the mode of baptism has been given. “Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death ? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father so we also might walk in newness of life.” We can read other verses from the Bible that tell us baptism is an immersion. But this time we shall refer to the scholars of the world on this subject.

John Wesley in his notes said, ‘Buried with him in baptism refers to the ancient mode of baptism.’ Moseium church history has been accepted all over the world, it says, “the baptism was practised by immersion in the first century.” Neyonder says, “in the first century the baptism was by immersion of the whole body.” The Anglican prayer book says, “the child shall be dipped into the pool if he will be able to endure it, if parents object to it then the child should be poured water on the head in the name of the three.” The Bible says and the eminent scholars agreed that the immersion is only the way that is right and cannot be wrong. If this is not followed we are only substituting to what Jesus and the Holy Spirit ordained.

We have seen so far the weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper, the name Christian, the baptism by immersion are agreed all over the world as the way that is right and cannot be wrong. But does the world agree that there is only one church that is right and cannot be wrong ?

There are several hundred different denominations in the world today. And they have their own names but is there any name that is right and cannot be wrong ? Yes. It is the Church of Christ. Church of God refers to the Father. “The church of

God which he purchased with his own blood," (Acts 20 : 28). What belongs to the Son belong to God and vice versa. In Hebrews 1 : 8, 9 Jesus was called God. All the denominations say to call the church as the Church of Christ is right. They say, we all are the Church of Christ, some times they admit too much, this is how the denominations are confusing. Hosea declared, "Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent, that he may know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right and the just shall walk in them : but transgressors shall fall therein." (Hosea 14 : 9).

How were you converted ?

Paul Simon

This question is more important than it might seem to you. You were either converted or you were not converted. The Bible is our only source of information concerning spiritual matters. If you were converted as the Bible directs, you were truly converted. If you were not converted as the Bible directs, you were not converted at all, but merely deceived. There is no use for you to say that you felt in your heart that you were saved. If you did what you thought that you should have done to be saved (regardless as to how absurd and false it might have been) you felt that God saved you, whether, He did or not.

New Testament Examples

There is not a single conversion in the entire New Testament in which the person did not hear the Word of God, believe in God, repent of his sins, and was baptized for the remission of his sins. I challenge anybody to show that this statement is false, or to give just one example where someone was saved another way. You might say, "The thief on the cross was saved without baptism." How do you know that he was? He might have and he might not have been. The Bible certainly does not say

that he was saved without baptism. Suppose he was ; that is no sign that you can be saved without baptism. He was living under a different law to you. Christ was still living on the earth and could forgive sins unconditionally. His will had not been sealed by His blood, He had not yet said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The thief lived and died under the Old Testament. We are living under the New Testament and its conditions. It says, "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." (Acts 2 : 38).

Feeling Is Not Evidence

But how were you converted ? Did the preacher ask you, "Do you feel in your heart that God has saved you ?" or "Do you believe that God for Christ's sake has already pardoned you ?" or "Do you feel that God has saved you, without baptism, and you want to be baptized into our church ?" If so, you were not converted according to Bible doctrine. No preacher inspired of God, ever asked a penitent sinner such questions. On the contrary, they told them, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." (be baptized). Acts 8 : 37 and "And now why tarriest thou ? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22 : 16). The fact that one feels that "God for Christ's sake has pardoned his sins" does not make it so. Jacob felt, for 22 years, that Joseph was torn to pieces by the wild beasts, but it was not so. The Apostle Paul felt that he was serving God by persecuting Christians. He said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." (Acts 26 : 9). How do you know that your feelings did not deceive you ? The Bible and not our feelings is our guide. It will never deceive us.

Voting Not Authorized

Did the church take a Vote on you to see whether or not they

would receive you? No such procedure is found in God's word. No, not one. What difference does it make whether they receive you or not, just so God receives you? Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast away." (John 6:37). Again, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6). You cannot come to God except through Christ, the Way, the Saviour of the world. How does one get into Christ the Way, in order that he might come to God? The only way to get into Christ is to be baptized into Him. "Know ye not that so many of us as were BAPTIZED into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). "For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED into Christ, have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27). I cannot emphasize too strongly, that you do just what the Bible commands, nothing more, nothing less,

One Book For All

Albert Gardner

Without reading further, guess how many languages and dialects there are in the world. According to the American Bible Society the French Academy lists 2,796. In order for the people that speak these nearly three thousand languages to learn the will of God and grow in Christ, they need the Bible in their own language. Everywhere the Bible has gone it has produced good fruit. It will not only make people better morally and socially but it will save their souls from sin. The Koran won't do it. The Book of Mormon is a human product. The creed books of men are weak and shallow. The Bible is the one Book for all.

The Bible is came from God. The Old Testament was inspired. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. 23:2). When the apostle Peter said it was time to select another apostle to replace Judas, he

said that the Psalms were given by the Holy Spirit. "Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." (Acts 1:16). Later, he said that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:21). Paul taught that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. 3:16). The apostles were given the words to speak. (1 Cor. 2:13),

It is estimated that there are about one thousand languages and dialects into which no part of the Bible has been translated. In a tract, "The Bible and the American Bible Society," page 5, the following question is asked and answered: "Into how many languages has some part of the Bible been translated and published? 1,151 languages as of December 31, 1959. The entire Bible has been published in two hundred nineteen languages; a complete Testament in two hundred seventy-one additional languages. New languages are added to the list at the rate of about ten a year."

Oh how thankful I am that I can read English today! Suppose I spoke and read one of the one thousand languages that do not even have a part of the Bible. Would I die without ever hearing about the Lamb of God that died for me? Would anyone ever let the light of the gospel shine into my sin-blighted, darkened, doomed soul? Would I ever eat Lord's supper? Would I ever know about baptism? Would you care? How could I learn about the church? Would you love my soul enough to send me the gospel? Or, would you rather fuss about how you were going to send it while my soul went swiftly into the other world with not one more chance to obey my Lord? You may not get the full force of this description since it is I, but suppose it were you! Well, it is somebody for whom Jesus died. He has right to hear.

There are 1,151 languages in which we can work but we are not doing that yet. Of all people that ought to be sowing down the whole world with Bibles, we should. Are we afraid to give Bibles away? Are we too stingy? Why do not we send it if we cannot go? Why do not you write some missionary and ask if you can supply him with some Bibles?

I am thankful that I can turn in my Bible and read it without having to hide to do so. Many have given their lives to make possible the reading of the Bible in the language "of the people." We should be deeply grateful for what they did. Are we?

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