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EDITORIAL

The Power of the Word of God

God has spoken in every age. (Hebrews 1:1, 2). He has spoken through his Son. (John 1:1, 2; Matthew 17:5). His word has been preserved and revealed to us through the holy scriptures, the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). That word is powerful. (Hebrews 4:12). When we believe it and obey it, it works in our lives to the saving of our souls. (Romans 1:16, 17).

Do you remember back in the beginning that "...God said, Let there be light : and there was light." (Genesis 1:3). And so the record continues with God speaking one thing after another into existence. His word was full of power.

Jesus came to speak for God. That is why he is called the Word. (John 1:1). He said on one occasion, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." (John 7:17, 18).

Christ spoke as one having authority. (Matthew 7:29). His critics could not answer him. The truth always prevailed

and Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6). He spoke the blind saw, the dumb spoke, the deaf heard, the lame walked, bodies were healed, and the dead arose from the grave. He spoke and the sea was calmed, the devils fled, the water was turned into wine, and the multitudes were fed. The Lord's word never failed to produce powerful results.

The things that Jesus has said and done have been written that we might believe and that by believing we might have life through his name. (John 20:30, 31). As we hear Christ through reading and studying his word (Matthew 17:5; 2 Timothy 2:15), faith is produced (Romans 10:17), and through our obedience to it we are saved. (Mark 16:15, 16). Peter explains it like this : "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently : Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1:22, 23).

We are told that the word is perfect, converting the soul. (Psalm 19:7). It is full of life. When it enters one it produces, faith, and as that faith grows and develops and produces action, then it ends in the saving of one's soul. James says that we are to be doers of the word. (James 1:22). Paul says that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believes. (Romans 1:16). Finally, Christ says that unless one does the will of God he cannot go to heaven. (Matthew 7:21).

Do you want power in your life ? Then read and study God's word, believe it, and obey it, and you will have more power in your life than you ever knew existed. That doesn't mean that God will release power in you that cannot be controlled or that will bring about your ultimate destruction, or that it is miraculous in nature. It does mean, though, that God's word will work in your life to the saving of your soul and as you allow it to lead you that it will bless you and help you to prepare your soul for heaven. As it work in your life it

will help you to remain humble, courageous, and faithful to the Lord. It will give you strength, zeal and determination. It will bring every physical and spiritual blessing you need in this life. And in the end it will judge you. (John 12:48).

It is so sad that the majority of people go to the wrong place for this power. It cannot be found in man or in his teachings. Rather the power is in God and in his word. God works through his word in our lives as we allow it to enter us through faith and obedience. It saves and gives the hope of eternal life. What power could be greater than this ?

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

The Most Powerful Thing

The word power is defined as : capacity for producing an effect; strength or energy. The world, through the centuries, has known many powerful nations, kings, minds, etcetra. However the *most* powerful thing that has ever existed is the Word of God ! It was in existence before the foundation of the world (John 1:1), and it will endure forever. (Psalm 119:89; 1 Peter 1:25; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35).

The manifestation of the power of God's word is seen in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, which is called Genesis. Here we are told that God made the universe by the power of His word. There He spoke and it was done.

In the Book of Isaiah the word of God is compared with the rain and snow. In this statement, 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 goeth 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). The purpose of rain is to make the barren ground fertile and fruitful, and the rain coming down does not return but accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent. And so is the word of God. Its purpose is to save men from their sins. The Apostle Paul says, "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." (Romans 1:16). Wherever it is preached or proclaimed it accomplishes its purpose; the preaching of the gospel always has a definite result. If people believe it and obey its commands, it results in their salvation; however, if it is rejected it will result in a hardening of their hearts and finally to their destruction, and will be a witness against them on the last day. (John 12:48). When Peter, for example, preached upon the day of Pentecost, the people were pricked in their hearts and they believed and became obedient to the Lord's word. (See Acts 2). However, later, when Stephen preached the same gospel, the people were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth and stoned him to death. (see Acts 7). God's word is always effective either in acceptance or in rejection.

The writer of the book of Hebrews, in the Bible, sums up the immense power of God's word in these words, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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." (Hebrews 4:12).

The Authority of the Bible

By **Frank Winters**

We think it must be evident to any student of spiritual conditions today that there is a widespread tendency to ignore and set aside the authority of the Bible.

One of the unique characteristics of this Book is that it claims the right to control the actions of men. It speaks "as one having authority."

It speaks to men, not from the standpoint of human wisdom or morality, but from a plane far above the most exalted human standards and with an attitude demanding unqualified submission. This assumption of authority over men rather contradicts the "democratic" spirit of our time that brooks no authority higher than "the people", which is to say man himself.

The great mass of men, including most of the leaders of our age, are completely absorbed in the activities of the world and are utterly indifferent to the claims of the Bible. But this Bible nevertheless still has a hold on the conscience of the few, and by its influence wields a mighty power. In some quarters the Bible is assailed and its divine origin disputed in the name of "scholarship" and of "science," though there is no known principle of science which the Bible contradicts. Sometimes the attack may come from those who concede the inspiration of the Bible but claim that other writers were also equally inspired. There is no practical difference in these two positions; the result is the same. The unique authority of the Bible is set aside.

We believe that it is of the very highest importance to insist unceasingly upon the sufficiency, finality and completeness of this revealed word of God, and with this attitude the Bible is a chart and compass, "a lamp unto our feet," and an anchor of the soul. With any other attitude the Book is bereft of its power to bless and save mankind, leaving humanity lost and groping in darkness and despair.

Can We Agree In Religion ?

By ~~G~~ **Gunnath Ford**

There is a very popular idea that religious people cannot agree. This idea is untrue in the light of present practice and Bible teaching. There are certain things in God's Word and present-day practice that lead me to believe you and I can agree in religion.

In the days that the New Testament was being written,

there was harmony and agreement among God's people. The Bible clearly teaches this. It was the plan of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit that it should be this way.

Prayer of Christ

Among the last words spoken by Christ before he went to Calvary were these :

“Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.....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 17:11-21).

When we examine these words we find that there were two groups of people for whom Christ prayed. First, he prayed for his chosen apostles, that they may be one as he and the Father were one. Secondly, he prayed for them also which shall believe on him through the word of the apostles that they may be one as he and the Father were one. He prayed for his apostles ; he prayed for you and me. We are the ones who believe on him through the word of the apostles. Certainly we agree on this. If not, how did you believe on the Lord ? Certainly it was through the words written in the Bible. He prayed that we may be one ! His purpose was the highest that could be had. We read, “... that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21). A oneness of Christ's followers leads the world to believe that God sent his Son to die for sinful man. Many are the heathen who failed to believe because a missionary came from one church and preached one thing : another came from another church and preached something contrary and different to the first. How can God be the author of such confusion ? He is not ! It is a reflection upon man and not upon God. The message is pure, the messenger is faulty. Will we believe

that Christ prayed for something that is impossible ? Never ! We really can be one, we can agree.

How Are We to Be One ?

Christ said that we are to be one as he and the Father are one. Hence the question arises, how are he and the Father one ? Christ and the Father are one in will and word. Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Christ was perfect. He never sinned, hence he never lied. He really did the will of the Father. He and the Father were one in will ! This is clearly shown when Jesus said, "For I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49). We can be assured that when Jesus spoke we heard the word of the Father. They were one in word ! Christ's words were the Father's words. We understand then how we are to be one. We are to be one in the will and words of the Father and the Son.

The Apostles Were One

Christ prayed that they may be one as he and the Father were one. (John 17:11). He gave them the Holy Spirit to guide them into that oneness.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

They had a guide that was perfect. He would bring to their remembrance everything Jesus had spoken unto them, He would teach them all things.

When they began to speak they spoke the words of Christ as they were guided by the Holy Ghost. Peter, Paul, James, and John all preached the same gospel. They were all guided by the same Holy Spirit. Read as Paul speaks of unity and oneness.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8). “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 judgement” (I Corinthians 1:10). “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all...” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

This is the oneness that prevailed at the time of the Apostle Paul. The body is the church and there was one at that time. In that same letter we read :

“...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).

We learn that God gave Christ to be the head of the church, which is his body.

“And he is the head of the body, the church...” (Colossians 1:18).

The Bible teaches that the body is the church. There is one body, hence there is one church. Paul also says :

“For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church” (I Corinthians 4:17).

In the days of Paul the same thing was taught in every church and there was but one. This is what Christ prayed for.

Can We Agree Today ?

We can. There are many reasons why we say this.

1. Christ prayed that we may be one in will and word (John 17:20-21). Christ never prayed for an impossibility.

2. Paul cast a curse upon those who preached another gospel (Galatians 1:8-9). If it is impossible to preach the same gospel, then God is condemning us for doing something we cannot help doing.

3. Paul called upon the Corinthians to speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among them (I Corinthians 1:10). He would not have asked them to do the impossible.

4. There was one church and one gospel in Paul's day (Ephesians 4:4-6). If we were guided by the same Holy Spirit, there would be one today. Is this not reasonable?

5. Human experience and preaching today show that we can agree through the Word of God.

How can we be agreed when there are so many churches teaching so many different things? Let us notice something about the preaching in most churches. We are speaking to those who believe that the Bible, all of it, is God's Word.

1. Most of the preachers and churches agree on the facts of the gospel.

2. Most of the preachers and churches agree on the promises of the gospel.

3. The primary source of division is in reference to the commands of the gospel. If we can agree on the facts and promises of the gospel, why not the commands?

Facts of the Gospel

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas,

then of the twelve : after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James ; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I Corinthians 15:1-8).

The people with whom I have been associated agree that the facts of gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with the proper witnesses testifying to the same.

When the Apostle Paul was facing people who did not believe in the resurrection from the dead, what was his attitude ? In that same letter Paul said, "...yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel !" (I Corinthians 9:16). In Athens he said, "...he (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Their reaction to this preaching was, "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked..." (Acts 17:32). This did not keep Paul from preaching the gospel. Those who believe the Bible today will not refrain from preaching the gospel because others mock and persecute them. We must not "shun to declare all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Promises of the Gospel

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Among those who believe the Bible it is generally agreed that Christ promises everlasting life.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..." (Acts 3:19).

It is likewise agreed that the Lord promises to blot out your sins.

“And we are his witnesses of these things : and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32).

It is agreed that Christ promises the Holy Ghost to all them that obey him. We understand that this is not the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the miraculous outpouring that the apostles received. If so, we could do the things that this Holy Ghost baptism enabled them to do. It guided them into all truth (John 16:13). It does not give us that miraculous power to know all truth today ; but we depend upon the Spirit’s sword, the Word of God, for our truth (Ephesians 6:17). If men were baptized with the Holy Ghost as were the apostles, they would need no Bible. They could write one. That is what those inspired men did. We agree upon the promises of the gospel.

Commands of the Gospel.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31).

Religious people in general are agreed that faith is a command of the gospel. It must also be a faith that is coupled with repentance.

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

There are very few religious people that I have met who believe that man is saved before he repents. They may say he repents before he believes, but it is a rare case that says he is saved before he repents. Repentance is a command of the gospel. It is essential to salvation. My friend, we have agreed thus far ; at least, those who believe the Bible are agreed on these points.

Why Have We Agreed ?

Is it not because we can understand the facts and the pro-

mises of the gospel ? We understand that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and arose from the dead; according to reliable witnesses. We understand that he promises us remission of sins, the Holy Ghost, and everlasting life. Who says we cannot understand the Bible ? We do on these points. God is just. He asks us to obey him and receive salvation (Matthew 7:21, Hebrews 5:8). He would not make his will impossible to understand. That would make him responsible for our damnation. Who will believe it ? Certainly it is not God's fault if we be lost. The reason why we preach the same facts and promises of the gospel is because we preach just what the Bible says, no more and no less. How do we know or how can we preach that Christ was buried ? The Bible tells us this hundreds of times. How can we know our buried body will arise ? The Bible tells us this many times.

We can preach the same commands also by following the same plan. We preach the same facts because we preach what the Bible says. We preach the same promises because we preach what the Bible says. We can preach the same commands if we preach what the Bible says.

What Most Churches Preach

Most churches preach that faith and repentance are essential to salvation. What would happen if the pulpits of our land would ring with all the commands of the gospel ? For example, what a revolution it would cause if preachers would stand and quote these scriptures without addition, subtraction, or substitution ?

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). “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). “And now why tarriest thou ? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Would not the reaction be the same as that of the eunuch in Acts 8:36 who said, "...see, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ?" Why is it that the pulpits are as silent as the tomb on this subject ? Why do the large revival campaigns leave these great scriptures out of their preaching ? Did Peter and Paul and Philip fail to speak on this great command of the Bible ? Who is shunning to declare the whole counsel of God ?

We Can Agree

You can see how easy it would be to speak the same thing. It can be done only by telling the people what Jesus, Peter, and Paul told the people in new testament days. What if one failed to tell that Christ arose from the dead ? That would be a failure to preach the whole gospel. The same is true when one fails to tell people that baptism is essential to man's salvation. What would happen if all the facts, commands, and promises of the gospel were preached by all men ? We would be one as Christ and the Father were one, one in will and word. What would this lead to ? It would lead to the salvation of souls. This is the only thing that preaching the whole gospel can lead to. It would lead to a destruction of denominationalism and division. We can agree if we tell people what the Bible says. We can agree on what the Bible calls followers of God. "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). We can never agree upon the names, Methodist, baptist, or Adventist. We can agree on the Bible name in the same manner as we agree on the facts of the gospel. The Bible gives us those. We now agree that Christ was buried. The Bible tells us so. We now agree that the buried body will arise. The Bible tells us so. We can in like manner agree that we are to be buried with the Lord in baptism. Why ? The Bible tells us so. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death..." (Romans 6:4). This is the way in which religious people can all speak the same thing. In new testament times when men obeyed the gospel, the Lord added them

to his church (Acts 2:47). If we did the same things today, we would be added to the same church. Then we could say as Paul said, "There is one body..." (Ephesians 4:4). May that be your desire.

God's Plan for Happiness

The world in which we live is filled with many wonders to behold, many beauties to see, and many things to enjoy and make life happy and pleasant for all mankind. Yet, on every hand we find miseries, sorrows, tragedies, unpleasantness, and unhappiness. The world is filled with distrust, strife, divisions, and a general state of turmoil exists. Yet behind all of this there is a common goal for which all are striving and that is happiness. Happiness is a goal for which all are striving, but so few really find the peace, contentment, and true happiness for which they so long, and their hearts desire.

God has ever desired that man be happy, and having created man God knows exactly what he needs to be happy. God created man with all his passions and desires, and for each of these He gave man a lawful outlet. He also gave man laws to govern and control his every action. God knew that without divine laws to govern man physically, morally, and spiritually a chaotic condition would exist and man would eventually become so sinful and immoral that he would destroy himself.

In Psalms 1:1-2 the inspired word of God says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Some versions justly render this, "happy" is the man that delights in and meditates in the law of the Lord.

In Eccl. 12:13 we find these words, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God and keep His Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Some translators have rendered this, "This is the happiness of man."

It is only when man departs from God and His laws that unhappiness, unpleasantness and discontentments arise.

Throughout the centuries man has departed from God's laws and sought to direct or allow others to direct his steps, but Jer. 10:23 clearly states that it is not possible for man to safely direct his own steps. When man ignores God's instructions, and warnings, and begins to seek out his own way and begins to try to find happiness apart from God and His laws that are so plainly given in the Bible, he soon finds himself in the same condition as a small child who ignores the instructions and warnings of his parents and wanders into the wilderness only to find himself lost and alone, and due to his unfamiliar surroundings with no one to guide him soon becomes very miserable and unhappy.

Much of man's failure to find peace and happiness comes from his "tampering with," "altering," or completely changing God's law instead of being content to believe and accept it just as God gave it to man in the Bible. When God wanted His law to man changed, He always did it and never gave man the authority to change His law in any way. Many today are trying to command that which God has not commanded and legislate where God has not spoken. The religious world is not divided over what the Bible says nearly as much as they are divided over what the Bible does not say.

Read Galatians 1:6-9, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 1:25, also, Revelation 22:18:19.

We of the Church of Christ have no doctrine of our own, no creeds, or doctrines of men to offer, but our plea is that we all accept God's law as revealed to us in the Bible and walk in all His ways. For all who will so live, peace, contentment,

and true happiness can be theirs here in this life and eternal happiness in that life beyond the veil of death.

We invite you to come study together with us the word of the Lord, the Bible, that together we may learn and do what He has commanded to us.

Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come, let us reason together; saith the Lord."

We have no "bones to pick" or "ax to grind" but only hope that by studying God's word together peace and happiness we can all find.

A friendly welcome awaits you at each of our services. We are interested in the soul salvation of all, and it is our prayer that you would open to the Lord your heart and let His word your life control.

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