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हमारा विशेष कार्यक्रम

“सत्य सुसमाचार” (हिन्दी)

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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Emergency

As you know, India has been living in a state of Emergency for more than one year now. We will not get involved in the political side of it, but I think all would have to admit that many good things have come out of it. Some of the more noticeable changes have been less corruption, greater effort and more work, more punctuality, respect for the law, a slow-down on inflation, and so on. The improvements have been needed for years and with the emergency the masses have discovered that it is possible to discipline themselves to the point of getting these results.

One of the more interesting sides to this emergency has been the many slogans that have appeared on buses, billboards, walls, at Post Offices, and other places. These slogans are designed to make the masses aware of some specific needs and thus through them to bring about the changes desired. I am especially interested in them because they basically represent Christian concepts. To prove this point, let us notice some of them.

1. "Work more, Talk less". The Bible certainly teaches that we should work. It even says that if a man will not work—provided of course he can work—then neither should he eat. (2 Thessalonians 3 : 10). Concerning the tongue, James wrote, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." (James 1 : 19).
2. "The need of the hour is discipline". This is what the Christian life is all about. There is decision, purpose, direction, a change to be made, a new life to be lived, a commitment to the Lord, and faithfulness to his cause. (Romans 6).
3. "Discipline makes a nation great". The same also can be said about a Christian and the church. (1 Corinthians 15 : 58).
4. "The only solution to poverty is hard work". We hear someone say from time to time that poverty is going to be eradicated, but the poor have always been with us and furthermore they will always be with us. (Matthew 26 : 11). Poverty can never be banished altogether through give-away programmes or by other similar solutions. The only way it can be dealt with, with any success at all, is by putting people to work and creating within them some respect for themselves and some feeling of the responsibility of caring for their own needs.
5. "The nation is on the move". This slogan is designed to cause people to think positively and affirmatively. It creates within them the desire to succeed to go forward, to win, to be victorious. This also is the Christian spirit. The Christian, the church, Christianity itself is on the move forward.
6. "There is no substitute for hard work" and one similar to that one, "Hard work gives strength and self reliance". Too many want a position. They equate work with ignorance and stupidity. This is not the proper

attitude we should have toward work whether it be mental or physical. Someone must be willing to go out and do the job that needs to be done. This is the only way we can ever get ahead as an individual or as a nation. (Romans 12 : 11).

7. "Economic offences bring stern punishment". The Bible teaches, "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6 : 7,8).
8. "Rumour mongers are nation's enemies". The rumormonger is also the enemy of Christ and the Bible says that we must control our tongue. The Christian is exhorted thus : "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." (Titus 3 : 1, 2).
9. "Let us get on with the job", "We march to a better tomorrow", and "The nation's on the move". All three of these slogans are designed to emphasize urgency, confidence, ambition, and hope. Is not this the philosophy of Christianity ?

Here is another series of slogans that I recently saw in a Post Office here in New Delhi. They are : "Service with a smile", "A soft answer turneth away wrath", "Courtesy begets courtesy", "Courtesy pays—Be courteous", "The customer is our important person", "Be gentle when you speak to a customer", and "Courtesy keeps everyone happy". These slogans are certainly based on Biblical principles and teachings, and in some cases are taken directly from the Bible. "A soft answer turneth away wrath", is one such verse. It is interesting that during the time of the emergency, someone recognizes that if the problems of this country are going to be solved, it is going to take principles like these to do the job. And

surely with so much discourtesy, ugliness, unfriendliness, and lack of concern for the average person, it was certainly time for someone to realize that the time had come to turn things around in order that some human decency might prevail, that people might respect one another as human beings, so that a little kindness could be demonstrated, and in order to create an atmosphere of good will, unity, and progress.

Finally, in Madras I saw these slogans : "It is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice", and "Back to the village—it needs you". Here again the emphasis is on respect for one another and for showing concern for the other fellow. These, too, are definitely Christian principles. Isn't that something ? We have been saying all along that what India needs more than anything else is the gospel of Christ. Why do we say that ? Because the gospel is the good news of Christ ; it means salvation, a new way of life, a better kind of life. Christ, and obedience to him—the Christian life—will give the people something to live for, something to work for, and something to die for. Those who are Christians know what it has done for them and they also know what it can do for others if they will but accept it.

The emergency here in India can be met as these slogans, or Christian principles, are applied by the masses. But it is not going to be enough just to put slogans up, to see them, and to chant them. These principles are going to have to be translated into action, into the thinking of the people. They are going to have to be applied, used, and worked. Then they will get results, great results even astonishing results. This could change a person, a people, a country in a drastic way. We believe that, and we know it can be a reality if only applied.

There is an emergency here for sure. There has been one all along and it is not going away in the near future. Besides the emergency that we are familiar with, I am speaking of an even greater emergency. Our problem is that in most cases we are not aware of our problem. There have been a few outward signs and the government has responded with programmes to

try to solve these problems, but it is deeper and more serious than that. If we can but get to the base of the problem, if we can discover the disease itself, if we will then be honest enough to admit where we stand, what we need, and if we will be willing and ready to apply the remedy then we will be able to cope with the problem and be victorious over it. But what is the problem? It is sin. This is the disease that you and I and all human beings are faced with. If this country has more problems, it is only because there are more people and more of them are trying to live with sin in their lives. But people who are in sin are lost. They are trying to live without God and his will and we can see the results of this everywhere. But worse than that, they die without God and without hope, and this is a real tragedy.

The solution to sin is the blood of Christ. It is the remedy to the killing disease of sin. When applied through obedience it can cure, heal, wipe out, blot out, remit, and wash away all in. (Matthew 26 : 28 ; Acts 2 : 38 ; Acts 22 : 16 ; Ephesians 1 : 7 ; Colossians 1:14 ; 1 John 1 : 7). All have this disease and therefore there is one remedy for all. (Romans 3 : 23 ; Mark 16 : 15, 16).

Once one has been cured and saved by the blood of Christ when as he walks in the steps of Christ, follows Christ, applies the teaching of Christ to his daily life, and thus lives for Christ, he becomes an asset to his village, city, and country. He thinks differently, talks differently, dresses differently, acts differently, and every phase of his life represents a new life. He becomes a better person, makes a better father or mother, son or daughter, makes a better worker, and becomes a better citizen. He loves his Lord, but he also loves his family, those around him, and he loves his country. He is honest, wants to do good to all, and is willing to forgive those who do him wrong. He is a Christian and that means he is Christ-like.

Now if Christianity could do this for one man, then why wouldn't it do the same for two men, a dozen, a hundred, a thousand, a million, and for the whole country. Wouldn't that make a difference? Wouldn't that change things for the

better? You had better believe it would! Why don't you begin with yourself. Whether you realize it or not, you are faced with an emergency. Will you live or will you die? It will depend on your decision-whether it is for Christ or against Christ. Make the right decision and meet your emergency. Believe in Christ and obey his will and live. Live a better, richer, and more rewarding life now and look forward to the next life with a great hope and expectation when you shall go to live with the Lord forevermore. In that world there will be no emergency.



**associate
editorial**

But The Bible Says

(2)

Some people say, we can join the church of our choice. But the Bible says, speaking about those who became Christians during the time of apostles, teaching, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2:47). There is a big difference between joining something and being added into, When we join something we do so by our own choice, but we become members of the Lord's church by being added by the Lord, and the Lord adds only the saved to his church. The church is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:24), and there is only one body (Ephesians 4:4). Therefore, there is but only one church. Christ, prior to the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D. has declared, "AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH" (Matthew 16:18). Therefore, he adds ALL THE SAVED to his only one church. No, we cannot join the church of Jesus Christ, but when we obey his gospel

(Mark 16:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). then, according to his promise, he saves us and adds us to his church.

There are many people who say, the church is not important; one can be saved and go to heaven without being a member of the church. But the Bible says, the church was so much important to Jesus Christ that he shed his precious blood to purchase his church. Hear, this is what apostle Paul said in speaking to the elders of the church; "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, **which he hath purchased with his own blood.**" (Acts 20 : 28). Now, let's ask a question, Suppose, if I have 5000 rupees, and this is all that I was able to save with hard labour of a number of years. Do you suppose that I would go and by some thing worthless, a thing that has no importance, with all my life's saving? Would Christ shed his blood to buy something that is worthless and unimportant? But listen, the Bible says, the blood of Christ saves us, (1 Peter 1 : 18,19 ; 1John 1 : 7). So where should we be to be saved by the blood of Christ? Of course, in his church. Because this is the only institution that he has purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20 : 28). To illustrate this fact, suppose, you have a friend, he has thirtyfive thousand rupees, you want to get benefit of his thirtyfive thousand rupees, but he goes and purchases a car with that money. Now, how can you get the benefit of his thirtyfive thousand rupees? Of course, by riding in his car. Because he paid all the money and purchased that car. Christ purchased his church with his blood, and we must be in his church to be saved by his blood. Who says the church is not important ?

Millions of people believe that church is a building or a place where people gather for worship. But the Bible says, "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought." (Acts 5 : 11,12). Can a building fear? Again, in Revelation 3 : 22 we read, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Can a building or a place hear? And in Matthew

18 : 17, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Now again, here it says, tell it unto the church. Can we speak to a building or walls? Also, it says, if he neglect to hear the church. Do we expect a building to speak? In Acts 8 : 1, the Bible says, "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem," If the church was a building or a place of worship, how would it be possible to persecute it? But the truth is that the word church is a translation of **ekkelisia**, a greek word, which is used in the New Testament to denote an organized community of people acknowledging Jesus Christ as their supreme ruler. **Ekklesia**, according to a Greek-English Interliner, is a narrower word, also an assembly, but including only those specially called together out of a larger multitude, for the transaction of business.

Therefore, church is not a building, it is not a place of worship, but it is the people, those who have been called out of the darkness of the world, and have been thus translated into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1 : 13), which is the church of Christ. (Matthew 16 : 18,19). Here are two more verses from the New Testament to show us that the church is composed of Christians: "And when they were come, **and had gathered the church together**, they rehearsed all that God had done with them..." (Acts 14 : 27), "And to our beloved Apphia, and archippus our fellow soldier, **and to the church in thy house.**" (Philemon 1 : 2).

However, remember, the Lord adds to the church daily those who are saved. (Acts 2 : 47). And he has told us very clearly what we must do to be saved. Thus, when we believe in him enough to obey his commands and repent of our sins, confess him as The Son of God, and are baptized for the forgiveness of sin, he then saves us and adds us into his church (Mark 16:16; Acts 8 : 35-39; Acts 2 : 38-47), which is the house or the family of God. (1Timothy 3 : 15).

Singing In Christian Worship

Singing has always been a vital part of Christian worship. After the institution of the Lord's Supper, we read, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." (Matt. 26 : 30) The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." (Col. 3 : 16) And again, "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5 : 19).

Although in modern times the use of instrumental music in worship has become widespread among many religious-groups, the music of the early church was purely vocal. Even though various instruments were used in the temple worship of Judaism, and in the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles, it appears that the Christians purposefully omitted it from their worship. The Apostolic example has long been taken as normative by many Christians, since Jesus promised to give the Apostles the power of the Holy Spirit, who would guide them "into all truth". (John 16 : 13). For this reason many Christians today believe that the worship of the church should include simple singing only, and that the instruments of music should be purposefully omitted.

References to singing in the early church made by the earliest Christian writers indicate that the use of instruments was not the accepted practice. Clement of Alexander (born c. 150 A.D.) wrote: "We no longer employ the ancient psalter, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute, which those expert in war and contemners of the fear of God were wont to make use of also in the choruses at their festive assemblies" ("The Instructor" 2 : 5, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. II, p, 250)

But, perhaps, of even greater importance, is the quality of singing as worship. In the Scriptures quoted above, the

Apostle exhorts Christians to speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The type of music used for expressing reverence, humility, praise and adoration toward God must be selected with great care. Some types of music are designed to appeal to the sensual side of man. Unfortunately, some people have tried to incorporate this frivolous music in songs to be used for worship, and as a result have degraded the worship, if not destroyed it. The type of music used for worship should be of the mood and spirit to fit the words and enhance the thought, not subvert it. This is, no doubt, a subjective matter, to some degree, but those who assume leadership in the church must be individuals of some sensitivity and good taste, people who have made some preparation for the difficult tasks they undertake.

Even with appropriate hymns, real worship depends upon the efforts of the individual. Paul's language is an exhortation, "singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord". Unless the sentiment expressed in our songs is our own, unless the words are sincerely uttered, unless the thoughts come from the heart, it is not worship. Often the poetic expressions found in our hymns represent an ideal state which we know we do not reach. Some people say, "I cannot honestly sing that." But if we realize that the sentiment is an idealized thought, and pray for strength to reach toward this ideal, we can sing in good conscience words which we know are not literally true of our state of devotion or righteousness. Our worship is no claim of perfection on our part, but an expression of aspiration, and exaltation of God, who is the embodiment of all our ideals. Every utterance should be accompanied with a prayer in our hearts for true gratitude, for true devotion, for true adoration. Such an effort can transform our worship from formality to fulfillment. Christians who worship in this way will not fail to "teach and admonish one another" effectively. And not one will say, "I do not receive anything from the services." Worship is not an event which one attends to be entertained, but it is a participation in an activity, where one receives as he gives, "full measure, pressed down, and running over."

Are Jehovah's Witnesses True to the Bible?

By W.N. Jackson

Surely one of the most zealous and dedicated religious groups of our day is that known as "Jehovah's Witnesses." Extremely evangelistic, and instilling this spirit within their members, they have experienced rapid growth throughout the world. Our purpose here is to take a look into the system and its primary teaching in the light of the Word of God. The Bible is, of course, the standard by which God's eternal judgment will be rendered (John 12:48). If the Witnesses' system stands under the light of the Bible, then it behooves all of us to join with them and to do all within our power to advance their cause. If on the other hand, their teaching can be shown to be contrary to the Word of God, then we must oppose it with all our power!

Officially, the Witnesses are known as Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, with headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. Theirs is a publishing and broadcasting empire with worldwide outlets used in spreading their teaching. They have their own translation of the Bible, the "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures." Their translation is designed to further their particular doctrines, using marginal notes and footnotes to direct the reader to accept their use of Bible expressions and definitions. Those who have good reason to believe that the basic design of their doctrine is to deny God's doctrine of eternal punishment of the wicked. As always, one unscriptural view then has to be supported by another, and still another, with the system becoming more unscriptural all the while.

A Case of Zeal Without Knowledge

We have noted the Witnesses' zeal, with its obvious fruits; increased membership and an even more evangelistic zeal found in newer members. We readily admire their zeal and their willingness to sacrifice time, effort and money in furthering the cause they espouse. But zeal does not denote faithful-

ness to the Word of God. A case in point is Romans 10 and Paul's Jewish brethren, Paul noted that they were zealous, but not in keeping with knowledge (v.2). He further stated that in their zeal, and without knowledge, they had substituted their own righteousness for the righteousness of God (v.3). To what extent had they erred? They had not obeyed the Christ! (v.4). Thus, even in their great zeal, they were lost (v.1), not having obeyed the gospel (v.16). Here is proof that men can be very zealous, and in honesty and sincerity, and yet not be obedient to the will of God. This is the case, we honestly believe, with the Witnesses.

The Issues At The Heart Of The System

While there are many interesting features about the Witnesses' system, we feel that the greatest benefit will be derived from a look into the "heart" doctrines of the group. Indeed, time would be wasted in dealing with many side issues, and still the foundation of the system would be ignored. On the other hand, if an examination of the foundation teaching of the Witnesses cannot stand in the light of the Word of God, the whole system will collapse and be shown to be a system of man rather than of God. The "heart" doctrines that we shall deal with centre on two points, (1) the nature of man and (2) the nature of the kingdom.

The Witnesses And The Nature Of Man

Jehovah's Witnesses are a materialistic group, teaching that man is wholly mortal; that is, that man has no eternal, immortal part about him. Thus, man who has lived a wicked life here has no part about him that survives death, and therefore cannot be in the judgment, and cannot be punished eternally for his misdeeds. This naturally works against their own teaching that the righteous man does have a reward forthcoming from God, so their doctrine conveniently arranges for God to give a "soul" to the good man when this life is over, but denying the same for the evil man.

We will now give citations from the Witnesses' own literature, their book **Let God Be True**, hereafter noted as **LGBT**.

1) "...we see that the claim of religionists that man has an immortal soul and therefore differs from the beast is not Scriptural." (LGBT, p.68)

2) "...man is a combination of two things, namely, the 'dust of the ground' and the 'breath of life.'" (LGBT. p. 68)

3) "The fact that the human soul is mortal can be proved by a careful study of the Holy Scriptures. An immortal soul cannot die, but God's Word, at Ezekiel 18:4, says concerning humans: "Behold, all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die." (LGBT. pp. 69, 70)

4) "Do you know that men and beasts die alike? Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20 says so; "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts...as the one dieth, so dieth the other: yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." (LGBT. p, 75)

By carefully picking and choosing verses and phrases, the Witnesses' literature will skillfully present the case for the mortality of man. They will choose usages of the word "soul" that refers to "A living being," or "breath," and ignoring all other contexts, they force all passages to mean the same. Indeed, there are various usages of the word "soul." and the context will show the meaning in each case. The point is, as the word "soul" is used to refer to "breath; a living being; the seat of feelings, desires, and affections," it also is used to refer to the "essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death." (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 677)

Let us see a passage or two noting that man has more than fleshly life: 1) Matt. 10:28. Here, the Lord states that man has a part about him, other than the body, which men cannot kill. They can kill the body, but not the soul! 2) James 5:19,20. James tells us that one who has erred from the truth, and then is converted, is a soul saved from death. Clearly, all the obeying of truth in the world will not save the body, the flesh-

ly existence, from death. So, James is referring to the immortal nature—that part that survives death of the body. 3) Ecclesiastes 12:7. Solomon here shows that, upon death of the body, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” Here is clearly shown both the mortal and the immortal nature of man: as one part goes into the earth, the other part returns to the care of God. In Luke 16:19-31, we have the record of men who finished their earthly course, and both had their bodies placed into the earth, yet the rich man and Lazarus had a part about them that was in eternity with feeling, consciousness and remembrance. Their immortal natures did not end with their earthly passing!

The Witnesses, in their earlier cited passage, Ezekiel 18:4 failed to point out the later verses in the same chapter which restates the matter, pointing out that the one who does that which is lawful and right shall live, and not die ! (vs. 20-21). Yet, little children, who never do any sin, nevertheless die physical death! Ezekiel is not speaking of physical death at all, since all men experience this, whether they live a life of sin or not! He is speaking of spiritual death, that eternal separation from God!

Also, in the Witnesses' citing of Ecclesiastes 3:19,20. which does emphasize physical death as that which come to both man and beast, and this point is true, they fail to see that the same author has shown that man has a part that returns to God upon the body going to the earth! (Ecc. 12:7) Proving that men die does not prove that all of man ceases to exist! All the citing of such passages as the Witnesses use, with all the false implications from them, will not change the fact that the Lord says there is part of man which other men cannot kill; a part that is saved upon obeying the truth; yea, a part which returns to God upon the death of the physical body.

The Witnesses And The Nature Of The Kingdom

The Witnesses, being a premillennial group, teach that the Lord is one day to return to this planet to reign with the redeemed a thousand years. They teach that

the kingdom is now constituted as a heavenly reign, awaiting the time that the reign of Christ will begin on earth. They state that the kingdom of Christ did not exist, in any sense, until the year 1914. Let us hear from them on that point; 'Since 1914 world—shattering events have followed one another in quick succession. These mark that year as the time when Christ Jesus began to rule in the midst of his enemies.' (LGBT p. 141) Again: "The undefeatable purpose of Jehovah God to establish a righteous kingdom in these last days was fulfilled A.D. 1914. (LGBT, p. 143)

On the return of the Lord, they teach that "Since no earthly men have even seen or can see the Father, they will be unable to see the glorified Son." (LGBT, p. 197)

Now, in answer to the Witnesses' claim that the kingdom did not exist until their own proclamation of it in 1914, what do the Scriptures teach?

1) Mark 9.1. The Lord said that some of those who heard him speak would not die until they had seen the kingdom come with power. One can follow that word power through Luke 24:42, see it identified as the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the promise of Acts 1:4-8, see the fulfillment in Acts 2:1-4, and see the resulting body that came into being on that day, the church (Acts 2:47).

2) Matthew 16:18-19. Jesus used the words "Church" and "kingdom" interchangeably, and his fulfillment of the promise to Peter regarding the kingdom is seen in Acts 2:47 as being the church of the Lord established on that day.

3) Paul, who had pointed out to the Ephesians that there is only one body (Eph. 4:4), said that he and the members of the Colossian church were in the kingdom (Col. 1:13), having entered that kingdom as they left the power of darkness, or sin.

4) More, John, in writing The Revelation, said that he and those who received that letter, and this included the seven congregations of the church of the Lord in chapters 2 and 3, were in the kingdom (Rev. 1:9).

These simple passages from the New Testament show us that the kingdom was established nearly 2,000 years ago. and not in this century as the Witnesses now teach. They have missed the kingdom by nearly nineteen centuries, and therefore their system could not be the system of God. Moreover on the Lord's return, John says that "...every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." (Rev. 1:7) This is in exact opposition to that which the Witnesses teach !

The apostle Paul pointed to the time when men would turn away from the truth, and be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:4). We have seen in looking at the two "heart" doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses, that they are not teaching the truth on the matter of either the nature of man or the nature of the kingdom. Theirs is thus a system of men, and not of God, and all who serve under a system of man offer unto God that which is vain and to be rejected by Him (Matt. 15:9). We urge all men everywhere to shun all man-made systems, and obey the pure gospel of Christ, and thus to be added into the kingdom of the Lord, the church of Christ!

An Open Letter To The Leaders Of All Evangelical Organizations In Sri Lanka

Mohan Seresinhe

(Editor's Note : Although this letter is directed to those of Sri Lanka, it could be as easily directed to the leaders of similar evangelical organizations and groups here in India. We would hope that all such leaders, as well as of our readers, would seriously consider the subjects discussed in this thought provoking article with the desire to know only the truth and to obey it. As you go over the material, and consider the questions that are brought up, be sure to go to your Bible to check these things for yourself. It is vital that we know the truth, and obey

it, rather than to fall victim to the traditions and teachings of men. Remember, if you will, that in the end, only the truth makes one free.)

My dear friends,

This letter is addressed to you as well as leaders of all evangelical organisations in Sri Lanka. It embraces within its ambit two subjects, which appertain to evangelism—namely salvation by faith **alone** and interdenominationalism. Hence we consider this letter of the highest importance to you and your organisation, since “each of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14 : 12). Let’s now engage in a discussion of these two subjects, in their proper sequence.

It’s apparent that many evangelical scholars and leaders are steeped in the theology of the Reformation—even to the point of accepting uncritically, many of the tenets of such reformers as Luther and Calvin. However, since many evangelicals would claim, they are guided by the Bible and the Bible alone, we propose to examine the doctrine of salvation by faith **alone** taught by practically all evangelical organisations in the world, with a very few exceptions, in the light of God’s word.

This doctrine commonly referred to as “justification by faith” was the cardinal doctrine of the Reformation. With the rapid spread of the movement, the doctrine was taught where-ever people and nations were prepared to throw aside the papal shackles, opting in favour of the teachings of the reformers. Luther, in propounding his doctrine of justification by faith alone, did come up against opposition from the scriptures themselves. His repudiation of the letter of James as, “A right strawy epistle”, because it plainly contradicted his teaching of salvation by faith **alone**, is a case in point.

Luther was indeed right when he taught justification by faith, but he was dead wrong, when he added, it was by faith **alone**. A prayerful critical and impartial study of the New Testament would convince any one, of the fallacy of his main thesis.

Many New Testament scriptures could be quoted on the necessity of faith for salvation such as Jn. 3 : 16 ; Acts 16 : 31 ; Romans 4 : 3 ; 5 : 1 ; Eph. 2 : 8 and 9 ; Titus 3 : 5. We sample two of these, to ascertain whether or not they teach salvation by faith only. "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". (Rom. 5 : 1). Paul has been discussing the faith of Abraham, "which was reckoned to him as righteousness". Would this great man of faith have been justified, if he had stood passively when in Gen. 12 : 1, Jehovah commanded him to leave Haran and go to Canaan ? He obeyed God, proving to the world, that saving faith is faith made active through obedience. "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance". (Heb. 11 : 8). Again, he exercises his faith by offering up Isaac. (Heb. 11 : 17). Thus it becomes patently clear to all, that Paul in Rom. 5 : 1, while teaching that faith is essential to salvation, does not assert that faith **alone**, devoid of obedience to God's commands, saves. We find that even Abraham, "the friend of God", was not justified apart from obedience. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar ?" (James 2 : 21). Thus we see that Rom. 5 : 1 often quoted by the faith only teachers, by no means proves their doctrine.

Turning our attention, to another scripture commonly produced to teach the "Faith only" doctrine-namely Acts 16 : 31- "And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved". How tragic it is that many blindly teach the doctrine under discussion, on the authority of the verse quoted (Vs. 31) without proceeding to read through to Vs. 34. Please turn in your Bible and read the verse immediately following, "and they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house". What was this "word" that they spoke to them ? It certainly included, inter alia, the necessity of obeying the Lord's command regarding baptism. Vs. 33 throw light on it, "and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, **and he was baptised, at once with all his family**". We wish to remind you, that scripture

taken out of context, could be made to support practically anything. This explains the reason for the sad and ignominious spectacle of around 250 separate denominations in "Christendom" causing a maze of confusion. Our plea is let's be wise, and study each verse of scripture in its respective context, **for there is only one correct interpretation and not several.**

If then the justification of the sinner is not by faith **alone**, how is one justified? This question of paramount importance, which has been confused, could only be conclusively answered, by recourse to the "sole rule of faith and authority", the Bible, and not by turning, as many indiscreetly do, to theological systems of uninspired and fallible mortals, no matter how renowned they may be.

Although as stated before, the subject under consideration has been much confused, the new Testament lays down very clearly the means whereby salvation could be received by us. Such confusion would have been averted, had men confined themselves to the pure, unadulterated and clear teaching of the N.T. on this subject, without being swayed by the teachings of the reformers.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in the great commission, unequivocally commanded his disciples as follows, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. **He who believes and is baptised shall be saved.**" (Mk. 16:15-16). Obedience in baptism is here plainly declared, a sine qua non to salvation. Matthew records the same as follows, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, **baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**". (Matt. 28 : 19). When, on the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter delivered the maiden evangelistic message on the occasion of the inauguration of the church dispensation, the question was posed by those **who had believed his message**, "Brethren what shall we do? (Acts 2 : 37); the emphatic response on Peter's part was, "**Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ**

for the forgiveness of your sins ; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2 : 38) Furthermore, Paul while narrating the story of his conversion, quotes the words of Ananias to him, **"and now why do you wait ? Rise and be baptised, and wash away your sins, calling on his name"** (Acts 22 : 16).

Even a careful reading of the well-known chapter on Faith (Heb. 11) should lead any sincere scholar of the word to the inevitable conclusion that none of the heroes of faith mentioned in the chapter, was ever justified before God, apart from works of obedience required by God, which of course should be clearly distinguished from works of human merit performed by men to earn their salvation. (Eph. 2 : 9). Examples of this nature could be multiplied, but the quotations used, should suffice to convince any honest student of the word the necessity of obedience to Christ's commands in receiving the gift of eternal life.

While it is true that many evangelicals, subscribe to the theory of salvation by faith alone, they like their precursor, Luther, confront certain problems, and this is where they manifest their inconsistency and confusion. To substantiate ; the exercise of the human will in repentance is emphasised. They teach that the sinner needs to thus respond to God's love, the doctrine of "prevenient grace" notwithstanding. Isn't this then a serious inconsistency, on the part of those who teach salvation by faith only? If man needs to repent and this is fully in harmony with scripture, then why not go a step further and teach the necessity of baptism too, according to MK. 16 : 16, Matt. 28 : 19 and Acts 2 : 38, quoted by us? Is the fact that the diverse denominations are divided on the mode of baptism, the reason why it's not taught in addition to repentance as essential to salvation, as per Acts 2 : 38 and other scriptures which teach it? If so, how dare we, contravene God's word to accommodate a system of denominationalism of men's innovation !

Let those who teach salvation by faith alone, be forever silenced by God's word which clinches the issue for all of us ;

“so faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead”. (James 2 : 17) Also, **“you believe that God is one ; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you shallow man that faith apart from works is barren ?”** (James 2 : 19-20).

Our discussion on the subject of salvation by faith, would be incomplete, unless the essential factors pertaining to salvation are set out. They are enumerated as follows :—

- (1) The necessity of hearing God's Word (Rom. 10 : 17).
- (2) The necessity of believing Jesus Christ (Jn. 3 : 16 Jn. 14 : 1).
- (3) The necessity of repentance (Luke 13 : 3 ; 24 : 47 ; Acts 2 : 38).
- (4) The necessity of confessing Jesus Christ (Mt. 10 : 32 ; Rom. 10 : 10).
- (5) The necessity of **baptism by immersion for the remission of sins** (Mk. 16 : 16 ; Matt. 23 : 19-20 ; Acts 2 : 38 ; Acts 22 : 16 ; Rom. 6 : 3-4 Col. 2 : 12 ; 1 Peter 3 : 21).

The N.T. was written in Koine Greek, which is capable of only one correct interpretation as adverted to earlier. Therefore it's ludicrous to suggest as many do, that the Greek word “Baptizo” could mean either sprinkling, pouring, dipping or immersing. The word means only **“to immerse or dip”**. You will not find a single instance of infant baptism in the N.T. nor a single case of baptism by sprinkling or pouring. That's why in such passages as Rom. 6 : 3-4 and Col. 2 : 12, baptism is referred to as a burial. Authorities like the Catholic Encyclopaedia, the Church of England, Luther, Calvin and Wesley and others, all concede, immersion was the common, and even the exclusive mode of baptism in the first century. Who gave anyone the authority to amend the mode authorised by God ?

If you have not conformed to God's plan of salvation as enumerated above, dear friend, whatever may be your theological background, or experience in teaching, preaching or even-

gelical work, **you are lost.** Our prayer is that you would jettison whatever preconceived notions you may have, and come to Christ, meeting God's terms unmistakably stated in the N.T. :—"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18 : 3-4).

This brings us to the subject of interdenominationalism. Earlier on in our discussion, we referred to the tragic spectacle of division and confusion in "Christendom", as evidenced by nearly 250 divergent denominations or sects. Could this be in the will of the Lord? **Is the Lord speaking to the world through a babel of voices?** Please mark the words of the Lord on the imperative need of Christian unity. "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; **even as thou, Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. So that the world may believe that thou hast sent me**" (Jn. 17 : 20-21). The 250 sects in the world, are by no means the answer to our Lord's prayer.

Far from convincing the world of the divine mission of the church, these denominations have caused great confusion and millions of people not knowing which of the 250 bodies or groups to join, have renounced the message of Christ, in sheer desperation. Many of them have even turned to Agnosticism and Atheism. We also wish to point out in regard to the necessity of unity, that the Apostle Paul condemns such division, **"For you are still of the Flesh. For while there is jealousy, and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men? For when one says, 'I belong to Paul' and another, 'I belong to apollos' are you not merely men?"** (1 Cor. 3:3-4). Paul's plea for unity could also be read in 1 Cor. 1:10 and Phil. 1 : 27 (latter part).

Recognising that no good could ever emerge from such chaos, and that such division was sinful, several pious Christian leaders, like James O' Kelly (Methodist), Barton stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell (Presbyterians) and

Abner Jones and Elias Smith (Baptists), unknown to each other, since they lived in various parts of the United States, far apart, decided to leave the denominations, and serve and worship the Lord guided only by the Bible, rejecting the traditions and systems of men. As the movement gathered momentum the leaders joined hands and thousands continued to rally round zealously, with the sole purpose of restoring N.T. Christianity. My friend, the Restoration Movement, **having as its objective the completion of the unfinished work of restoration, begun by the reformers in the 16th century, is still enjoying phenomenal progress and today there are millions of N.T. Christians around the world, all belonging to the Lord's Church, as opposed to the apostate churches of "Christendom"**.

Are you aware, that the numerous denominations are referred to as "Babylon" in the N.T. ? (**Babylon from the G.K. form of Bable which means confusion**). If you think that the fact that you are a denominational Christian is a matter of little moment, you are under an illusion. If you are working to foster denominationalism you are in effect endeavouring to perpetuate, a system condemned by the Lord. It is our sincere prayer that you would heed the Lord's warning as recorded in Rev. 18 : 4-5, **"Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share her plagues !"** The same command to quit the apostate denominational organisations, is given in II Cor. 6 : 17. Many are daily leaving spiritual "Babylon", serving and worshipping the Lord" in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4 : 23) Won't you ?

We conclude with the fervent prayer that you would have the courage of your convictions to obey God's Word, no matter how inconvenient, unpopular or unpalatable it might be.

If you would wish to discourse on the contents of this appeal, please do write to us ; we shall be pleased to meet you, any time convenient to you.

Yours on behalf of the Restoration Movement in Sri Lanka.
(Mohan Seresinhe)

Three Vital Questions

We live in an age in which there never seems to be enough time and yet we usually manage to find time for those things which we (1) feel are really important ; and (2) really enjoy. We are asking only for a few minutes of your valuable time to consider three questions of extreme importance.

The Bible states, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Cor. 5 : 10). We are also told in the Bible that we can know that we are in a saved condition and ready to meet God. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (I John 5 : 13). Since life is so uncertain and standing before God in Judgment is inevitable, the first vital question is : "ARE YOU READY TO STAND BEFORE GOD NOW ?"

If you feel that you are ready to meet the Lord now, let us suggest to you the second vital question : "WHY DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATTERS?" Is it because this is what your parents believe ? Is it because this is what someone had told you ? Is it because you have a good feeling about your salvation ? We are not saying that your family, friends or feelings are necessarily wrong, but that one's faith should be based upon a personal search of God's word. Our salvation is not based upon our feelings, our good words or the fact that we are perhaps better moral people than many of those round about us. Our salvation is based upon the message revealed to us in the pages of God's word. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8 : 31-32). The Bible also says "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." (II Cor. 13 : 5). How long has it been since you "examined" yourself or your religious beliefs in the light of the scriptures ? Truth does not need to fear examination.

The third vital question is : "IF YOU COULD KNOW FOR SURE WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO DO, WOULD YOU DO IT ?" Just as medication for our physical bodies is no value to us unless it is applied ; so also God's message of salvation is of no value to us unless we are willing to apply His word to our lives. The Bible says, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2 : 4).

We love the Bible and we love people. We feel that studying the Bible together is certainly one of the most beneficial and enjoyable uses of our time. At your convenience, we would like 30 minutes of your time to introduce you to a very interesting study of the Bible. If you find the study beneficial and interesting, we can continue our study then, or at a later time. Many have said that this is the most enlightening and enjoyable method of studying they have ever experienced. The entire study is centered around the Bible itself and great care has been taken to observe the context of all passages of Scripture.

We want to hear your views and your ideas. We feel that we can all learn from one another. We promise to be courteous and respect your wishes at all times. This study is offered without cost or obligation and may be discontinued at any time you so desire. Please consider this matter carefully and prayerfully and give us a few minutes of your time.

If we may be of some service to you in this, or some other way, please contact us.

Tongue Speaking

Leon Barnes

One of the fastest growing religious movements in the world today is that movement which advocates the idea that tongue speaking as practiced in the days of the apostles is still a part of God's plan and promise for His people in this age. We wish therefore to study what the Bible has to say about it. We shall from four stand points. They are : 1. What is tongue speaking ? 2. The reason this gift was given. 3. Restrictions

placed upon its use in New Testament days. 4. How long was this gift to last ?

Let us first of all then see just what it is the Bible means when it refers to this subject. There are only five occasions when the Bible mentions this subject (Mark 16 : 17 ; Acts 2 ; 10 ; 19 ; I Cor. 12-14). There are a variety of ideas concerning just what is meant by the term "speaking in tongues". Some say it has no reference to known languages, but to a kind of ecstatic utterance. Others say it may mean either a foreign language or an ecstatic speech. Still others say that it always means a foreign language which was never learned by the speaker. It is obvious from the second chapter of Acts that at least part of the time it is a foreign language for the apostles spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (vs. 4) and people out of more than fifteen different nations heard them in his "own language wherein he was born" (vs. 5-11). But is there sufficient reason to believe that something different took place in one or more of the other places ? Well surely not in Acts 10 for Peter says concerning the household of Cornelius that they received the like of gift of what was received by the apostles in the beginning (Acts 11 : 15). Furthermore, the record says that they spoke with tongues and magnified God, but how would those looking on have known that it was a magnifying of God if it was just jabberish ? likewise it is evident that Acts 19 is no exception for the inspired writer uses the exact same terminology here as in the other two places. Also it is said that they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19 : 6). The same question asked concerning Cornelius is pertinent here, for if it was just jabberish how did they know that the twelve men prophesied ? Since Mark 16 : 17 is a prophecy of what would happen and these references are its fulfillment, then surely no one would argue that Jesus was prophesying something different. Also the Greek word for "new" in Mark 16 : 17 would indicate that it was not something newly invented but the use of something unfamiliar to the user. There are two words that could have been used and received the same English translation of "new". They are "neos" and "kainos". The first means new

with reference to time, as recent. If this word had been used it would have indicated a language completely new and unheard of before, but this is not the word used. The other word means new with reference to quality, freshness or its being unworn. Thus indicating that the tongue was not something that had never been in existence before, but something that was new to the user.

The only remaining example of tongue speaking in the Bible and which might give us an example of something other than a foreign language is 1 Cor. 12-14. And these chapters are indeed where the battle must be fought for this is where those who claim that tongue speaking can be something other than foreign languages believe they can get their evidence that even this has reference to foreign languages. For instance, Paul's quotation of Is. 28 : 11, 12 in 14 : 21 indicates it is a foreign language to which he refers in this book. Notice what it says "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people." Isaiah's prophecy had reference to Assyria invading Israel and Judah. It could hardly then in Paul's quotation of it have reference to anything besides a foreign language. Also in 14:9 Paul exhorts the tongue speakers to use words easily understood. This would be a ridiculous exhortation if he were referring to ecstatic utterance. Also the illustration in verse 7 of this same chapter of the pipe, harp and trumpet giving uncertain sound and no one knowing what is piped shows that he intended them to speak things that others could understand. But someone might answer by saying "The Scripture says that they are UNKNOWN tongues which shows that something other than a foreign language was comprehended." The fact is though that the word unknown is not in the original text but was supplied by the King James translators. If you will look at your Bible you will see that the word unknown is always in italics which means that the word is not a part of the original text. Again someone might say, "in verse two of chapter fourteen Paul says no man understands the tongues so it must be an ecstatic utterance of some kind. But this is not a categorical statement for if it were it would contradict what we have already seen did happen in Acts 2. This simply means that no one present at the service understands it. From all this we conclude that in every instance when the Bible talks of tongue speaking it has reference to speaking in a foreign language.

Now let us see why this gift was given. It was not the sole purpose of this gift to attract attention. It had the practical value of enabling men unfamiliar with the different languages of their day to go into all countries and teach them the gospel with use of an interpreter. God has never given anything that was not of real value.

Let us now note some of the restrictions placed around this gift. First of all it was not to be used without there was an interpreter. (I Cor. 14 : 27, 28). Secondly, Paul recognized that the spirit of the prophet was subject to him (I Cor. 14:32), and demanded that only two or three speak and that by course (verse 27) and that all things be done decently and IN ORDER (vs. 40). Anyone who has any familiarity at all with the modern tongues movement knows that these restrictions are not observed by them. If they are doing the same thing that was done in the first century, why do they not observe the restrictions that the inspired penman placed on tongue speakers?

Finally, let us notice how long this gift was to last. Anyone who has read I Cor. 13 : 8 knows that the Bible declares that there is to be a ceasing time, for it says "Whether there be tongues they SHALL CEASE". Since the Bible says they shall cease we need only to find out if it tells when and if it does determine what that time is. If we continue to read in I Cor. 13 we will find that it does tell us when. It says "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come that which is in a part shall be done away." So the time when such things as tongues were to pass away was when that which is perfect is come. But what is that which is perfect? The words "that which is perfect" refer to the same thing as "that which is in part" and that which is in part is the revelation of the divine will unto man. Paul says that we only know in part now, referring to the time in which he lived. For the revelation was not then completed or perfected. But he says when it is perfected then these miraculous manifestations such as tongue speaking will pass away. But before the end of the first century that revelation had been completed. Jude says, the faith has been once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3 ASV). Paul says, we are now completely furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3 : 16, 17). James speaks of the PERFECT law of liberty (Jas. 1 : 25) and Peter says, we have ALL things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1 : 3). Thus the revelation is complete or perfect and just as certain as Paul told the truth in I Cor. 13 : 8-11, just that certain such miraculous gifts as tongue speaking have now ceased. But someone may say that "that which is perfect" in I Cor. 13 is not the revelation but Christ. If so then Christ would have

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Important Note To Readers !

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to be that in part also, for both refer to the same thing. Also if Paul had been referring to Christ he would most likely have said "He which is perfect" and not "that which is perfect".

Furthermore, there were but two ways that men were ever given power to speak in tongues and that was by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2 and 10) and the laying on of the apostles hands (Acts 19 ; 1 Cor. 12-14). The baptism of the Holy Spirit passed away after Cornelius, for Paul says in Eph. 4 : 5 that there IS one baptism of the great commission was to last forever (Matt. 28 : 19-20), so if there is but one this must be it.

That which was received by the laying on of the apostles hands necessarily died when all the apostles died alone with all on whom they had previously laid their hands. Therefore since these are the only two ways the gift was passed on and these two ways have ceased then the gift has ceased also.

Thus when men today speak with tongues it is not from God for that which come from God has long since ceased to be. Besides this when the modern day tongue speakers use their gift it is totally unlike that of the first century. Instead of speaking in a foreign language it is some kind of grunting. Often there is no interpreter and not necessarily by order. Neither is there any recognition of its practical use in New Testament days.

My friend, search the scriptures to see if this is not the truth and react accordingly.

TO :

From :

The Bible Teacher

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