

THE CHRISTIAN READER

Vol. 1

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by

J. C. CHOATE

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INTRODUCTION

Several years ago while working in the United States I printed a magazine called *Choate's Quarterly*. After eight issues my family and I then moved here to Asia to work. With that move it was necessary to discontinue that good work. As a result I was left with a number of manuscripts. Since that time I have held on to them with the intention of one day having them printed. Inasmuch as we have need of good Christian literature here in India, then I decided that I would print them in this form. I hope that you, the reader, will find this material worthwhile and useful. I am also hoping that I can gather similar articles and bring them out in later volumes.

I personally know many of these writers. Several of them have worked in different parts of the world. This being true, then I am especially delighted to be able to use their articles in this way. I am certainly grateful to them for having sent these materials in years gone by and I am sure that they will be more than happy to know that their work was not in vain. I feel too that they will be specially happy to know that their efforts are contributing to some extent to the Lord's work here in India.

There are a variety of subjects dealt with in these pages. None of them have exhausted the theme with which they are concerned. All of the articles are practical in nature and would encourage the reader to a deeper study of God's word. This is certainly our aim with the

hope that it will lead you to obey God and be a Christian, a faithful child of God, so that one day heaven might be your eternal home.

With these few words, I commend to you this Christian Reader.

J.C. Choate

Church of Christ

Box 3815

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October 17, 1978

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Singing

Bob Douglas

"If you abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples." John 8 : 31. Abiding in Christ's word requires that man worship God. It also requires that he worship God according to God's commands. In the King James version of the Bible we find the expression "will worship" (Colossians 2 :23), which means worshipping according to the dictates of one's own will, or desires. No man can worship God acceptably and worship God in this way. God has commanded how we are to worship God in this way. God has commanded how we are to worship him and added that we are not to depart from what he has said.

An essential part of Christian worship is singing; it is a command of God that man should sing praise to God. "Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart." Ephesians 5:18-19 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." Colossians 3:16 "Let us then offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name." Hebrews 13:15. These and other verses clearly teach and

command that singing be offered to God as worship. It is the duty of every one who would worship God acceptably to sing, whether he has a particular gift for singing or not. God does not judge whether singing is good or bad on the same basis man does. Good singing before God is singing that is "from the heart". It is the singing of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

It is clear from these verses that the singing of the original church of Jesus Christ was congregation singing, not singing by a choir. Such singing served a double purpose. First, it was a means of praising God. Secondly, it was a means of Christians teaching one another and others. Paul speaks of "teaching and admonishing one another—singing." (Col. 3:16). "Spiritual songs." Obviously deal with spiritual subjects, and so give spiritual instructions.

Today men often add instrumental music to the original practice of simply singing. The New Testament never mentions instruments of music of any kind being used in the worship of God. Since they are not mentioned, obviously they are not part of God's will for man. For had they been part of his will, he would have mentioned them. Remember, he has told us "all things that pertain to life and godliness;" (IIPet. 1:3), and has guided man into "all the truth." (John 16:13).

The New Testament command to sing always uses same form of the word "sing." It never says "play an instrument," or "make melody on an instrument." Neither does it ever imply such. The command to sing is a specific commandment, that is, it specifies exactly what God wants. God did the same thing with Noah in

building the ark. He said, "Make an ark of *gopher wood*." (Genesis 6:14). Hence God told Noah the exact kind of wood to use in building the ark... gopher wood. Since God said "gopher wood," would any other kind do? No, for no other kind would meet the requirements of God's command since it stated "gopher wood," which is a particular "kind" of wood.

In the same way, God did not say make "just any kind of music," instead he specified a particular kind of music, for he said "sing." The only thing that can sing is a voice. An instrument cannot sing. It can make music, but God did not say "make music." He said "sing." Since "sing" is all God said, "singing" is all God wants. The use of an instrument in celebrating the praises of God in worship is not part of the New Testament. Hence, it is something "added" by man. It is a point in which men have not "abided" in Christ's word (John 8:31). It is a point in which man has "gone onward" (II John 9). Since God has set forth his whole will for man (II Peter 1:3) in the New Testament, and since instrumental music is not included, it is the height of presumption for man to include it in worship. "Keep back your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." Psalms 19:13. Such presumption professes to tell God what God wants, as if God himself did not know what he wanted.

But man has been presumptuous about many things that are often counted part of worship to God. Burning candles and incense, prayers offered to Saints and Mary, the mother of Christ, communion in one kind only—all of these and other things are NOT TAUGHT IN SCRIP-

TURES. They are things added by man without authorization from God. Thus man has presumed to tell God how God should be worshipped.

Some say that instrumental music, and other things, are justified because they were included in the worship practiced under the law of Moses. But the law of Moses is no longer binding on man. To take part of the law means we must take all of the law (Galatians 5:2-3); we would then have to have animal sacrifices, observe the passover, and do all the thousands of things the law requires. Then too, Paul said that any who appealed to the law to justify themselves had "fallen from grace." Galatians 5:4. So the law proves nothing.

Others justify instrumental music on the grounds that they like it and that it aids in their worship. Again this justifies nothing. God is not concerned with what WE LIKE AND DO NOT LIKE. He is not interested in OUR DOING WHAT WE WANT TO DO, BUT IN OUR DOING WHAT HE WANTS US TO. Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Anything and everything could be proved right and good on this same basis. All one would have to do is say "I like it," or "It helps me" and it would be right. But not before God. His word, and it alone is the standard for determining right and wrong. Surely if we truly love God we will like what God commands.

To worship God as he commands, Christians will sing God's praise without instruments of music. More than this is more than God Commands. Doing more than God commands is sin, just as doing less than God commands is sin.

The Lord's Supper

Bob Douglas

God the Father, and Christ Jesus, God's Son, are worthy of man's worship. But how shall man worship God? What acts shall he offer as the means of adoring and reverencing God? God has not left man without instructions, for God knows that there are many ways "that seem right unto man, but the ends thereof are death." (Proverbs 14:12). In the New Testament we find five different acts commanded as acts of worship. Since they are commanded of God, they clearly are what God wants. If he had wanted other than the things he commanded, then why did he command what he did?

One of the acts of worship "in truth", is the observance of what is called the "Lord's Supper." According to the language of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's Supper is called by four different terms. They are: (1) the Lord's Supper—I Corinthians 11:20, (2) the Lord's table—I Corinthians 10:21, (3) communion—I Corinthians 10:16, and (4) breaking bread—Acts 2:42; 20:7.

Today many people refer to the Lord's Supper as the "Eucharist", and by the term "Sacrament". *Neither* of these expressions *is used in Scripture* of this act of worship. Both have grown up over the years and are wholly traditional in origin. Peter would again remind us to

“speak as the oracles of God”, for only by so doing can we come to see the Lord’s Supper as Christ intends it, and observe it as he wishes.

(The Lord’s Supper is a MEMORIAL, reminding the believer of the death of Christ on the cross.) The fullest single discussion of the Lord’s Supper in the New Testament is in I Corinthians 11:17-34. From these verses we learn that the Lord’s Supper is a MEMORIAL, reminding the believer of the death of Christ on the cross. Paul tells us that Jesus took bread, broke it, and commanded the disciples to eat it (Matthew 26:26), saying, “do this *in remembrance* of me”. (I Cor. 11:24). In like manner he spoke of the cup filled with “fruit of the vine”, saying, “Do this, as often as you do it, *in remembrance* of me”. Thus the bread is a means of remembering Christ’s flesh crucified for us, and the fruit of the vine is a means of remembering Jesus’ divine blood poured out for our sins.

The Christian is to be conscious of the things memorialized in these elements, if he would worship acceptably. “For anyone who eats and drinks *without discerning* the body eats and drinks judgement upon himself.” I Corinthians 11:29. To fail to discern the body and blood is to fail to recognize that these elements represent Christ’s flesh and blood.

It is widely taught that the bread and fruit of the vine become the LITERAL FLESH AND BLOOD OF CHRIST during communion. But *does the Bible teach this?* Or is it mere tradition? (Matthew 15:6-9) The passage appealed to in the Scriptures as proof that the bread does become flesh, and the fruit of the vine, blood, is, Matthew 26:26. Jesus said “This is my body”, and

again, "This is my blood of the covenant". But is there any indication that Jesus meant these statements literally?

The answer is "NO." Jesus' blood was still flowing in his veins when he spoke. He was still living in his flesh when he said this. How could he possibly expect his disciples to accept his words literally since he was still before them in the flesh? To say that Jesus meant what he said literally is to deny that the New Testament contains any figures of speech. Did Jesus speak literally when he said, "I am the true vine" (John 15:1), or when he said, "I am the door?" (John 10:9) All people admit that these expressions are figurative. Why then is not Matthew 26:26 figurative? To say that Jesus meant his words literally is to say that he expected his disciples to be unreasoning men who would ignore their own senses. It is not a question of *what Jesus can do*, for certainly he could change bread into his flesh, if he wanted to. The question is *what did Jesus do?* Jesus himself says that it is "the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail." (John 6:63).

Every Christian is to observe the Lord's supper, for Jesus commanded "*Do this* in remembrance of me." Whenever Christians do not observe the Lord's supper as Jesus commanded, they have sinned, for they have disobeyed Christ. The New Testament does not teach that one must confess his sins, or live a worthy life in order to observe the Lord's supper. As far as being worthy goes, NO ONE IS EVER WORTHY. The Christian is commanded to partake WORTHILY: however, the word "worthily" has to do with his MANNER, OR ATTITUDE, IN partaking, rather than with his life from day to day. (I Corinthians 11:27). Partaking worthily involves

“discerning” the body and blood of Christ (I Corinthians 11:29). We must obey Christ’s command to “Do this.”

But how often does God expect the Christian to observe the Lord’s supper? Different religious groups differ as to the frequency with which they commune. However, there is no reason for such disagreement. The New Testament tells us how often Christians first observed the Lord’s supper. “And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread (observe the Lord’s supper), Paul talked with them.” (Acts 20:7). This verse gives an example of Christian communion, an example approved and participated in by Paul. Why does the New Testament record this example? The reason is to show us how often we are to commune, for God does not have different practices for different people in different ages. He has one will for all men forever. The Christians in Troas observed the Lord’s supper on “The first day of the week,” (Sunday) rather than on Wednesday, or Thursday. Hence, we learn the day of the week to commune. We also learn the frequency; they observed the Lord’s supper 52 times a year, for there are 52 “first days of the week” in a year. Every week has a first day, and they observed the communion on the “first day of the week.” To observe the Lord’s supper more frequently, or less frequently or on a day other than the first day of the week, is to do something other than what God’s word commands. It is to add to God’s word, and also to take from it. It is to go beyond it and fail to abide in it. It is to preach, teach, and practice something other than Paul did. Is that right before God? Galatians 1:8-9; II John 9; Revelation 22:18-19.

So every Christian is to worship God every Sunday by partaking of the Lord’s supper in remembrance of Christ every Sunday.

Prayer

Bob Douglas

The Christians' privilege of worshipping God is one of the most wonderful privileges ever granted man. While all five acts of Christian worship are most meaningful, prayer, in many ways, is the most blessed of the five. At the same time, there is probably no act of Christianity that is more mis-understood and more frequently abused than prayer. For this reason every person needs to study the subject of prayer closely, with determination to "abide in the word" of Christ (John 8:31).

The New Testament frequently commands the Christian to pray. "Pray at all times in Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance." (Ephesians 6:18). "Continue stedfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." (Colossians 4:2). "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6). "Pray constantly." (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Obviously no man can please God who does not pray, and pray frequently and regularly. Failure to pray is failure to believe and obey, and so is sin.

The New Testament does more than just command prayer. It teaches man what is essential to acceptable

prayer and what is non-essential. Jeremiah said : "It is not in man that walks to direct his own steps." (Jeremiah 10:23). Likewise, man is not born with a knowledge of how to pray acceptable prayers. "For we do not know how to pray as we ought." Romans 8:26. Jesus took the time to teach the disciples how to pray (Luke 11:1-4). The disciples had wisdom enough to realize that they needed instructions about this subject and so asked for help. So man today must study God's word to learn how to pray acceptably.

First of all, the Bible says that God *does not answer* the prayers of all men. "We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him." (John 9:31). "He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Proverbs 28:9). It is absolutely useless for the sinner to pray asking God to save him, or asking God to grant him certain things, so long as he continues to refuse to obey God's written word. The Bible never tells the unconverted sinner to pray for anything, let alone for salvation. Salvation comes, not through prayer (John 9:31), but through obedience to God's word (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Prayer is a privilege of THE SAVED.

The Bible indicates that some things, which man often puts emphasis upon, are of no consequence to God in prayer. For example, when one prays, that is, the time of day, or night; where one prays; the position of one's body in prayer, whether kneeling, standing, sitting etc., and the length of a prayer, whether one sentence (Luke 18:13), or extending a whole night (Luke 6:12). While these things do not matter to God there are other things that definitely do matter.

For prayer to be acceptable to God, and hence to be answered by God, it must meet certain conditions he has set forth in his word. These conditions should be studied carefully. (1) It must be offered in faith, that is, believing that God can and will grant it. James 1:6-8; Matthew 21:22. (2) It must be in harmony with God's will. 1 John 5:14-15. This means that it must be in harmony with the teaching set forth in the New Testament. For example, God will never grant the prayer that says save the sinner without baptism. For his word commands baptism as a condition of saving the sinner. (Acts 10:48; 1 Peter 3:21). (3) Man who prays must obey God's commandments, or live the Christian life. 1 John 3:22. (4) Prayer must have the right motive behind it. James 4:3 (5) It must be offered "in the name of Christ," that is, through Christ as mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). John 14:13; Colossians 3:17. The New Testament nowhere teaches that any one but Christ acts as man's mediator with God. To Jesus, Mary was a beloved mother, but no more. Matthew 12:46-50 The fact that there is "ONE MEDIATOR" and that one is Christ shows that Mary mediates and intercedes for no one. Neither do "saints". In fact, in the New Testament, "saints" are simply Christians. All Christians are saints! (Acts 9:13; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2). There is no command or example of praying to "saints" in heaven.

God answers every prayer offered by a genuine Christian as long as it is offered according to the conditions God has set forth. This does not mean that God grants every request man makes. God sometimes answer "NO" instead of "YES". (2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Matthew 26:39). But nonetheless, God answers. Prayer properly used is

a source of great blessings. "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects." James 5:16.

Prayer is fundamental part of Christian worship, though it is certainly not restricted to the regularly scheduled worship services of the church. However, no worship service is as God would have it that is not characterized by prayer.

Facts About The Bible

James L. Denison

IT IS A FACT THAT THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED OF GOD:

1. "All Scripture is inspired of God." (2 Tim. 3:16).
2. "...Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:21).
3. "God, who at sundry (several) times and in divers (various) manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1-2).
4. "Not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. 2:13).

IT IS A FACT THAT THE BIBLE

Was written by about forty different persons over a period of about sixteen hundred years. These persons came from different walks of life—they ranged from kings to peasants. During this time new discoveries were made; empires and civilizations rose and fell. Yet, there are no contradictions, neither Scientific nor historical mistakes in its holy pages,

but a remarkable unity. For instance, note the unity between the Old and the New Testaments:

OLD

- A. Creation (Gen. 1 & 2 c's).
- B. Prophecies of Christ (Is' 53c., et. als.).
- C. Moral law (Ex. 20:12-17).
- D. Condemnation of adoring and bowing to idols and images (Ex. 20:3-5).

NEW

- A. Creation (Jn. 1:1-3; Heb. 1:1-2).
 - B. Fulfillment in Christ (Acts 8:35, et. als.).
 - C. Moral law (Eph. 6:2; Mat. 5:21-22, 31-32; Eph. 5:28; Mat. 15:19; Eph. 5:3).
 - D. Condemnation of adoring and bowing to idols and images (Rom. 1:22-25).
2. Was originally written in Hebrew and Greek.
 3. Has a lapse of about four hundred years between the closing of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament.
 4. Heads the list of the World's best selling book.
 5. Holds the distinction of being the first printed book.
 6. Was not originally divided into chapters and verses, but was later so divided to make the study of it easier. The New Testament was first divided into chapters by Cardinal Hugo in 1250 A.D., and the Bible was first divided into verses by Sir Robert Stephens in 1551 A.D.

IT IS A FACT THAT THE BIBLE REVEALS GOD'S CONTINUING PURPOSE TO BE THE SALVATION OF MAN.

1. "And I will put enmity between thee and woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (Christ) shall bruise thy head, and thou (Satan) shalt bruise his heal." (Gen. 3:15).
2. "Wherefore then serveth the (Mosaic) law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed (Christ, verse 16) should come to whom the promise was made." (Gal. 3:19).
3. "...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:8-11).

IT IS A FACT THAT THE BIBLE MUST BE RIGHTLY DIVIDED (2 Tim. 2:15).

1. There are two major divisions of the Bible—the Old Testament and the New Testament.
2. There are sixty-six books in the Bible—twenty-seven in the New Testament and thirty-nine in the Old Testament.
3. There are three dispensations of time covered by the Bible, each having their respective system of laws.
 - A. The Patriarchal beginning with the creation and ending at Mt. Sinai about 1500 A.D.
 - B. The Mosaic beginning at Mt. Sinai about 1500 A.D. and ending with christ's death on the cross about 33 A.D.

- C. The Christian beginning with Christ's death on the cross about 33 A.D. and ending with the judgment and destruction of the world.
4. One should never take a scripture from its context, but should always interpret it in light of its surrounding statements.
 5. One should always ask "Who is speaking?" "To whom is he speaking?" "What is he speaking about?" and "Why is he speaking?" and endeavour to get the correct answer.
 6. The laws of the Old Testament are no longer binding upon people as a rule of faith and practice.
- A. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances (Mosaic) Law that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his (Christ's) cross." (Col. 2:14).
- B. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;... In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first (Mosaic) old. Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Heb. 8:8-13).
- C. "But before faith came, we were kept under the (Mosaic) law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the (Mosaic) law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster (the Mos-

aic Law). For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:23-36).

- D. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the (Mosaic) law; ye are fallen from grace." (Gal. 5:4).

IT IS A FACT THAT WE CANNOT TAMPER WITH THE HOLY TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE.

1. We cannot add to, nor take from it (Rev. 22:18-19).
2. Those who in any way pervert its teachings are accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).
3. Those who transgress or go beyond its teachings hath not God (2 Jn. 9).
4. When we speak on spiritual matters, it should only be as God's word has spoken (1 Pet. 4:11).

IT IS A FACT THAT YOU SHOULD NOT FORSAKE ASSEMBLING WITH THE SAINTS, OR CHRISTIANS. (Heb. 10:25).

Convincing the Muslim that Christ is the Son of God

Bob Douglas

Introduction:

I. In approaching this discussion, I have a real feeling of incompetence. I have had no experience worthy of mention in the area of convincing the Moslem that Christ is God's Son. I have no success in converting Moslems to which I can point as proof that I know whereof I speak. In fact, even my acquaintance with literature on this subject is of a limited degree.

In preparing these remarks, I have attempted to draw on the knowledge and experience of others, particularly brethren in Cairo. For there, there are several New Testament Christians who were originally Moslems, were converted to protestantism, and then, many years later discovered New Testament Christianity. At least one of those worked for a while attempting to convert other Moslems. Likewise, I have drawn on a situation of which I have first hand knowledge...that of the conversion of our Brother Mohammed Nassar in Benghazi, Libya. Besides these sources, I have attempted to read what limited materials I could find on the subject at hand.

What I have to say, then, is merely a summary of all

of this, boiled down into what seems to me to be the best approach in convincing Moslems that Christ is God's Son. Of course, all of what I say is somewhat coloured by the present religious and political situation in North Africa, and in Egypt in particular.

II. Our subject is "Convincing the Moslem that Christ is the Son of God." We must realize that this is the ultimate object of all that we do as Christians. It is the ultimate purpose behind all our other discussions. Convincing the Muslim that the Bible is God's Word, and convincing him that Christianity is God's true religion is all part of and preliminary to convincing him that Christ is God's Son. "For you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he." —John 8:24. How shall we go about this task?

Discussion:

I. Convincing the Moslem that Christ is the Son of God involves bringing two persons together, the teacher and the one to be taught. For, "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?" —Romans 10:14. Our first concern then must be with discovering who is the right person to approach the Moslem. Who shall we send?

Considered negatively, we must not to be content to send just anyone. Not even just any Christian, or just any preacher. This is the common opinion of all I talked with. The winner of souls must be wise. Jesus said, "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." —Matthew

10:16 Prior to that he said, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves." Truly the teacher of Moslems stands as a sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore, the need of wisdom is very great.

Dr. Phillips, a long time protestant missionary to the Moslems of Egypt, says that Moslems are most easily convinced about Christ's divinity by others who have been Moslems. Some years ago, he asked for seven "converts" the term used in Egypt to describe Moslems who have embraced Christianity, to preach to Islam. Why use converted Moslems? Principally because such people know the road one must take in coming to Christ. They are acquainted with the difficulties of accepting Christ's claims. They know the arguments made against Christ's Sonship and the most workable answers. They too, know the trials involved in actually giving up Islam...the hostility of family, village, government, etc.

Now we obviously do not have such people in the fellowship of the church of Christ today ... at least not outside of Pakistan, Morocco and Libya. Neither would we ever have such people in any place at the beginning of a new work. But we can profit by the principle involved in Dr. Phillip's idea.

The one who would convince Moslems that Christ is God's Son must be thoroughly acquainted with Islam. He must know Moslem traditions and rituals. He must have a ready command of the Koran. He must understand the thought processes of the Moslem mind, and he must be fluent in Arabic. This last point was insisted upon by all who offered suggestions about our topic. S.M. Zwemer, a teacher of Moslems of considerable re-

nown and a man who preached something of Christ in Al Azhar University in Cairo, also emphasized the same qualifications in his book, "The Law of Apostasy in Islam." Likewise, he must know "how" to talk to the Moslem. That is, what to say and what not to say, so as not to unduly antagonize the one he would seek to teach. Only one fully acquainted with the Arabic mind and way of life would be in a position to do this adequately.

Then the teacher of Moslems must be a wise, patient, and good hearted individual. Jesus calls his people to be "fishers of men". As we are fishing, we need the qualities of a fisherman, one of the most outstanding of which is patience.

Having seen the necessary qualifications of the one who would teach Moslems, we now proceed to the next step. How shall we bring the teacher and the prospective student together? The initial step in this involves no verbal teaching at all. Before you can begin to convince one about Jesus Christ, you must convince him about yourself. As in teaching a language, or mathematics, you must begin at the very beginning, so in teaching Moslems. What avenues of approach shall we use here?

One of several that are open to us is simple friendship. This will need to be friendship on the job, in the neighbourhood, in play, in every area of living. In all the instances known to me where one was converted to Christ, that conversion started on the basis of friendship and was made possible only because teacher and prospect made great efforts to maintain that friendship. That such friendship is absolutely necessary will become clear when

we realize that at the first the prospect views you as an enemy of himself and of his religion. So long as this feeling prevails progress is impossible.

In addition to friendship, there is the necessity of a life of good deeds. As Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." —Matthew 5:16. Without such good works there is nothing attractive to commend itself to the mind of the Moslem.

Then, as part of both friendship and good works, there must be service to others, especially in times of need and grief. I was repeatedly reminded that people in the East are extremely sentimental and sensitive to the smallest deeds of kindness. Thus, you must do them a favour. It is most important to visit the sick, ask about a man's children and console the grieving. In effect, we must "rejoice, with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep." —Romans 12 : 15.

Another word of caution should be added here. And this, too, was repeatedly emphasized. The people of the East do not recognize that you do not know their customs. When you fail to follow their habits at times of sickness or grief, they will not broadmindedly say that you are a foreigner and simply don't know their ways. They expect you to act as their fellow citizens act, and to fail to do so will offend them, possibly beyond a point of ever recovering any ground gained!

II. Now we are ready to do something...to actually teach something. But first let us notice our problems in convincing the Moslem about Christ... problems involving Moslem religious beliefs and dogmatism. Some of these

problems are very complex. They are often rooted in deeper problems which others will deal with in this series of discussions.

The first problem that we call to your attention is the Moslem's ignorance of the true Christ as pictured in the gospels. Most Moslems have never seen a New Testament. Most have never read so much as a chapter of any one of the gospels. Yet they are confident that they know Christ as He truly is! This attitude creates a vast number of difficulties.

The second problem is that the Moslem does know Jesus as He is pictured in the Koran; coupled with this is the fact that the Moslem believes firmly in Islam, the Koran, and the Traditions, and hence believes that his picture of Christ is the true picture. The Jesus of the Koran is indeed a limited Jesus. We must be fully aware of what Moslems believe to be the truth about Christ. We must be as fully conversant with the Koranic Jesus as with the Christ of the New Testament. Please notice some of the main things the Koran has to say about our Lord and Saviour.

Islam accepts the virgin birth of Christ; in fact, the story of his conception and birth sounds much like parts of the record in the Gospel of Luke. "And make mention of Mary in the Scripture, when she had withdrawn from her people to a chamber looking East, and had chosen seclusion from them. Then we sent unto her Our spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said: Lo. I seek refuge in the Beneficent One from thee, if thou are God fearing. He said: I am only a messenger of thy Lord, that I may bestow on thee a faultless son.

She said : How can I have a son when no mortal hath touched me, neither have I been unchaste? He said : So it will be. Thy Lord saith : it is easy for Me. And it will be that We may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a thing ordained. And she conceived him, and withdrew with him to a far place." —Surah XIX: 16-22 It is clear that Jesus is thought to have been conceived of a Virgin ; his conception is said to be an act of God's spirit. Jesus is likewise called "a perfect man", and a "faultless son."

Several times the Koran records incidents in which Christ supposedly spoke from the cradle as a baby. Notice Surah XIX ; 29ff, Surah III : 46, et al. The Words placed in Jesus' mouth in the cradle sound very much like some of the supposed saying of Christ in the pseudepigrapha.

There is one reference to the miracles of Christ (Surah V : 110 cf. also Surah III : 49). Surah V : 114 contains what some think is a vague reference to the Lord's Supper, whereas Surah III : 52 speaks of Jesus having disciples. Jesus also is said to have confirmed the Law and received the Gospel from God. "And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming that which was revealed before him, and we bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance and a light, confirming that which was revealed before it in the Torah." Surah V : 46. Then there is the famous denial of the death of Jesus. "They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them ; and lo those who disagree concerning it are in doubt thereof ; they have no knowledge thereof save pursuit of a conjecture; they slew him not for certain, but

Allah took him up unto Himself.” —Surah IV : 157-158. In the “Family of Imran” (Surah III) there is a reference to Jesus dying and ascending (verse 55) ; however all Moslem commentators explain this reference as one which speaks of Jesus, future death, following his return at the end of time, and his ascension into heaven. It is universally rejected as a reference to his crucifixion.

The greatest single type of reference to Christ is in the form of denials of his divinity, equality with God, and Sonship. Surah V : 72 has Christ saying, “O children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah forbiddeth Paradise.” Verse 75 of the same Surah says, “The Messiah, son of Mary, was no other than a messenger, messengers the like of whom had passed away before Him.” Again, “They indeed have disbelieved who say : Lo Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary.” In Surah XIX : 30 Jesus is made to claim that he is a prophet, which claim amounts to a denial of divinity. Then verse 35 adds, “It befitteth not the Majesty of Allah that He should take unto Himself a Son.” Surah III : 59 states that the likeness of Jesus with Allah is the likeness of Adam, that is, Jesus is no more than a mere man. Of course Surah CXII, “The Unity”, is a firm and final denial of Christ’s Sonship and equality with God.

From the problem of the Koranic Jesus, we move to still a third problem that directly effects our efforts at convincing the Moslems that Christ is the Son of God. That problem is Christ as pictured to Moslems by denominational Christianity.

In the only forms of Christianity that the Moslem has

ever seen, Jesus is an object of idolators veneration by means of statues, crosses, pictures, and related objects. This in itself causes the Moslem to reject the Christ of Christianity, for the Moslem is unequivocally opposed to idolatry in any and every form. Moslem converts to Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox Churches are almost non-existent ; one of the chief reasons is the imagery of these groups.

The book, "Blessed Be My People Egypt", is a history of the "conversion" of several Moslems in Egypt to various denominations. In one of these accounts, a Moslem had come to know something of Christ through the influence of a Roman Catholic friend. He had, in denominational language, "accepted" Christ, But as he went to the Roman Catholic Church he was horrified at the ceremony, images, gold, and ornamentation. This he knew, was not what he had read about in the New Testament. Thus, he withdrew and sought out Protestant people who were free from these forms of perversion.

Again, the Christ pictured by all denominational literature, paintings, and preaching is a weak, watery, woman-like person ... pale and effeminate. This, too, does not commend itself to the moslems mind. For example, the Arab sense of manliness is definitely repulsed by such a portrayal of Jesus.

Then, there is the matter of Christ as reflected in so-called Christian living. The supposed "Christian" lives of denominational people in the Middle East, if not everywhere, are a bankrupt form which does not commend itself to anyone. The Moslem sees clearly that this Jesus of the "Christian" does not effect the life of the "Chris-

tian" in any positive way. The "Christian" is in no way better than the Moslem in his morals and piety ; in fact, in many cases, he is obviously worse off! The only alteration of life the Moslem can see in the lives of believers in Christ is that they tend toward isolation and withdrawal from society at large, such as is seen in monasticism.

The following quotation will confirm what we have said. It is taken from a work called, "Social Justice in Islam", by Sayyid Qutb. He says :

"Christianity, as far as we can see, cannot be reckoned as a real force in opposition to the philosophies of the new materialism ; it is an individualist, isolationist, negative faith. It has no power to make life grow under its influence in any permanent or positive way ... when it proved incompetent to keep pace with life as it developed then, Christianity confined itself to worship and to matters of the individual conscience, ceasing to have any control over the practical affairs of life ; for it had not the power to persevere, to develop or to grow."

The noted Egyptian writer Mohammed Hussain Haykal, one time president of the Egyptian Senate, sets forth the same ideas in a long and painstaking manner in his preface to his "Life of Mohammed". Though there may be some natural antagonism behind these remarks, we must admit that what ever their motives, the facts set forth by these Moslem thinkers are basically correct with reference to denominational Christianity. We, of course, are faced with task of overcoming this "heritage" which we did not create and which we do not present.

III. Thus far we have seen who should attempt to convince the Moslem that Christ is God's Son, and we

have seen some of the problems we face when we come to tackle the Moslem mind its concept of the Lord. Now where do we go from here?

Direct frontal attacks on Islam, the Koran, and the Moslem concept of Jesus are absolutely futile. They are more than that, they are disastrous, for they only raise old antagonism and make any progress absolutely impossible.

Kenneth Graig, in his book, "The Call of Minaret" suggests how we should proceed. He says:

"Our first step, no doubt will be to convey to them the character and personality of Jesus as seen in the Gospels. Our surest way ... will be to acquaint the Muslims with the New Testament narrative." And even in pursuing this course, we must offer milk, not meat. But more about that in a minute. Throughout my reading and discussions with others about this topic, I met again the idea that the simple appeal of the gospel message unaided by men was the most effective course open to us. John wrote' "...These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life in His name." John 20:30-31. "These things" which have been written remain until today that men might believe. Our task is to simply sow the seed ... the New Testament record of Christ's life, teachings, and work, and let God give the increase.

What shall we do with the Koran? Shall we quote appropriate passages from it as a means of introducing our subject, or as a means of trying to take the Moslem deeper in a consideration of the Lord's nature? No! We must avoid using the Koran at all cost. Please notice I did

not say we must avoid a knowledge of the Koran. Indeed, we must know what it says. But quoting from it implies recognition of its claim to divine origin. To quote erects more barriers than it ever clears away. In passing, we must admit that there was some difference of opinion among those we talked to about this matter of quoting from the Koran. However, the majority were opposed to its use.

In offering the Moslem the Scriptures to read, we should begin with small portions, such as the sermon on the mount. Its beauty and ethical loftiness will find an appreciative reception. At the same time it is free from ideas such as the divinity of Christ, the trinity, and other problem points. This could well be followed by proverbs, Psalms, and Genesis 1 and 2. For, while the Koran teaches that God created all things, it does not describe how this creation took place step by step. It is rather pointless, and often harmful to give the Moslem a Bible or even a complete New Testament at the outset.

After a little we might give the Moslem a copy of "The Prophet Who Is Without Sin", or at least materials of this kind. This small booklet, prepared by the Presbyterian Church in Egypt, discusses the 25 major prophets recognized by Islam, beginning with Adam, working through Abraham and coming down to Christ. However it totally ignores Mohammed. In the case of each of these prophets, Islam admits that they were guilty of sin. That is, until we come to Christ, who is acknowledged to be pure and holy by the Koran as we have seen. The Moslem is simply left with a question...why didn't Jesus commit sin? Of course, the implication is that he is more than human.

Unfortunately, this particular booklet is out of print at this time. Nonetheless, the idea and approach it presents are well worth consideration.

Later we might offer a work called "Hamidi Am Dusture". This booklet explains the ritual that the Moslem observes when he goes to Mecca on a pilgrimage. It points out that the Moslem cannot kill an insect, but can kill a Christian if he is found in a Mosque. The question is then raised as to why? What is this system of values? What sort of an ethical and religious philosophy would place an insect above human life? A similar work is called *Al Mirratu Al Galiyya* (The Clear Mirror). For the Moslem who had advanced in his study and thinking there is a four volume set called *Al Hidiyya* (The Guidance). This material is also quite rare, but exceedingly valuable, as it sets about in a definite way to expose the falsehood of Islam, the Koran and Mohammed. It should be used with caution.

However, we would remind you, as we said earlier, that the best material is simply the Scriptures, particularly portions.

IV. All of this activity of which we have been speaking is naturally going to lead us into discussions of various questions related to Christ's divinity. We must expect these questions and we must be ready to answer them. The answers we give will have to be in terms the Moslem mind can understand; often the answers will have to be in terms of philosophical concepts, for an appeal to the Bible as an authoritative answer book is of no avail unless we have established the validity of the Bible in the Moslem's mind. From this point on I confess that I am borrowing totally from others. Let's notice a couple of

thorny questions which we must face in convincing the Moslem that Christ is God's Son.

One problem is the Moslem's concept of God's sovereignty, which he believes stands in total opposition to the "Trinity" of the Bible. The Koran is emphatic in its declarations about God. Notice ... Surah CXII, "The Unity" ... "Say; He is Allah, the one! Allah, the eternally Besought of all! He begotteth not nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him." In Surah V:73, we read, "They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the third of three; when there is no God save the One God." The Moslem conceives of God as One and Absolute; whereas in his mind Christianity is tri-theistic. "Say not 'three'...cease! It is better for you! Allah is only one God." Surah IV:169. It should be noted that the "three" Gods of Christianity in the Moslem mind are God, Jesus and Mary. Notice Surah V:116. "O Jesus, Son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?". Again and again, thoughts of this kind are set forth by Mohammed. In fact, the most fundamental principle in all Islam...the thing above all else that marks one as an acceptable "orthodox" Moslem is belief in one God, to the exclusion of any and all equals, or partners. Quite naturally: then, the greatest sin in Islam is "association", that is, considering anyone or anything as associated with God.

How do we meet and overcome this problem? Is it possible to overcome it? Can these people be reached and persuaded to accept an idea, which to them stands in opposition to all they hold dear? Yes, we believe it is

possible to lead the Moslem to accept the claim of Jesus that he is "God". After all, those men who were first persuaded to follow Jesus were the strictest kind of monotheists, were they not? Like Moslems, they recited verses at every service, setting forth the oneness of God. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."—Deuteronomy 6:5. Yet these same people came to accept Christ as God's Son, and realized that there was no contradiction between God's "Oneness", rightly understood Jesus' Divinity.

The explanation of the divine side of Christ must be made in terms Moslems best understand, namely the double belief that God is both He who reveals and that He is also Sovereign. Moslems say that God reveals himself by or in, himself.

Now if God is personal, and Islam affirms that He is, then knowledge of Him must be personal, too. This requires a personal revelation. And Jesus is that Personality, bringing into focus and form the revelation of God. This revelation was verbal, in that He taught, actual, in that He lived and suffered, and personal in that He, God, was involved.

It would certainly be blasphemy to turn a teacher into God; however, it is not impossible that God would become a teacher. To say that this is impossible is to place restrictions on God that do not agree with His all powerful nature...a characteristic much emphasized in Islam. In fact, in Surah XXVII:7ff there is the Koranic vestion of God's appearance to Moses at the burning bush; this incident, accepted by Moslems, shows that God did appear in one particular place, at a specific time, in order to

instruct Moses. Why could he not have done the same through a body of flesh as well?

We must make it clear that the doctrine of Jesus is not an imposition upon facts, or reason, but rather a conclusion from the facts. We must show that we have not made a teacher God, but that we believe that God undertook in Christ to teach men, and that consequently Moslems reject Christ on the wrong premise.

The Moslem concept of God's Sovereignty emphasizes the great gulf that exists between God and men. To Moslems, revelation is possible only because that gulf is bridged by intermediaries, such as archangels, angels, prophets, etc. Revelation in human life would be unworthy of God's glory and Sovereignty, Islam believes.

We must help the Moslem to see that by so depending on the Sovereignty of God, that he is, in effect, limiting God! God must be left alone to determine His own ways of doing things and the limits of His own Sovereignty, without man's interference. Islam will accept this conclusion. And when that is accepted, we are brought back once again to Jesus. In presenting Christ we are simply asking Moslems to believe more, not less, in the undefeatable Sovereignty of God. Islam teaches that God is truly "all in all", but how can he be without stooping to meet man's needs?

The Biblical expression, "Son of God", also will come up for discussion. All Moslems think that this expression implies paternity, of which they cannot conceive. But then, neither can the Christian. We agree that this would be blasphemous. It must be pointed out that the Biblical concept of Christ as the Son of God is an attempt to tell us of

God's revelation of Himself. Rather than involving pater-
nity, it excludes it. Moslems can understand, and fre-
quently use, similar expressions, such as, "son of country",
or "son of Egypt". It must be made clear that the term
Son of God is used in a similar way.

Yet another question which will have to be dealt with
is the matter of Christ's death on the cross. We have
already seen the Koran's declaration about this point.
"They did not kill him, they did not crucify him, it was
made to appear so." At the same time the Koran recog-
nizes that the Jews *desired* to crucify Christ; tradition
usually says that Judas was substituted in the Lord's place
at the last minute.

Here is an important fact to keep always in mind, as
it will relate to Jesus and His death: the Koran stresses
that all of God's messengers have been subjected to hosti-
lity from mankind in general, due to their preaching of
God's will. At the same time, the Koran sets forth idea
that God has always sustained his messengers in their
struggles and ultimately seen them to victory over their
enemies. For this very reason the crucifixion of Jesus is
denied. To the Moslem it means that God did not lead
his servant to success, but allowed him to perish at the
hands of his enemies...an unthinkable thing to the Islamic
mind.

But why should we accept the idea that Jesus escaped?
If it was the will of the Sovereign of heaven and earth
that Jesus die, how and why should he have escaped?
And when the crucifixion is viewed in the context of the
whole last week of Jesus' life, including the resurrection,
then we see that rather than leaving Christ to be over-

thrown, God did vindicate Christ and did bring to naught the counsel of those who were opposing His will.

If the crucifixion is not a fact, then it is an invention. But who invented it? And when? Did the church invent the faith which made it, creating the history which in fact created it?

These are but a few of the points which will come up for discussion as we speak with Moslems about Christ's divinity. We do not mean to imply that these are all of the questions which will be raised, nor do we mean to imply that these lines of thought are necessarily the best lines to be pursued in answering. Every Moslem is different to some degree, in that each is an individual. What will convince one, will leave another unimpressed. By sharing these few thoughts with you, we hope to challenge your thinking, and encourage you to do more by way of attempting to convince the Moslem that Christ is the Son of God.

The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation, even to the Moslem, and especially to the Moslem. Followers of Islam can be convinced about our Lord and Saviour! It is our responsibility to lay aside any defeatist attitudes and go forth, sowing the seed of the kingdom. For truly, in the Lord, our labour is not in vain. God help us to rise to the challenge he has placed before us!

The Church And Her Mission

Bob Hurd

The true mission of the churches of Christ is seen plainly in the words of the Master himself... "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16 : 15). As the old adage states. "Take the go out of gospel, and you have nothing." There is only one way the souls can be saved in our day or in any day and that is by hearing the words of God and surrendering to them. Paul says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach, except they be sent ? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. (Romans 10 : 14—15). Here we find many questions, each with the same answer... the necessity of the gospel in everyones life. Thus the mission of the churches of Christ is before us... Go PREACH !!

The next question is : Who is to preach ? Preaching today is being left to a group of highly educated men who have spent years in training to be able to say God loves you in such a way as to excite the souls. The Lord's church was at one time a mass of believing

“working” Christians who knew the true meaning of the message of Christ in Mark 16 : 15. Does it take a BA, MA, or a PHD to tell the simple story of Christ and to sit and explain the truths of God’s plan of salvation to man ? Please do not misunderstand me, I am a firm believer in a good educational background for all those that are to present the word of God. However, I am also convinced that it isn’t always required. Some of the greatest preachers I have heard were men who realized the meaning of the message of Mark 16 : 15 and did just what it said... they went !! I could tell of many others who did the same thing, not only in their own country, but around the world. However, we still have not covered completely who it is that is to preach. We hear so often, “Thats the preacher’s job”, or, “Leave it to the elders and deacons”, and the work of the Lord is held back by lazy do-nothing members who are satisfied to sit once or twice a week in a fine building and go home without once doing something to save a soul in sin. Yes, they do love the Lord, but, by their lives they show a lack of love for the will of God in taking the message to others. The command Go Ye wasn’t written to preachers or the leaders of the congregations alone, it was to ALL IN CHRIST !!! That means boy, girl, men and women, all who have been born again into Christ. Who me !! Why I don’t know how to do that !!! I don’t know enough about the Bible to do this !! Sound familiar ? What these are, are weak sinful soul condemning excuses that keep us from doing the work of Christ ! You can give someone a tract, invite them to services, visit in a home, tell them how to become Christians.

None of these things need special training, it takes special... LOVE... the same kind that was willing to give Himself on the cross for the sins of all mankind. Thus we can conclude this part of the church's mission by saying that the who is YOU, everyone born into Christ.

The final question we need to examine is: Where do we Preach? Jesus told his disciples, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest...(John 4 : 35). The world is the field, and the heart of every person is the soil. The only way anyone can be saved is by hearing and obeying the word of Christ. Thus we see the urgency of preaching the gospel. Souls are dead in sin!! Souls are destined to die and go into eternal hell without Christ, without a hope, to suffer pain and horror beyond the humans mind to conceive. Paul said that Christ was coming again with his angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who knew not Christ, and who obeyed not the gospel of Christ...(2 Thess. 1 : 7-9). How can we as members of the body of Christ sit idly by and allow this to happen. Yet, it is evident that this is just what has happened and is happening right now. Christians sit and say, "We have the truth, come and hear." The mission field is the friend next door, the man down the street, the people of a community, and all the world. When we think about mission work, we so often are prone to think only of the far away country, and allow the millions all around us to rush head long into hell, never once telling them of God's wonderful plan of salvation to them. It is to be noted here, that there is a great

awakening among the Lord's church to the needs of the lost in the United States. We have a wonderful mission effort by radio and television, and preachers are sent to the areas of the nation where the church has had no influence as yet. On a world wide scale we are still far behind in our mission efforts. Many want to send, few want to go. There are still many nations under the sun with few, if any missionaries in them. The religious denominations which carry not the true gospel, but the perverted one which cannot save, are far more numerous than all our efforts combined. Brethren, can we be satisfied until every person has had the opportunity to hear the gospel at least once? The mission of the church will succeed brethren, it **MUST**! Will it succeed because you cared, or will it succeed in spite of you? Let us all start now to do all we can personally to see that the mission of the church is carried out, and engage those about us in this vital task. Soldiers of Christ Arise, and put your armour on!!!

“We Don't Want To Have Anything To Do With The Church Of Christ”

J.C. Choate

Recently a brother told me about an experience he had with some denominational people who operated a printing press. He said that on going to them to check about some printing costs that they responded by saying, “We don't want to have anything to do with you people of the church of Christ.” Another brother told me that his Pentecostal classmates reacted in a similar fashion when he invited them to worship. And on and on I could go with other such instances which would indicate that for some reason a lot of people have a disliking for the Lord's church. But why should this be?

Please think with me for a few minutes. Why would anyone not like the church of Christ? Why would they want to shun it, not have anything to do with it? Why would they resent it or oppose it? What have we done to cause such feelings on the part of our religious friends? Have we done them some wrong? Have we hurt their feelings? Could it be that we are not teaching the truth? Or could it be that they have such feeling because we are teaching the truth?

As far as I know we who are members of the church of Christ love all people. We even love those who dis-

agree with us religiously. We try to be kind and friendly with all. We encourage everyone to come and worship with us and to study the Bible with us. If we differ doctrinally, we try to keep an open mind and stress the importance of allowing God's word to settle all differences. We certainly do not desire to drive anyone away from us, and especially from the truth.

I suspect, however, that the real reason that a lot of religious people don't want to have anything to do with us is because of what we teach. Not only that, but because of that, teaching we are unable to fellowship them and thereby they feel rejected. But if we teach the truth, and we are shunned because of this, then that means that these people are not just opposing us but they are opposing the truth and God himself.

Doesn't this remind us of the attitude the Pharisees and Sadducees had towards Christ? They found fault with him, condemned his actions, rejected his teachings, bitterly opposed him, and were even responsible for his death on the cross. Why? Because he condemned their religious error, pointed out their hypocrisy, and asked them to repent and obey God. When we do likewise in dealing with our denominational friends of today we get the same response. It is the truth that makes all the difference in each case.

To create such strong feelings in the people of our own time then the next question that would automatically come to one's mind would be, "What do you teach?" We try to teach the truth in all matters. But all would say this. Then we will be a little more specific. We accept the Bible and the Bible only in dealing with spiritual

matters, (2 Timothy 3 : 16, 17). We teach that every accountable being must believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16 : 16), and that the saved are added to the Lord's church. (Acts 2 : 47). We teach that Christ built the church (Matthew 16 : 18), on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), that there is but one church (Ephesians 4 : 4), that he died for it to purchase it with his blood (Acts 20 : 28), that he is the saviour of it (Ephesians 5 : 23), that he is the one and only head of it (Colossians 1 : 18), that it wears the name of Christ (Romans 16 : 16), and that its members are Christians only. (Acts 26 : 28 ; Acts 11 : 26 ; 1 Peter 4 : 16). We are opposed to denominationalism because this is of man and represents division, whereas Christ prayed that we might all be one. (John 17 : 20-23). As Christians, we believe that we should meet on each first day of the week (Acts 20 : 7) to worship God (John 4 : 24) through prayer (Acts 2 : 42), singing (Ephesians 5:19), studying God's word (2 Timothy 2:15), partaking of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-29), and through giving. (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2). Any other worship is vain and according to the doctrines and commandments of men. (Matthew 15 : 9). And on and on we could go with many other truths that are set forth in God's word that we both believe and teach and practice.

Now it is because of such teaching that marks us and distinguishes us from all others. It is also for this reason that our religious friends often shun us, reject us, and even oppose us. They don't like us because we will not compromise with them and have fellowship with them. They accuse us of saying that we are better than everyone

else and that we are the only ones going to heaven. Actually, because of such statements the hearts of many are prejudiced against us and this leads them to refuse to study with us when really they don't know who we are and what we teach. This is sad indeed.

I would like to encourage you to come and see us. Visit with us. Don't listen to what others say about us but come and see and hear for yourself. If you don't agree with us, tell us wherein we are wrong. If you love souls, and believe you are right, then you should come and study with us and teach us the truth. If you will invite us to come and study with you then we will be happy to do so. Then once we learn God's will we can all obey it and be saved. What could be wrong with that? For sure, we must take caution so as not to end up in opposing the Lord and his church, but the only way we can be sure is through a study of his word. We wish to extend to you once more an invitation to come and study the word of God with us. If you will, you will find that you are among friends, that no one will force or pressure you to accept anything. Then through our study if it is found that you have the truth then we will want to accept that truth, but if you should find that we have the truth then we would hope that you would also want the truth and that you would obey it. In either case, if we are honest and sincere with one another, and with God, through such a study we should end up being united in Christ and his church. Surely that would not be wrong but rather that would be good for all involved. May God help us to so do.

A Study of Baptism

Douglas LeCroy

Since baptism is the subject of so much controversy among students of religion, we will not make this subject old by often mentioning it. Almost all churches practice the rite of baptism, or something they consider to be baptism: and since this is a Bible theme, we need to "attain unto the uuity of the faith" (Eph. 4:13) concerning it. We do not propose that this article will be the last word on baptism, but it is hoped that it will broaden our knowledge and correct at least some mis-understandings.

There are five Greek words used in the New Testament which are the entire source of words meaning "baptize, baptism, dipping, Baptist," etc. The Greek word *baptisma* appears 22 times in the New Testament and each time is translated by the Anglicized word, "baptism". *Baptismos* occurs only 4 times and is translated once as "baptism," and three times as "washing". A proper noun *Baptistes* all 14 times is used as an identifier for John the Baptist. The verb *baptizo* is utilized 79 times, and 74 of those instances is translated "baptize". Used in the middle passive voice however, twice it is necessary to render it "be baptized" and two times "wash." In its one occurrence in the participial usage it is translated "Baptist." The last word from the root word *bapt* is *bapto*, a verb appearing 3 times and always rendered "dip". To sum-

marize : words from the root *bapt* occur 122 times in the New Testament.

Instead of pursuing these words throughout the New Testament, let us look at three chapters in the book of Matthew where they occur and we can see some various uses of the words.

Matt. 3— John the Baptist baptized with the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. See verses 5, 6, 11, 13, 14, 17 where the words appear. John baptized in water. The dative case of the word with water means that John baptized in water in the Jordan.

Matt. 20— Verses 22 and 23 speak of a different kind of baptism, though not actually termed a baptism. It is a “cup” of sorrow, a baptism of suffering, or an overwhelming, a plunging in grief, sorrow and anguish.

Matt. 28— Verses 18-20. We have here a command to the apostles by Christ. Jesus says, “By merit of all power which is invested in me, I command you to go and teach all nations.” They were to baptize those who were taught. Notice this command was not to the men taught, but it is directed to the teacher. There are other commands to the persons to be baptized.

These words occurring in Matthew mean to dip, to plunge, to immerse, to submerge, signifying burying and lifting up again, if we refer to any standard Greek lexicon. Not one of the 122 usages in the New Testament could

be safely or logically rendered "to sprinkle" or "to pour".

On closely examining all phases of baptism, these words mean that at least 5 things are necessary.

- (1) An Administrator of the baptism.
- (2) A Subject or Person or Thing or Object that is to be baptized.
- (3) An Element in which the baptism occurs. There are six elements in the New Testament : water, fire, Spirit, water-cloud, sea, and suffering. It will be of interest to discover who is the administrator of all these baptisms in the different elements.
- (4) A Purpose or Design accomplished by the baptism.
- (5) An Action involved to perform the baptism.

These things must exist.

In less than a book we could not hope fully to discuss all those considerations. We do want to glean the obvious conclusions from these however.

ADMINISTRATOR. Some baptisms are the fulfillment of promises or threats, such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit or the baptism of fire or the baptism of suffering.

God administered all those baptism that were promises or threats. Some examples of baptism administered by God were when Moses and the children of Israel were baptized in the water-cloud and in the sea (I Cor. 10 :2) ; Noah (I Pet. 3 : 20, 21) ; Holy Spirit (Acts 2, with Matt. 3 : 11) when the apostles were clothed with the Power from on high (Luke 24 : 49). In the end of the

world God will baptize the world in fire (Matt. 3 : 11, with II Pet. 3 : 7, 10).

Another baptism which only God could administer was the baptism of suffering which Christ only had to experience (Matt. 20 : 22, 23). This cup of grief, although not termed a baptism in the Greek was really that because he was completely covered up in it.

What is the *purpose* of those baptisms administered by God ? They are for the advancement of the salvation given by the Lord.

John the Baptist was the administrator of John's baptism. He commanded men to be baptized and he and his disciples performed the rites when men obeyed. John baptized people in water in places where there was much water (John 3 : 23), because the biblical action of baptism was immersion of the entire body in the water.

In obedience to the command of Jesus expressed in the Great Commission, the apostles went forth, taught and commanded believing penitents to be baptized. Those believers submitted to baptism and they were baptized in water either by the apostles themselves or other disciples of Christ.

From these remarks about the administrator of baptism, we can conclude this ; *God never administers a commanded baptism, nor men a threatened or promised baptism.*

If then we are not baptized with the Holy Spirit, can we blame anyone, or ourselves ? No. God is the only one who can administer Holy Spirit baptism and it is not our fault if we are not baptized.

But men are told to go and baptize. Does this mean that they will lay their hands on people and give them the Holy Spirit? No. It is impossible for them to perform a baptism of which God only is the administrator. But men *are* responsible for the baptism commanded by Christ. The blame can be placed directly on those taught if they are not baptized, for they are commanded to be baptized (Mark 16 : 16) ; and if they are willing, this baptism can be administered by men.

Every time baptism is used with water, whether in the case of Noah, Moses, or John, under the Jewish age or dispensation, or the baptism of the Great Commission in this Christian age we live in, its purpose each time was for salvation.

Is Sin Inherited?

Bob Douglas

Christianity is very directly concerned with the subject of sin. For it was sin that prompted God to send Jesus Christ into the world to die on the cross, and establish the Christian religion. (Luke 19 : 10 ; Matthew 1 : 21). Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59 : 1-2) ; and leads to condemnation, for "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6 : 23) To be saved man must, among other things, repent of his sins (Luke 13 : 3), and be baptized "for the remission of "sins." (Acts 2 : 38). Since all of these things are so, it is most important that everyone who would please God understand what sin is.

What is sin ? Is it inherited ? Are we responsible before God for our own sins only, or also for the sins of Adam and our forefathers ? These are important questions, the answers to which involve a right understanding of God's word, and the salvation of our souls. Jesus Christ is the **SOLE AUTHORITY** in answering these questions, for he is God's Son and possesses "all authority (power) in heaven and on earth" Matthew 28 : 18. What Christ in his word says is God's truth ; whatever man may say that differs with Christ's word, is simply not God's truth !

The New Testament tells us what sin is. John says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." I John 3:4. Thus,

we have THE DIVINE DEFINITION of sin. When man breaks God's law, the New Testament, he sins. Since sin is "transgression" (or breaking) God's law. We see this in the case of Adam, the first man, for God had given him a law (Genesis 2 : 17), for a time Adam did not sin. Later, he acted in such a way as to break God's law, thus he sinned. Had Adam never acted in this manner, he would not have sinned.

Men inherit many things from their parents and forefathers, but one thing they do not inherit is "acts" of various kinds. For example, a man may learn how to drive a car. This is an act of a specific kind. When a son is born to that man, that son inherits certain characteristics from his father, but he does not inherit the ability to drive a car. Before the son will ever be able to perform the act of driving a car, he will have to learn how for himself.

John shows us that sin is an "act", the act of "transgressing the law" of God. Thus, one man may sin, but this does not mean that his children will inherit his sins. In fact, just the opposite is true. God says through Ezekiel (18: 20), "*The soul that sins it shall die.*" God *did not* say, "soul shall die for it inherits sins." There is NOT ONE VERSE IN ALL THE BIBLE that says people "inherit" sins. But there is A VERSE THAT SAYS THEY DO NOT inherit sins, Ezekiel 18 ; 20, goes on, "*The father shall not bear the iniquity of the son, neither shall the son bear the iniquity of the father.*" This is so because sin is an "act," and consequently, not inheritable ! Deuteronomy 1 : 39 adds that children "have no knowledge of good or evil."

But the Bible has more to say. It tells us that man's

a dual being, that is, there are two sides to man. One is physical, the other spiritual. Or put another way—man has a body, and a soul, or spirit. (II Cor. 4 : 16 ; I Thess. 5 : 23 ; Mt. 10 : 28.) Listen to Hebrews 12 : 9, “We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live ? Here the writer recognizes man’s dual nature as he mentions (1) “fathers of our flesh”, and (2) “the Father of spirits.”

Man’s physical body is fathered by the “father of his flesh.” It is tall or short, dark or light, slim or fat, because it inherits the characteristics of its father. Man’s soul, or spirit, comes, not from the physical father, but “from the Father of Spirit, God. Zechariah 12 : 1 says that the Lord “forms the spirit of man within him.” THE BIBLE TEACHES WE GET OUR SOULS FROM GOD, NOT from Adam or any physical being. Paul says, “We are indeed his (God’s) offspring.” Acts 17 : 28 Read also Ecclesiastes 12 : 7. Now if man is born sinful, it is because the father of a soul that is sinful ! But who will say that God is sinful, or that he is the Father of a soul that is sinful ? This is what one must say, if sin is inherited, for the spirit, which is supposedly born sinful comes from God, and partakes of God’s characteristics !

Man begins life pure and holy ; later due to the presence of Satan in the world, he chooses to act contrary to God’s laws, and thus he sins. But he is not born sinful, or a sinner.

Jesus further pointed this out by saying that the kingdom of heaven is made up of little children. Luke 18 : 15-16. Note that Jesus does not say that the kingdom

is made up of "such" as they then were! Is God's kingdom made up of wholly defiled and sinful persons? No, just the opposite.

Usually, where the idea of sin being inherited is taught, the idea of baptizing infants is also taught. For this second idea has proceeded from acceptance of the first idea. If children are not born sinful there is no need to baptize them.

The Bible shows that infants were not baptized in early Christianity, for Jesus and the apostles taught that one must BELIEVE BEFORE being baptized (Mark 16 : 16; Acts 16 : 31 & 18 : 8). Infants cannot believe. Yet all who would be baptized as God commands must believe before they are baptized, otherwise, their baptism is not "of faith." Scripture tells us that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14 : 23. Read also Romans 1 : 16-17 ; Hebrews 11 : 6.

There is no reason for baptizing infants, for they have no sin to be remitted or forgiven. There is great reason for not baptizing infants. God HAS NOT COMMANDED IT. It is not part of the New Testament. Those who have been baptized as infants have not obeyed God. Their baptism was not their own choice, neither was it proceeded by and based on the all necessary ingredient of faith, Just as faith without works will not save (James 2 : 24), so works without faith will not save either. Faith must work. But faith must also come before works.

Every man is responsible for his own sins and the sins of no one else. Romans 14 : 12, II Corinthians 5 : 10. No man is born a sinner. He becomes a sinner when he disobeys God's law. He can be saved only when faith obeys God in repentance of sins and baptism.

To Him That Overcometh

Bill Burton

Each of the seven letters addressed to the seven churches of Asia closes with a promise or promises to the ones who "overcome." There are many lessons for us in the admonition to overcome.

To "overcome" means "to get the better of in competition ; conquer ; to master ; suppress ; prevail over."—Webster. Some things we are to overcome are false teachers, the world, temptations, and self. The Christian life is not easy. It requires diligent effort. It requires continual pruning, crucifying, developing. We must be vigilant, sober (1 Pet. 5 : 8) ; walking circumspectly (Eph. 5 : 15). We must not conform to the world (Rom. 12 : 2), but meet the world in conflict. We cannot overcome by being unwatchful and half-asleep. One cannot be a Christian unless he makes that his one aim in life. Christ will not accept a divided service.

These letters to the seven churches point out the individual responsibility of each member of the church. To Ephesus Jesus said, "*He* that hath an ear, let *him* hear" and "to *him* that overcometh, to *him* will I give..." (Rev. 2 : 7). We will not be judged as congregations but as individuals. Each Christian must hear himself for and overcome for himself. He may receive aid and

help from brethren and friends but in the final analysis he is personally and individually responsible to God. The principle that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10 : 34) and that "each of us shall give an account of himself to God" (Rom. 14 : 12), is clearly taught in these letters.

Now notice the promises that are held out to the ones who overcome :

1. The right to "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. 2 : 7).
2. The "crown of life" and not to be "hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2 : 10-11).
3. "Eat of the hidden manna," "a white stone" ; and "a new name." (Rev. 2 : 17).
4. Power and rule over the nations. (Rev. 2 : 26).
5. Clothed in white raiment, name in the book of life, and be confessed before the Father and His angels. (Rev. 3 : 5).
6. To be made "a pillar in the temple of God" and have the name of God. (Rev. 3 : 12).
7. To be allowed to sit with Christ on His throne. (Rev. 3 : 21).

What blessings are these ! What incentives to overcome !

Let it be emphasized again that these blessings are held out only to those who overcome. This simply implies that these blessings would be lost if we fail to overcome. It also implies ability to fail or to overcome. The words are without meaning if this is not true. Look again at the blessings listed. What a horrible thought to think of failing to inherit these blessings and promises ! This should spur us to greater effort.

The Church in the New Testament

1. Was built by Christ. Matt. 16 : 18
2. Christ died for it. Eph. 5 : 25
3. Christ purchased it. Acts 20 : 28
4. Is Christ's church. Matt. 16 : 18 ; Rom. 16 : 16
5. Also God's church. 1 Tim. 3 : 15 ; John 17 : 10
6. The body of Christ. 1 Cor. 12 : 27 ; Col. 1 : 24
7. Christ-Head of Body. Eph. 1 : 22, 23 ; 5 : 23.
8. One head, one body. Col. 1 : 18 ; Eph. 4 : 4
9. Body obeys the head. Col. 1 : 18 ; Heb. 5 : 8, 9
10. Has all authority. Matt. 28 : 18-20 ; John 1 : 17
11. Saviour of the body. Eph. 5 : 23-27
12. Reconciled in body. Eph. 2 : 14-16 ; 3 : 6.
13. Saved in the church. Acts 2 : 47 ; Mk. 16 : 16
14. Baptized into body. 1 Cor. 12 : 13 ; Rom. 16 : 16
15. Called in one body. Col. 3 : 15 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 14
16. Church built, A.D. 33 Matt. 16 : 18 ; Acts 2 : 47
17. 3,000 added to it. Acts 2 : 36-38, 41, 47
18. Seed sown elsewhere. Luke 8 : 11 ; Acts 8 : 5, 12

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| 19. Not make Philipites
Acts 8 : 26-39 ; 1 Pet.
4 : 16 | 29. Prayer for unity.
John 17 : 20-23 |
| 20. Nor make Paulities.
Acts 26 : 26-28 ; James
2 : 7 | 30. Division condemned.
1 Cor. 1 : 10 ; 3 : 1-4 |
| 21. "Churches of Christ"
Rom. 16 : 16 ; Matt.
16 : 18 | 31. Avoid the dividers.
Rom. 16 : 16-18 ; Tit,
3 : 10 |
| 22. Word made Christians
Acts 11 : 26 ; Isa. 62 : 2 | 32. Abide in the Truth.
John 8 : 32 ; 2 John
9-11 |
| 23. Many congregations.
Gal. 1 : 2 ; Rom.
16 : 16 | 33. Error makes sectarians.
Matt. 15 : 13-14 ; 1
Tim. 4 : 1-3 |
| 24. Churches (Local) Rom.
16 : 16 | 34. Word unites believers.
John 17 : 20-23 ; 1 John
1 : 7 |
| 25. One church (General).
Matt. 16 : 18 ; Col.
1 : 18, 24 | 35. Reproduces N. T.
Church. Luke 8 : 11 (If
Sow Same.) |
| 26. Of same faith, etc. Eph.
4 : 3-6 ; Jude 3 | 36. Back to the Bible.
Neh. 8 : 13-18 ; Jude 3 |
| 27. Had the same teaching.
1 Cor. 4 : 17 ; 2 John
9-11 | 37. Not a sectarian book.
Eph. 4 : 3-6 ; John
17 : 20-23 |
| 28. Had no denominations.
Eph. 4 : 3-6 ; 2 : 16 ;
3 : 1 | 38. Christ is not divided.
1 Cor. 1 : 10-13 ; Eph.
2 : 14 |

39. God not for confusion. 42. Human creeds wrong.
 1 Cor. 14 : 33 ; Prov. Mark 7 : 3-13 ; 2 Tim.
 6 : 16-19 3 : 15-17
40. Spirit is for unity. 43. Are contradictory. 1
 Eph. 4 : 3-6; 2 Pet. 1 : 21 Cor. 1 : 10 ; Isa. 8 : 20
41. Man - made bodies 44. Bible is our creed.
 wrong. Eph. 1 : 22, 23 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 15-17 ; 2
 Eph. 4 : 4 Pet. 1 : 3

Flee Youthful Lusts

Wm. Kay Moser

This truth could well be thundered from Mount Sinai, because there are probably few exhortations as much needed today. Modern advertising, much of today's dress and hero-worship is geared to keep youth worshipping at an ivory tower of one sort or another ; be it lusts, vain glory or useless aspirations. Of all the lusts that youth are subject to in our simple world it is my conviction that none wreck more lives and damn more souls than that which is associated with what are called sex sins.

"FLEE fornication." Paul admonished in as strong a way as he could have written it. Paul knew, as other thinking people know, that a man was safe only in flight. Barnes well said : "Man should *escape* from it ; he should not stay to reason about it ; to *debate* the matter ; or even to *contend* with his propensities, and to try the strength of his virtue. There are some sins which man can resist ; some about which he can reason without danger of pollution. But this is a sin where a man is *safe* only when he flies ; free from pollution only when he refuses to entertain a thought of it ; secure when he seeks a victory by flight, and a conquest by retreat. Let a man turn away from it without reflection on it and he is safe. Let him

turn and reason and he may be ruined." Barnes' Notes on 1 Cor. 6 : 18.

After saying the foregoing Barnes made an observation that every person living in the twentieth century could well ponder. "An argument on the subject often leaves pollution ; a description ruins ; and even the presentation of motives *against* it may often fix the mind with dangerous inclination on the crime. There is no way of avoiding the pollution but in the manner prescribed by Paul ; there is no man safe who will not follow his direction. How many a young man would be saved from poverty, want disease, curses, tears, and hell, could these TWO WORDS be made to blaze before him like the writing before the astonished eyes of Belshazzer (Dan. 5). and could they terrify him from even the *momentary* contemplation of the crime."

I might add that everywhere a young man falls through this sin into tears, want, disease and hell there is a young woman. The advice is just as loud and clear to the young women as the young men.

Brother J.W. Shepherd reasons that since Timothy was such an outstanding young man in the ministry of the word of God that Paul would not have needed to give him such advice as "flee youthful lusts" and mean by it anything in the way of sensuality. I don't think many preachers would agree with Brother Shepherd. This is partaking somewhat of the idea that a preacher is supplied with more moral courage than others. I don't believe this. I think it is even possible that he spend most of his time teaching and exhorting other until he lack it himself. Preachers need preaching to as badly as anybody, and I

believe this is what Paul was doing to Timothy. It doesn't mean Timothy was bad, but it does mean he was subject to temptation. Many a young woman has been led astray by placing too much confidence in spiritual advisors, and the very idea that Brother Shepherd had would be an added danger to her. No sin has plagued the Catholic Church like this one. No person is immune to it.

Paul was telling Timothy the same thing in a little more positive way in 1 Tim. 4: 12 when he said he should be an example in *purity*. No one was in as responsible a position as was a preacher of the gospel, and no one would do so much damage by a fall, into this sin. The advice to flee youthful lusts was just a step ahead of the advice to flee fornication. In either event the only safe battle to be waged against it would be in turning our backs to the temptation and fleeing.

Nearly all the so-called sex advice in our modern pulps and the pulps that have graduated into the top grades of pictures and paper are *against* it. Yet, the way it is discussed will entice more than it warns. These, as jokes about sex, have as their aim to entice rather than to promote humor. Many a young couple have begun talking about intimate things, and even though they were against them then they ended up trapped by their own speech that was prompted by Satan himself. So, as Barnes said, "An argument on the subject often leaves pollution." The example our forefathers left of not discussing certain things in certain places could well be imitated today.

I don't mean that youth should not be educated along these lines. They should, but the people who profess to be teaching in the magazines are more often trying to

sell their wares than impart information. The Christian women should teach their young women. (Tit. 2 : 3-5). Though anybody will grant some women have taught their daughters too little, we must admit at the same time that others who professed to be doing what wasn't done at home have gone overboard and drug many youth with them into deep water. What the base used to discuss only among others of the same sex has come to be front-page stuff. Not to be left out is the advice the fathers owes his son along this line.

Preachers should teach more along this line it seems to me. The Bible teaches a lot about it, the national magazines never put out an issue without something in it to entice toward youthful lusts and surely the minister of the gospel can give better counsel than can they who do not even profess respect for God. There is a limit to all things, but the preacher is respected by most youth who attend his preaching regularly and they will believe his exhortation about this as quickly as about baptism if they're taught it wisely. It is the untaught that go astray and take others with them.

There are statistics that show that our moral life is decaying, or has already decayed. The home life of most of those who add digits in immorality testify to the need of *godly* counsel. There is the ungodly everywhere. The races that need teaching worst have gone the lowest in sex crimes and sins. The children who have not heard or seen Christianity in action have fallen into sin more often.

All of us, be we older or younger, need to flee the lusts that are generally associated with youth. There are few diseases that youth generally get but what older folk can also fall prey to. We must awake to soberness and righteousness in purity of heart and life so we can be found acceptable for that for which we were created in the first place—eternal life with God and his Son Jesus Christ.

“Selling the Gospel to Others”

J.P. Williams

Yes, it is true, every Christian must be a salesman. No, not necessarily of tangible things, but rather the intangible, the gospel of Christ which is God's only power to save the soul of man. (Rom. 1 : 16).

Jesus said : “It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” (John 6 : 45). In saying this he enjoined upon every follower of his the necessity of teaching or selling the gospel to others.

There are certain basic underlying principles that a good salesman must grasp before he can be successful in the field of selling. These principles will apply in the spiritual realm as well as the material.

I was privileged once to take a correspondence course from a very prominent institution. When I was contacted by the field man of the institution I was reluctant to enroll in the course, because I felt that correspondence work was difficult and especially in the field of salesmanship. Yet when he showed me the simplicity of the planned course I was amazed. The whole course was built around three letters of the English alphabet. These letters meant very

little in the beginning of the course, but as the course progressed they became very prominent. The plan of the course has helped me greatly as a minister. A-stood for advantage ; P-stood for proof ; and A-stood for actions. The course was called the A-P-A course.

The entire scheme, or perhaps better to say lesson to be learned was : Show the advantage of your product ; Prove the advantage of your product ; Secure action of your prospect. This plan can be aptly applied to teaching lost souls.

First we need to learn well the advantage Christianity affords through diligent study. Perhaps the greatest hindrance in spreading the gospel today is unlearned Christians. Paul said, "Study to show thyself approved" (2 Tim. 2 : 15), Peter said, "Be ready always to give an answer." (1 Pet. 3:15). All of us would do well to committ Paul's admonition in Heb. 5 : 12-14 to memory.

Second, we need to be able to prove the advantage of the gospel. Thus we could never be able to do without a knowledge of God's word. The wonderful blessings and experiences that the true Christian enjoys makes the gospel so joyful and interesting to them that in their telling others the proof of advantage is reflected in no uncertain terms. Jesus said we would be salt and light. Matt. 5 : 13-16, and truly we are if Christians indeed.

Last but not least, procuring the action of the hearer is the vital step. Paul said, "Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord we persuade men." (2 Cor. 5 : 11). We never want the hearer to linger because time is short and

eternity sure. Yet I wonder often times if we do not over persuade and thereby have unconverted members on the roll.

Brethren let us never commercialize the blessed gospel of Christ, but please let each of us put forth more effort in preparing ourselves by study, prayer, and fasting that we might be able to tell the sweet story to those we contact in a mannerly way.

Religion's No Elective

Wm. Kay Moser

Man can choose to drive a Ford car or a Chevrolet and be little wrose off regardless of how he decide. He can choose whether he wants to farm or work in a grocery store and end up with only a living either way. Little is involved in such choices as this but there is an area of life not so unimportant:

God has overlooked more than he had to already when it comes to sin. He has made a way to rid men of it that is better than any other and the only way—through Christ. If man does not accept this redemption he will be held accountable for it. God commands all men everywhere to repent today. (Acts 17 : 30, 31). Regardless of how men received forgiveness in the Gentile world before the days of Christ this way is no longer open.

People might have argued in the early days of Christianity that if they who lived before them went to heaven without Christ (as they would certainly say they did) then they could also. This argument was never any good from the time the gospel of Christ's death, and resurrection was first preached. It certainly hasn't improved any. We need to forget everybody except ourselves and get our safety guaranteed. Then if we have time we can try to teach and influence others. Oh that men could look out for their own salvation!

Each man shall stand up before God in judgement to answer only for the things he has done in life. His wife's sins, or a wife's failings shall not be at his feet ; neither shall a husband's rebellion be held against a faithful Christian woman. Each man and each woman shall stand before God for themselves to answer for the things they have done against God and against Christ who died for them. Every idle word spoken shall be remembered by the judge of all earth. Many words could be best unsaid, especially when the time for final reckoning comes.

When an enrollment for taxation comes one cannot say he doesn't want to be numbered and thereby be exempt. If such thoroughness is evident among men can we not assume that God will demand every man's notice? We are all in this game of life to play it to the finish and there is no crown except in accepting Christ as our Saviour.

In the story of the ten virgins of Matt. 25 all mankind are represented. Five were wise and five were foolish but all were accountable to the Lord. So is every man accountable to the Lord of Heaven and earth whether he acknowledges it in his life or not.

Certainly the story told in Matt. 25 : 31-46 includes all men. Before the Son of man shall be gathered *all* nations and this will include every individual in each land. There will be none escape. Even though some would like to draw the mountains down over them to hide them from the face of him who sitteth on the throne they shall not be able to. Everywhere a man might try to hide God was there before him. There will be no escape from

judgement at the end of life and therefore religion is not an elective like a certain subject might be in school. We must take it—we are already signed up for it by our Lord himself and if we don't do our best to pass it with his help there is no hope for us.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy for his violation. How much worse shall the punishment be to the disobedient of Jesus Christ!

It would be fine if only the righteous would appear before the Lord. The rest would then go without being apprehended. The scripture certainly doesn't speak well of this idea in 2 Cor. 5:10: "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The Worship of God

Evert Pickartz

The expression of devotion to God is that we call worship. Every kind of service, good works, acts of worship and all praise express our devotion to God. God knows the hearts of all men and whether they sincerely love him or not; and yet it pleases God that we express the devotion that we feel toward Him.

In every age God has commanded certain acts or expressions of devotion and worship. When man sincerely wants to serve God he will do what God has commanded him. But when man rebels against God he will change, or at least try to do so, the worship which God has commanded. And even if such a man should continue to pretend to worship God after man's own inventions, God knows the hearts of all and will render a just judgement.

In the time of Adam, Noah, and Abraham, God chose certain ways to express devotion and commanded his people to follow them. One of the acts of worship to God was the offering of animals in sacrifice. Within the burning of a sacrifice there was little merit, except that God had commanded it of his people, and in this way man expressed his devotion to his God.

In the time of the Jews, God gave us a more complete revelation of what he expected from his people in the way of worship. They continued to offer animal sacrifices in

worship to God but now only those designated priests could offer the sacrifice for the people and it was offered in the temple of God where the name of Jehovah was written. There were other methods of expressing the love one felt toward God but these ways of worship were all revealed by Jehovah to his people.

In the church of Christ, God has revealed the way in which we are to express our love for him. It is the same way that people have always expressed such devotion to God: obedience to his commandments. These are changed in some ways from the time of Adam add Moses but the basic idea of worship is the same. If one loves God, he will keep the commandments of God.

A glass of water given to a thirsty person, offered in the name of Christ, is worship to God. The oil poured over the head of Jesus was an expression of devotion to him that he understood but which was difficult for his disciples to grasp. Care of the widows and orphans in the name of Christ is accepted by God as worship of him. When we help the sick, visit those in jail, give to those who are hungry and who have no home, and we do it in the name of Christ, we do not only serve those we helped but we also serve God in this way.

Quite apart from such acts of service, God has chosen that Christian people should express their worship to him through five expressions of devotion. Within themselves they may be very similar to the animal sacrifices offered by the people of the Old Testament; that is, there may not be any merit within themselves but receive their merit because God has commanded that these five acts characterize public worship to him on the first day of the week in the

Christian assembly. The Christian who loves God will use these five ways of showing he loves God; the person who does not use them does not obey God.

The five acts of worship in the Christian assembly are the singing of praises to God and his name; prayer to God through his Son, Jesus; study of the word of God, the Holy Scriptures; to give a part of that which we possess for the work of the church; and to observe the Lord's Supper in memory of Jesus Christ. The first three are daily acts of worship for every Christian; the last two are done in the public assembly of the church on the first day of the week. All of them are used by members of the churches of Christ to express their worship to God.

“What am I Worth to the Church?”

J.P. Williams

Dear brother and sister did you ever stop and ask yourself the personal question: “What am I worth to the church?” Sobering, yes indeed, yet we are admonished to make a self examination. “Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith: prove your own selves.” (2 Cor, 13:5). What some one else has done in the past or will do in the future does not matter in the least. The only thing that will matter is what have I done or what do I plan to do. Every man shall be rewarded according to the works he has performed. (Rev. 22:12). I will not be left out of this group. Therefore I should think seriously lest I be found wanting.

Let each of us ask ourselves some searching questions for examination sake. (1) Am I an asset or liability to the congregation where I worship regularly? (2) Do I really help or hinder? (3) Do I add strength and character or do I cause weakness and degradation? (4) Can someone pattern their life after me and be safe? I remember Paul told others to follow him as he followed Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1). (5) Am I growing and becoming more efficient daily, or am I shrinking and becoming useless? (6) Am I lending encouragement or discouragement to the Cause?

There are some practical business standard that each of us need to apply to ourselves as we strive to live the Christian life. As members of the greatest institution on earth I am duty bound to work. (John 9:4). I should work with enthusiasm. (2 Pet. 1:10). I should be at work regularly. (Heb. 10 : 24, 25). I can't deceive God. I shall surely reap just as I have sown. (Gal. 6:7-9).

There are some practical ways I can be of value to the congregation where I worship regularly. I can be faithful. This is the first requirement of a steward. (I Cor. 4:2). I can be loyal to the authority of the truth. (Matt. 28:18). I can earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3). I can live a godly life and be a shining light. (Matt. 5:14-16). I can maintain a cheerful attitude. (Phil. 2:14). I can be dependable. (1 Cor. 15:58). The most deplorable character is the one you can never depend on. Then when I shall have done all these I can say, I am an unprofitable servant, I have only done that which was my duty to do. (Lk. 17:10).

The Witness of the Spirits

G.F. Raines

Some spend their entire lives in worry and anxiety about eternity, not knowing whether or not they are prepared to meet the Judge of all the earth in peace. Such solicitude is needless and tends to rob the soul of the peace of mind that is essential to our well-being both physically and spiritually. John, the apostle of love, said: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18). Our Saviour is not a Prince of Fear but of Peace: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6). In the presence of a lonely group of Judean shepherds an angelic host in proclaiming the birth of the subject of Isaiah's prophecy sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Lk. 2:14). Paul said: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Col. 3:15).

We may KNOW that we are God's children: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5:1). Having

this confidence we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:2).

That the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God is plainly taught in the Bible: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16).

"The Spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit, the divine personality sometimes called "the third person of the Godhead." The Holy Spirit has personality, the same as does the Father and the Son. In the following passage the personal "he" is six times used with reference to him: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." (John 16:13). The Holy spirit is one of the three beings called God. The Father is called God in 1 thess. 1 : 1 ; the Son is called God in Heb. 1:8; Acts 20:28; and John 1:1; and the Holy Spirit is designated as God in Acts 5:4: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? (Now verse 4) Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why has thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (Acts 5:3, 4). He who is called God in verse 4 is called the Holy Ghost in verse 3. The Holy Spirit is therefore God! The word GOD! is a term embracing ALL of which DEITY is composed, and often the word is used to designate MORE than one of the persons of the Godhead. An example is in Gen. 1:1; here the word from which

God is translated (Elohim) is the PLURAL form of EL and occurs in this form about 3,000 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. El is found only 57 times.

There is one God (1 Tim. 2 : 5), but God is not composed of merely one person, The SUN is one, but is composed of heat, light, and power; our INTELLECT is one, but is composed of reason, will, affection, and conscience ; MAN is one, but is composed of body, soul, and spirit : the OUTER UNIVERSE is one, but is composed of time, space, and matter ; the INNER UNIVERSE is one, but is composed of nature, person, and personality. in like manner, GOD is one, but is composed of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

To "bear witness" is to testify. In our courts of law the witness serves in the capacity of bearing testimony.

When the Bible speaks of "our spirit" it alludes to what is called in other passages the heart. The two terms are used interchangeably in Rom. 2:29. Paul, in showing that we do not become children of God because of fleshly descent, said : "But he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh : But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God." That's taken from Rom. 2:28, 29. See also 1 Cor. 2:11 and Prov. 14:10.

In only a few passages does "heart," as used by the divine writers, mean the organ that pumps blood. Usually it is used as equivalent to the spirit, as in the above passage. Yet some in giving evidence of their salvation place their hand over their left breast and say, "I feel it

right down here." But pardon does not take place inside of the body, but in the MIND OF GOD in heaven. To know that we are pardoned we must know what the mind of God contains relative to the matter. The only thing we know about the mind of God is what the Holy Spirit has revealed to us: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (1 Cor. 2:11-13).

The "children of God" certainly indicates those who are in the family of God. The family of God is the church; therefore, those who are in the family of God are in the church of Jesus Christ: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15). The word "house" is used a number of times in the Bible to mean family. It was used thusly with reference to the house of Noah (Gen. 7:1), the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:2), and the house of the Jailor at Philippi (Acts 16:34). In Eph. 2:19 the church is called "the household of God" which, of course, is the family of God. If one can be a child of God outside the church he can be saved without being in the family of God! Does God have any children outside His family?

There is no controversy among Bible believers as to

whether the Spirit bears witness with our spirit : that fact is plainly stated and readily admitted. There is much controversy as to HOW the Spirit acts in bearing witness.

It will be well to observe that the passage under consideration does NOT say that the Spirit bears witness TO our spirit : He bears witness WITH our spirit. There is a difference between bearing witness to and bearing witness with—the same difference that exist between talking with and talking to. When the former expression is used, both parties are talking ; when the latter is used, only one is talking. And so it is with respect to the matter of bearing witness. As the Spirit bears witness WITH our spirit, it follows that the human spirit is one of TWO witnesses involved.

By the Scriptures we are made wise unto salvation : “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:15). See also John 5:39, 40. Paul declared that the words he used were not words of his own choosing, but words that had been selected by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:13). Man, to be saved, must obey the revelation of the Holy Spirit from the heart (spirit): “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” (Rom. 6:17, 16). By the New Testament we are sanctified: “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for

all." (Heb. 10:9, 10). The Holy Spirit teaches that we are justified by :

1. FAITH: Rom. 5:1; Heb. 11:6; Gal. 5:6.
2. REPENTANCE: Lk 13:3; Acts 11:18; 17:30.
3. CONFESSION: Matt. 10:32, 33; Rom, 10:9, 10.
4. BAPTISM: Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:37, 38; 22:16.

When man has done from the spirit what the Holy Spirit has revealed in the New Testament that he must do, the witnesses then agree. The obedience of the human spirit agree with the commandments that the Holy Spirit has revealed ; and thus it is that, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the childred of God." No man can know that he is saved until he has complied with God's law of pardon expressed in His commandments: "hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." (1 John 2:3). "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). "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14). May we have the love in our hearts that will render us submissive to the will of God, for : "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21).

Church Government

(1)

Bob Douglas

The New Testament describes the church of Jesus Christ in every detail, and it sets forth a "pattern" (II Timothy 1:13) for the church, with the urging to "abide" in his word (John 8:31) even as Moses was to make "everything according to the pattern" shown him for the tabernacle (Hebrews 8:5). The New Testament predicted that men would not be content with God's word and will, and that they would "depart from the faith" (I Timothy 4:1), and "turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (II Timothy 4:4). Paul said that this process was underway even in his day. "For the mystery of lawlessness does already work." II Thessalonians 2:7. One of the first places that men departed from God's will and truth was in the matter of the organization, or government, of the church. Whereas the New Testament teaches a simple organization, men shortly left that simple way and developed a more complex system of church offices.

In the New Testament church, Christ appointed (1) apostles, (2) prophets, (3) evangelists, (4) pastors and teachers. So Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:11. These various offices were created by God for three reasons: (1) for the perfecting of the saints, (2) unto the work of ministering,

and (3) unto the building up of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). The highest authority and office in the church is that occupied by Jesus Christ; he is "head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22-23) by God's appointment. Likewise, he has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

Under Christ were the apostles, whom Jesus himself had chosen and called, or names, "apostles". Read Luke 6:12-17. These apostles, along with Christ, served as the "foundation" of the church (Ephesians 2:20). Their authority was derived from Christ, who had personally appointed them, and from the Holy Spirit, who was miraculously present in their lives, leading them into infallible teachings (John 14:26; 16:13; I Corinthians 2:9-12), and enabling them to perform miracles to prove the truthfulness of their message. (Habrews 2:4). The apostles did not have dioceses, or regions, which were their specific responsibilities, but were to be Christ's witnesses "unto the ends of the world" (Acts 1:8). Paul is also called on "apostle" (Romans 1:1), due to his experience of seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus, (Acts 9). He says he was an "apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father" (Galatians 1:1) Thus, he was appointed to such a position by God's Son himself.

The Bible shows that the apostles were the personal representatives of Christ on earth, speaking with Christ's authority (II Corinthians 13:10), commanding the church in its duties, and leading it into the full knowledge of God's will (II Corinthians 11:23; 15:1). Today the church of Christ still has "apostles". They are not new apostles,

or men who have succeeded the original apostles, **BUT ARE THE ORIGINAL TWELVE APOSTLES THEMSELVES.** For the New Testament teaches that the original apostles do not, and can not, have any living successors today. In Acts 1:15-26, we have a passage that needs careful study in this connection. Two things need to be noticed. First, in the selection of one to succeed Judas, one of the original twelve, Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit sets forth the qualifications a man must meet to be considered for such appointment. These qualifications are: (1) he must "have companied with us (the twelve) all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day that he was received up from us" (Acts 1:21-22), and (2) he "must be a witness of the resurrection with us."

Now it is clear that there is no man on earth today that meets these requirements. There has been no such man on earth for many centuries. In fact, the apostles could only find two such men in their own day (Acts 1:23). Thus, since none can today meet these requirements, none can today be a successor of the apostles. Hence, the only apostles the church has are the original twelve.

Second, when the two candidates were set forth, the **LORD SELECTED** the one to be appointed, not man (Acts 1:24). "And they prayed, Lord—show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen." So, if there were such qualified men on earth today, which there are not, it would still be the Lord's task, not man's, to select whom he wanted.

Further, it is seen that there are no successors of the

apostles today, because the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit ended with the end of the first century. Paul listed the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on men (II Corinthians 12:4-11). It was the possession of these gifts, among other things, that proved the apostles to be true apostles. Paul says, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works." II Corinthians 12:12. True apostles were identified and distinguished from false apostles (II Corinthians 11:13), at least in part, by their miraculous powers. Surely any successors they might have would have the same powers to identify themselves, for they always claim the same authority: Among the powers an apostle had was "the word of wisdom" and the "word of knowledge" (I Corinthians 12:8). This involved the ability to know, reveal, and teach infallibly; divine truth. But Christ promised that the Spirit would lead the original twelve apostles into "all the truth" (John 16:13), which the Holy Spirit did (Jude 3).

What function would successors of the apostles serve, since all of God's truth has been revealed in the New Testament? Miraculous powers have ceased, even as Paul said they would (I Corinthians 13:8-11). What sign can so called successors give to show that they are true apostles, as they claim to be, and not false apostles? Who can meet the qualifications the Holy Spirit laid down for being a successor? Who can claim to be an eyewitness of Christ's life and resurrection? The New Testament shows that there ARE NO SUCCESSORS TO THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES.

Church Government

(2)

Bob Douglas

We have seen that Christ appointed (1) apostles, (2) prophets, (3) evangelists, (4) pastors, and teachers, in the church to lead and direct it to full growth. Ephesians 4:11. We noticed who the apostles were, what the work was they had to do, and that they have no successors today. Next we consider the office of the "prophets". Again, we must remember that the church today is to be organized exactly as it originally was. "If you abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples." John 8:31. To organize it other than as the Bible outlines, is to fail to abide in his word. It is to depart from the truth. II Timothy 4:3-4. John says that those who do so "have not God." (II John 9).

A prophet is a man who speaks God's will for man, whether that will concern the past, present, or future. That there were prophets in the New Testament church is clear, (Eph. 4:11), and that their office was a high and important one, is also clear. Read I Corinthians 12:28. How many prophets there were, and who they were, that is, what their names were, we do not know fully. Some are named. Acts 11:27-28; Acts 13:1-2. Yet it is clear that there were many more prophets than just these. I Corinthians 14:1-5. Prophets served various functions.

Among them, (1) predicting future events, as in Acts 11:17-28, and also Acts 21:8-11. (2) They also revealed, or disclosed, God's word. I Corinthians 14:1-5:30-32; (3) They served to instruct, encourage, and strengthen the church. I Corinthians 14:3, 31; Acts 15:32.

It is clear that all the prophets were appointed by the apostles, for being a prophet depended on possessing the gift of the Holy Spirit called "prophecy" (I Corinthians 12:8-11). And no one but the apostles was able to bestow these gifts; they were given by the apostles to certain men, through the laying on of the apostles' hands. Read Acts 8:5-19. Philip had had the hands of the apostles laid upon himself (Acts 6:5-6), and as a result he possessed miraculous powers from the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:7), but he was unable to pass such powers on to the Samaritans. This is evident from the church in Jerusalem sending two apostles to Samaria to lay their hands on the new Christians and so bestow the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

The office of the prophet, depending as it did on the possession of the miraculous gift of prophecy from the Holy Spirit, has now passed out of existence. For the time of such miraculous gifts has passed. I Corinthians 13:8 "Love never ends; as for prophecies they will pass away", when "that which is perfect is come". By "that which is perfect" Paul refers to the completed New Testament. Romans 12:2; James 1:25; Revelation 22:18-19. Hence, there are no prophets in the church today, unless they be the same ones originally appointed by the apostles. These original prophets have no modern successors.

Paul goes on to name another office in the organization of the New Testament church, that of "evangelist". Who the "evangelists" were can in part be seen by noticing the very meaning of the word. "Evangelist", in Greek, is derived from the same word translated "Gospel" or "Good News". In fact, an evangelist is a "proclaimer of good news". In writing to Timothy, Paul says, "Preach the word, be urgent in season, and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort." (II Timothy 4:3) He goes on to say, "Do the work of an evangelist". (II Timothy 4:5). Thus, the basic work of an evangelist is to "preach the word", or proclaim the gospel of Christ. The books of I and II Timothy, and Titus, were written by Paul to these two evangelists, instructing them concerning their obligations, and their work. A careful reading of the books will disclose more about this office.

The office of "evangelist" by its very nature, continues until today in the new Testament church. For men today are still sinners (Romans 3:23), the gospel is still the power of God to save (Romans 1:16), and faith still comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). Hence, there is still the need of those who proclaim that gospel that men might believe. This office will last until time ends.

In the New Testament, the "evangelist" is also called a "preacher", (Romans 10:14) because he is to "preach the word". II Timothy 4:3. Likewise, he is described as a "minister".

Paul says that he was both a "Preacher", or evangelist, and an "apostle". I Timothy 2:7. Clearly he was both, as he went about proclaiming God's word that men might

believe and obey it. In the same way, all the apostles served this double duty.

Paul warns that those who would preach exactly what the apostles taught, or be "accursed" of God. "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed". Galatians 1:8. Paul thus re-emphasizes the truth that we must abide in God's word to please God.

Church Government

(3)

Bob Douglas

We have seen three of the five offices that Paul lists as being within the frame work of the organization of the original church. Ephesians 3:11. Having noticed the office of apostles, prophets, and evangelists, we now are ready to consider the office of "pastor". Again, we must "abide in" Christ's word; we must see what the Bible says, and then see that we are members of a church organized as the Bible teaches, or otherwise all is vain. (II John 9). Likewise, we must learn "to speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11), that is, call church offices, and Christian practices by the names that Christ originally used. Otherwise, we are inaccurate in our belief, and may mislead others.

In the New Testament, the office called "pastor", is also called "bishop", and "elder", the term "elder" occurring the most often. That these three words used of ONE AND THE SAME OFFICE is indicated in the following Scriptures.

Acts 20:17, 28. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the ELDERS of the church", Addressing those he had called, Paul said. "Take heed to yourselves and to all the FLOCK over which the Holy-Spirit has made you BISHOPS (or overseers), TO FEED the church of the Lord". In these two verses Paul addresses

these men as BISHOPS, where Luke earlier called them elders. Thus, both offices are one and the same. Paul tells them to FEED THE FLOCK. The word "Feed" is a verb form of the word PASTOR. Hence, he is telling the BISHOPS, who Luke by inspiration calls ELDERS, to do the work of PASTORS. Only one conclusion is possible, that is, all three words are used to describe one office.

Again, notice Titus 1:5, 7. "This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what is defective, and appoint ELDERS in every town as I directed". Verse 7, "For a BISHOP, as God's steward must be blameless". Paul, tells Titus to appoint ELDERS, he then tells him what qualifications an ELDER MUST have, and in the process calls the ELDERS, BISHOPS. Hence, they are one and the same office.

Finally, notice I Peter 5:1-4, Peter begins, "So I exhort the Elders among you". In exhorting the ELDERS HE tells them to "Tend the Flock (pastor the flock)" "exercising the OVERSIGHT". The word translated "oversight" is the same rootword translated OVERSEER, or BISHOP. In verse four he mentions Christ as the CHIEF SHEPHERD, implying that the ELDERS are under-shepherds. The word translated SHEPHERD is the same word translated PASTOR in Ephesians 4:11. So again, we see that the three words *do not describe three different offices*, but describe various aspects of *ONE AND THE SAME OFFICE*.

Whatever is said of ELDERS IS true of BISHOPS and PASTORS as well. And whatever is true of

BISHOPS and PASTORS, is true of ELDERS as well. For they are the same.

The Bible points out with great clarity the responsibilities of Bishops, or Elders. Notice the following duties outlined.

(1) "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock", (2) "Feed the church of the Lord" Acts 20:28, (3) "Rule" I Timothy 4:17, (4) "Give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" Titus 1:9, (5) "Watch in behalf of souls" Hebrews 13:17, (6) "Tend the flock of God", (7) "exercising the oversight", (8) "being an example to the flock". I Peter 5:1-3.

From these statements it can be seen that the responsibilities of ELDERS, or BISHOPS, is weighty and far reaching. Hebrews 13:17 adds that they will "give account" to God for the way in which they discharge their duties.

Who could be BISHOPS, and how were they appointed? God did not leave it to man's judgement to decide what the qualifications for the office of BISHOP should be. God himself set forth those qualifications with great clearness. Read I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Only men who had these qualities about them could be appointed BISHOPS. We see that the congregations involved selected the particular men who would so serve (Acts 6:3), and they were then appointed to their office by the evangelist. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5. This is quite different from modern practices regarding the selection and appointment of men called "bishops".

We learn another, and most basic fact about BISHOPS and the churches-through careful study of God's word.

That is, EVERY CONGREGATION had its OWN BISHOPS. The New Testament, in speaking of bishops and churches, (congregations) always used the word "church" in the singular, while the word "bishop" is plural. Notice; Acts 12:23, "They... appointed ELDERS for them in EVERY CHURCH". The word CHURCH, as used here, refers to congregations; there were congregations in several cities in Asia Minor at this time, and as the result of Paul's missionary journey. Acts 14:20-21.

Acts 20:17 "He sent to Ephesus and called to him the ELDERS of the church". In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul addresses himself to the BISHOPS, as well as the CHURCH. Phill. 1:1.

In every case where the words ELDERS, BISHOPS, or PASTORS, ARE used it is used in the PLURAL. Hence, the original organization of the church was such that had a PLURALITY of BISHOPS ruling every single CONGREGATION, or church. Since this was the way Christ originally organized the church, THIS IS THE WAY IT MUST BE ORGANIZED NOW to abide in Christ's word. John 8:31. It was in this matter of bishops, and the area of their authority, that the church first departed from God's truth. For authority after the time of Christ, some bishops were exalted to the place of being the sole ruler of one congregation. Later, a bishop was appointed over several congregations, or a diocese.

Today then, the word BISHOP is used to describe ONE man who rules MANY CHURCHES in a given area or diocese. In the New Testament, on the other hand, the word BISHOP is used to describe SEVERAL

MEN who have the rule of ONLY-ONE CHURCH, or congregation.

The New Testament is absolutely silent about such offices as POPE, PATRIARCH, METROPOLITAN, ARCH BISHOP, ARCH DEACON.

Since the New Testament contains all of Christ's will for man (II Timothy 3:16-17; II John 9; Matthew 28:18-19), and since it is not to be "added to" or taken from (Revelation 22:18-19), and since it is absolutely silent about such offices as Patriarch, etc., it is clear that these offices are not part of Christ's pattern for organizing the church. Remember, Paul said to Timothy, "Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you heard from me". II Timothy 1:13.

To abide in Christ's word (John 8:31) man must organize the church as Christ originally appointed. Ephesians 4:11.

Church Government

(4)

Bob Douglas

The Old Testament tells us that certain Jewish people lived among the Philistine people so long that they corrupted their own language, so that they spoke "half in the language of Ashdod" and half in their own Hebrew tongue. This same thing has happened to religious people today when it comes to discussing Christian practices and principles.

The Bible sets forth the language God chose to be used in speaking of all things connected with Christianity. God expects that we will be careful to speak of things as he spoke; he wishes that we use his words in the way, and with the meaning, he gave them. Thus, Peter tells us to "speak as the oracles (words) of God" (I Peter 4:11). To do other than this is not only to disobey God, but it is to confuse many people about God's will by using God's words in ways, and with meanings, other than God intended.

For many people and churches invent words for themselves to describe acts, practices, and persons, God has already described. At other times churches take Bible words and use them in a way and with a meaning that they do not have in Scripture.

We have already seen how men today mis-use the word "bishop". The name "deacon" is also mis-used by

many. "Deacon" is a word found in the Bible; in fact, it is the name of an office, or work in the church. In addition to those offices mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, Paul adds that of deacons, Read Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-13.

The word "deacon" means a "servant". From Scripture we see that the deacons of the church were just that, servants performing whatever task was required of them to aid the church in its work of ministering to men physically and spiritually. Hence, in Acts 6:1-6, we see the church in Jerusalem select men to serve as "deacons". The seven men selected worked at supplying the widows with their daily needs. They also taught God's word on occasion (See Acts 6:8); Their presence doubtless contributed to the multiplication of the disciples in Jerusalem, referred to in Acts 6:7.

Because the "bishops" of each congregation have the rule, or authority, over their own individual congregation, it is clear that the deacons, being "servants", are under the authority of the bishops. There is nothing to indicate that deacons have any authority of any kind, except as the bishops may give it them to accomplish certain tasks. Deacons had to be qualified men (I Timothy 3:8-13). They were selected by the congregation, not by the bishop. Acts 6:3. "Therefore, *brethren, pick out from among you seven men whom we may appoint to this duty*".

The use of the word "deacon" to describe any office, or work, in the church other than that which the Bible attributes to deacons, is a mis-use of the word. It is a failure to "abide" in Christ's word, and a failure to

“speak as the oracles of God”. As such it is a step in the direction of falling away from the pure New Testament faith.

Another word that is often mis-used is “priest”. Under the law of Moses (Old Testament) God appointed a specially selected group of men to be “priest” to the Jewish nation. Only certain men from certain families, with certain qualifications, were priests then. These priest’s conducted the major portion of the worship the jews offered to God; they offered sacrifices, prayed, and served, in the interest of, and actually in the place of the people they represented.

In the New Testament God also has “priests”. However, we must be careful to see how God uses the word “priest”, and to whom he applies it. For man has once again taken a Bible term, “priests”, and begun to use it in a sense wholly different from the way it is used in Scripture.

Today, in many churches, there is a specially selected group of men who are called “priests”. These men pray in behalf of the people, act as mediators in the matter of forgiveness, and conduct worship services in behalf of the congregation they serve. In many cases, it is thought that such things as being baptized, and observing the Lord Supper, are beneficial spiritually only when duly appointed priest administers them.

How does God’s word use the word “priest”? In a way far different from the above described practice. The New Testament does not know anything of a special “priesthood” within the church, serving, praying, and worshipping in behalf of Christians. It does not mention

any man as "mediator" in behalf of any other man, except Jesus Christ, and HIM ALONE. "For there is one God, and there is ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, The MAN CHRIST JESUS." I Timothy 2:5. According to the New Testament all Christians may pray for themselves, (and are to pray for themselves) (Colossians 4:2; I Thess. 5:19). All Christians are capable of worshipping God, and are to worship God (Mathew 4:10; John 4:24) without depending on a "priest" to perform acts for them. The benefit of the Lord's Supper and baptism depend not on the qualifications of the one who administers them, but on the condition of heart of the one who participate in them (I Corinthians 11:27-29; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

All of this is so, because the New Testament uses the word "priest" as a description of EVERY CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD. Peter, in writing to the Christians in Asia Minor (I Peter 1:1), says, "God chose you to be a holy priesthood" (I Peter 2:5). "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood..." I Peter 2:9. It is clear from careful reading of Peter's words that he is addressing THE CHRISTIANS in that part of the world, not some special group.

Revelation 1:6 adds, "(Christ) made us to be a kingdom, priests to his God and Father". Here John says those who are in God's Kingdom are in GOD'S PRIESTS. God's Kingdom is made up of ALL THE CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD, not just a specially selected, trained group of churchmen. Hence, All CHRISTIANS ARE PRIESTS. (Read Also Revelation 5:10).

Thus God does not have a special priesthood within the church whose obligation it is to minister in behalf of

the average Christian. **EVERY CHRISTIAN IS HIS OWN PRIEST**, and true dependent on no other man to pray for him, worship for him, offer forgiveness to him or bestow blessings upon him.

Where people, and churches, use the term "priest" to mean a special group of men, other than **ALL CHRISTIANS**, we have a case of men failing to "speak as the oracles of God". We have a case of the church departing from God's truth (I Timothy 4:1) because, the church has invented for itself an office God did not invent, and has come to use a Bible word in a way God did not intend it should be used.

The Greatest Question

Bill Burton

Whether all men admit it or not, the greatest question that can fall from human lips is, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" The question, sincerely asked, and the answer, honestly and scripturally given, bring about results that transcend time and reach into eternity.

It is sad that the question does not grace the speech of more men, and sadder still that many who do ask the question never realize, to any great extent, all that the question implies.

What are some of the important things implied in this Question? *The sinner's lost condition.* It is a recognition of transgression of God's law. It speaks of the conviction of sin, for there must be this conviction before this question is asked. The man who earnestly raises this query not only admits in theory, but feels in his heart, that he is a sinner. This, of course, is fundamental. There is no incentive to obey God until one realizes that he is a sinner, and because of this he is lost, desperately in need of salvation.

It implies a *sense of the danger to which sin exposes.* The sinner has transgressed God's law and justice calls for the infliction of punishment. The penalty comprehends all the miseries of hell. The sinner, conscious of this danger, cries out, "What must I do to be saved?"

The question, sincerely asked, implies a *deep earnestness about salvation*. When one sees the importance of salvation, nothing else matters. All is vanity!

We see a willingness, on the part of the one who would ask this question, to do anything to obtain salvation. This attitude is manifested: "I am willing to do whatever is necessary." When the sinner is effectually awakened to his condition, he is ready to exert all his powers in securing salvation. We see also in this connection that there is something for the sinner to *do!*

Here, also, is a recognition that one cannot save himself. He wants to know what to do *to be saved* which words imply that the saving is done by another.

I can think of no better way to answer the question than to turn to the Bible and read the question and then read the answer given. In fact, this is the only way we can be sure we are receiving the correct answer.

Therefore, we ask you to open your Bible to the second chapter of the book of Acts. Let us analyze this passage together. In verses 1-4 we have the fulfillment of the promise the coming of the Holy Spirit Jesus had made to the Apostles only a few days before (See Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). This demonstration of power brought together a multitude of people (verses 5-13). When the audience gathered the sermon followed. In it we have:

1. A refutation of the charge of drunkenness (v. 14).
2. An explanation that what the audience thought was an indication of intoxication was, in reality, the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. (vs. 16-21).
3. Jesus is then proclaimed as Lord and Christ (vs. 22-36). His life and death are briefly

accounted for (vs. 22-23). The preacher then speaks of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ (v. 24). This he proves by:

- (a) Testimony of David (vs. 25-28).
- (b) Exposition of quotation (vs. 29-31).
- (c) The fact of eye-witnesses (vs. 32). (see Acts 1:3).
- (d) The supernatural manifestation of the hour which had attracted and astonished them (v. 33). His hearers could not explain what they saw and heard, but Peter could.
- (e) Quotation of David again, as additional proof of the resurrection (v. 34).

Now, the conclusion: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (v. 36) Luke records the effects of the sermon in these words: "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" There is every indication that all the things discussed earlier in this lesson were understood by these people that asked this question. These people saw their lost condition; they were aware of the danger to which they had exposed themselves by their sin; they were deeply earnest about salvation; they were willing to do whatever was required.

Read the all-important answer: "...Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The answer, having been given under the

great commission, is applicable to you, and to all men in this age of the world.

The answer is beyond being misunderstood; however, there are those who spend much time in trying to evade the force of it by trying to explain away baptism as a condition to the remission of sins. But, consider: Did Peter give them the right answer to their question? Remember, he was speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance. If his answer was correct then, what is wrong with it now? Is there any indication that any who really wanted to be saved argued with Peter about the command to "be baptized?" If not, what of such action today? Would it not indicate a lack of faith in God's Word?

Is this great question of life yours? Then you have the answer from heaven itself. Obey it today?

The Inspiration of Modernists

James D. Bales

One of the astonishing things about some modernists is that after they have denied in varying degrees the inspiration of the Scriptures, they end up with an affirmation of their own inspiration or the inspiration of some of their leaders. A striking illustration of this is found in the following quotations:

“There are Christian prophets in the world today, and one of them is John A. Mackay. The reason we choose him as representative of the prophetic Church is that he was the chief author of the famous and now historic “Letter to Presbyterians,” issued by the General Council of our Church on October 21, 1953. This document is the foremost example in very recent times of a people of God declaring the voice of God to the Church and the nation in an hour of social crisis. The issue to which it was addressed Communist witch-hunting in the United States has subsided as the social issue of immediate importance. But the principles that required the Church to speak and that dictated what the Church said at that time are eternally true and form an outline of the Church’s prophetic witness in any period on any issue.”

“There are certain characteristics of the Biblical prophet that can be applied to a modern churchman who stands in the prophetic tradition;

“The prophet is a man who speaks with the sure conviction that what he says is the word of God to a particular situation. The hallmark of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah is the phrase, “Thus says the Lord.” We may call this self-assurance, arrogance, and indeed it would be so if the spokesmen declared a word aimed at ingratiating themselves with the people or spoke as if they alone had a direct person to person line to the Almighty. We may legitimately shy away from flagellators whose compulsion is not compassion but the ego satisfying urge to make their listeners feel what ugly and miserable sinners they are. But none of this applies to the Biblical prophet or to his modern counterpart.” (*Cross-roads*, July-Sept. 1956, p. 24).

“It is impossible to know how much influence the Presbyterian Letter had. The eventual discrediting of those who had led the “witch—hunt” was due to a number of factors. In a sense, this is an irrelevant inquiry. The prophet speaks not because he expects men to listen or because he believes that his words will change the course of history. He speaks out of obedience to God, and the consequences of his words are in hands other than his.” (*Ibid.*, p. 25).

Although there are other grounds for denying that Dr. MacKay is a prophet, the Presbyterian Letter also furnishes grounds for this denial. The Letter shows a

lack of understanding of the communist menace in our own country and a distortion of much of the opposition to communism by labeling it "Communist witch-hunting". He was the "prophet" who on January 6, 1950, seemed to identify himself with the "opinion that the most un-American thing that this Committee brought to light was the Committee itself". The reference was made to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. This is said in spite of the fact that the Committee helped bring to light the nature of communism and its reality as a menace in America, and the names of many communists. Would a prophet have been so confused as to think that the House Committee on Un-American Activities was more un-American than the Communists? Or, on the other hand, so ignorant that he did not know that they had exposed communists and communism? No wonder this "prophet" was duped into joining some communist front organizations and signing some communists front petitions.

A confused liberal, a prominent churchman—yes. A prophet—No.

Joining the Church

L.D. Williams

In the denominational world there are many misconceptions of the church of the New Testament. These wrong ideas have resulted from the desire of some to pit human intelligence and reason against that of God. One who does this is doomed to failure. The intelligence and reason of God is so far above that of man, that there is no common ground of comparison. Just as one would not dare to place the proverbial "ant hill" on the same basis as "Pike's Peak," so must we not be so foolish as to place the wisdom of man on the same level as God's wisdom. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:20: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" And again in I Corinthians 1:25, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than man; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

As a result of man's attempt to surpass God's wisdom, many people have the idea that they can "join" the church. But this cannot be done.

The New Testament and the word "Join"

The word "join" is used eleven times in the New Testament. (Matt. 19:6; Mk. 10:9; Lk. 15:15; Acts

5:13, 36; 8:29; 9:26; 18:7; 1 Cor. 6:16, 17; Eph. 5:31). In all of these references, there is not one that refers to anyone "joining the church."

Some turn to Acts 9:26 and say that Paul desired to join the church in Jerusalem. But this was not the case. The verse says, "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed (desired) to join himself to the disciples..." Paul desired to fraternize with the disciples, not join the church. He had become a Christian in Damascus (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 12:13), and he had been preaching the Gospel of Christ three years before he came to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:17,18). Therefore, Paul only wanted to work with the brethren in Jerusalem as an evangelist, not join the Jerusalem church.

Others turn to 1 Cor. 6:17 and ask, "Does this not mean that we join the church?" The answer is emphatically, "NO." This verse says, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." The verse here states the condition of a man who is already, a member of the church. Then the question may be asked, "How do we become members of the church if we do not join it?"

In Acts 2:41, we read, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and that same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." How did these people who had heard the gospel story become members of the church? The inspired writer says they were "added." Well, who does the adding? The Lord does the adding. Acts 2:47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Who can be Added to the Church

The basic requirement for becoming a member of the church is obedience to God's commands. If we wish to serve God, we must obey His wishes. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). He purchased sinful man (Acts 20:28) and redeemed him with his own blood (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). Thus, those who will heed the call of the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14) and obey the terms of it can be saved. However, we must be sure that we obey all of God's commandments, for only in this way can we know we are members of His church. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3). We must meet God's conditions if we expect His blessing.

Conditions of Membership

1. Faith—One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. "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). "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30, 31).

2. Repentance—God does not allow those who follow him to continue in sin. Man must repent of his sins and walk in righteousness. To repent literally means “to change the mind.” Therefore one must change his mind from the path of sin and follow Jesus. Repentance is not godly sorrow, but is brought about by godly sorrow, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance” (2 Cor. 7:10). A person must feel sorrow in his heart for his sin against God and dedicate himself to service against the power of sin. “I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise Perish.” (Lk. 13:3). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

3. Confession—“...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). What is the good confession? “And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt. 16:16). “Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven” (Matt. 10:32,33).

4. Baptism—What is baptism? A burial in water, an immersion. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). What is the purpose of baptism? SALVATION. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall

be damned" (Mk. 16:16). REMISSION OF SINS. "Then Peter said unto them, 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 Spirit" (Acts 2:38). TO PUT US INTO CHRIST. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3). "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

Added to the Church

When one has obeyed the preceding commandments, the inspired writer said the Lord adds him to the church (Acts 2:47). Notice the Biblical examples:

1. The Pentecostians (Acts 2:37) asked what they must do. They were not told to join the church. They obeyed the gospel plan of salvation.

2. The sinful Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:6) fell to his knees in a penitent spirit and asked, "Lord, what will thou have me do?" He was not told to join the church. When the preacher came to him, he arose and obeyed the gospel plan of salvation.

3. When the Roman jailor (Acts 16:30) asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved." He was not told to join the church. When he heard the story of Jesus, he arose that very hour and obeyed the gospel plan of salvation.

If you have a desire to become a member of the body of Christ, the church (Col. 1:18), you need only obey the commands to believe, to repent, to confess, and to be baptized for the remission of your sins, and the Lord will add you to His wonderful church.

“If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?”

Leon E. Tester

Text: Job 14:14

Purpose: To inspire to better Christian living.

Thesis: Those resurrected in Christ should live new lives.

Method: Subject

Introduction

- I Job asked if the dead would live again. An uninspired man, Theocritus, said, “For the living there is hope, for the dead there is none.”
- II Christians answer Job’s question with a “Yes!” Their hope rests on three bases.
 - A. Temporary revivals from death.
 - B. Permanent revivals from death.
 - C. Typical revivals from death.

Body

- I The Christian basis his hope for resurrection on temporary revivals from death.
 - A. Several were revived from death before Christ died.
 - 1. The son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8-37).
 - 2. The widow of Nain’s son (Luke 7:11-17).

3. Jarius' daughter (Luke 8:40-56).
 4. Lazarus (John 11).
- B. Some were revived from the dead after Christ died.
1. Peter raised Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42).
 2. Paul raised Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12).
- II The Christian basis his hope for resurrection on permanent revivals from death.
- A. Some came out of their tombs with Christ. (Matt. 27:50-54).
- B. One resurrection, that of Jesus, gives Christians utmost hope.
1. The resurrection of Jesus was prophesied (Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31f).
 2. The resurrection of Jesus materialized (Luke 24:1-12).
 3. The resurrection of Jesus was witnessed (1 Cor. 15:5-8).
 4. The resurrection of Jesus is essential (1 Cor. 15:1-4, 12-19).
- C. Many believers derive comfort from their prophesied resurrection (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
- III The Christian basis his hope for resurrection on a typical resurrection.
- A. Baptism typifies the burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-5).
- B. Baptism unites us in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-5).
- C. Baptism marks the beginning of a new life (Rom. 6:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17).
1. At this point we call on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16; Rom. 10:13).

2. At this point we are made free from sin (Rom. 6:17, 18).
 - a. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
 - b. We receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38).
 - c. We have our sins washed away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16 cf Rev. 1:5; Rom. 6:3; John 19:32-34).
3. At this point God adds us to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13).
 - a. Christ's body is the Church (Eph. 1:22, 23).
 - b. The church should be without spot, or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:26,27).

Conclusion

- I If a man die physically, he shall live again.
- II If a man die spiritually, he can live again.
- III Are you alive spiritually? Will you live with Christ in the resurrection?

“There’s Within My Heart A Melody”

Elmer Prout

You can hear sounds of all descriptions in Japan. Some are Western in origin—the roar of an airplane, the steamy clank of a locomotive, the honk of an automobile, the call of a baseball umpire. Others are distinctly Oriental—the clack-clack of wooden shoes, the wail of native music, the greeting (*Ohayo gazaimasu*) and the farewell (*Sayonara*).

Surrounded by these mingled sounds the other day my ear caught a different strain. Somewhere out on the campus a student was whistling “Draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord, to the cross where thou hast died...” Another day I saw the same student and his tune was “Face to face with Christ my Saviour, face to face what will it be...” Every time I saw this young man there was a song on his lips. One day as he walked past he sang and whistled “There’s within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low, fear not I am with thee in all of life’s ebb and flow...” And there was the answer to his joy and confidence—Jesus in his life had changed its whole complexion.

There are times when preachers and teachers of the gospel wonder how much good they are doing. There are days when the spoken word seems to fall on deaf ears. There are occasions when Christians in America question

the value of sending money to far places. There are moments when the wisdom of foreign mission work is examined with a critical eye. There are circumstances which seem to say "Do the work at home first and then turn attention to other lands."

I think that I shall never face such times or thoughts again without the picture of this young man coming to my mind. Here in a land almost one hundred per cent non-Christian walked a man with gospel songs flowing from his heart. Suppose that we took away the dollars, the prayers, the interest, the time and the effort of American Christians—what melody would be on his lips? Let's face it, without the years of effort by the church in America; without the dollars contributed to the work in Japan the tune on his lips would be anything but "Face to face with Christ." It might be "rock-and-roll"; it might be jazz beat or a Buddhist chant or the empty lament of doubt but it wouldn't be "Draw me nearer."

What if this one young person was the only fruit of the years of labour in Japan? Suppose that churches which have spent thousands of dollars in this work could point only to this one life changed as a result of their activity. Would this be justification for the investment? The Bible answer is a mighty "YES, a soul is worth more than the world". But this is not the only result. Hundreds of people, young and old, have learned the "glad song of redemption" and their lives show the saving power of the gospel of Christ.

This event took place in Japan. But what happened here is happening in other nations of the world. Christians have gone and preached the message and hearts are sing-

ing in a hundred different tongues "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, sweetest name I know, fills my heart with gladness, keeps me singing as I go."

But what of those who have not heard the song? How long must they moan the dirge of darkness, doubt and death? How long ere the light will be carried to them? How long before the fight against the forces of evil will be pressed to every corner of the battlefield? The answer lies in the hands and hearts of those of us who already know the melody. Will you share the blessing of salvation in Christ with someone today?

Baptism Also Saves Us

Jesse W. Stephens

That many people in the religious world do not believe that baptism has anything to do with one's salvation is obvious. Daily, we meet people who appear to be very pious and "very religious," but will affirm that they were saved long before they were baptized.

They usually cite a few verses that mention one's being saved and declare that nothing is said about baptism. Examples: Eph. 2:8-9 says that we are saved by grace; baptism is not mentioned in these verses. Romans 5:1 shows that we are saved by faith; baptism is not mentioned in this verse. They proceed after that manner.

There are a number of verses in the New Testament that mention baptism in connection with one's being saved. Examples: Acts 22:16 "...Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins..." Neither FAITH nor GRACE is mentioned in this verse. "...Baptism doth also now save us..." 1 Peter 3:21. Nothing is said of GRACE and FAITH in this verse. Yet, we know that baptism without faith cannot please God nor bring us into His GRACE. Heb. 11:6.

"What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus..." His blood cleanses us. "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" God has placed this cleansing element in the water. Water and BLOOD came together

from the side of Christ. John 19:34. Water and BLOOD are still together. You reach HIS BLOOD in the watery grave of baptism. Rom. 6:3-5. It is then that you are made free from sin. Romans 6:17-18. We put a cleansing element in water and then put the soiled garment therein in order that it may become clean. Likewise, sinners must enter the watery grave of baptism to contact the cleansing blood of Christ and be washed and made clean. Acts 22:16; 8:37-39; 2:38; 10:47-48; Revelation 1:5-6. Matthew 26:26-28 and Heb. 9:22 and 10:4 show us just how important the blood of Christ really is. Believing Christ to be the Son of God, repenting of your sins and with confession upon your lips, you enter the watery grave of baptism (a fountain filled with blood drawn from the veins of the Son of God) and bathe your soul in that cleansing fountain, you are then raised to "walk in newness of life." Rom. 6:3-5.

Seven essentials are mentioned by Paul in his letter to the church at Ephesus. Eph. 4:4-6 shows that God, Christ, The Holy Spirit, Faith, Baptism, Body of Christ (the church) and HOPE *all are essential to salvation*. Who, but an infidel, would have the audacity to erase any one of these?

Christ is our Saviour and He commanded baptism. Baptism is from Heaven Mk. 16; Matt. 28. Christ is the the Saviour of the Body—the church. Eph. 5:23. We enter the church when we are baptized into Christ. Romans 6:3-5; 1Cor. 12:13. If "Hope" is necessary, baptism is ALSO. For outside of Christ, we have no hope. When we are baptized into Christ, we enter Him Who is our HOPE. 1Tim. 1:1; Gal. 3:27. Christ is the TRUE

VINE and we must "abide" In Him. We are "hopeless" if detached.

Yes, I believe that we are "saved by grace". Eph. 2:8-9. But "baptism also saves..." 1Peter 3:21.

I believe that we are saved by faith. Romans 5:1. "Baptism doth ALSO save us..." 1Peter 3:21.

I believe that we are saved by the Gospel of Christ. 1Cor. 15:1-4; Romans 6. "Baptism doth ALSO save us..." 1Peter 3:21.

I believe that God is no respecter of persons. Romans 2:11. I believe that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10:12-13. But we call on the name of the Lord through our obedience to Him in baptism. Acts 22:16. "...Baptism doth also save us..." 1Peter 3:21.

I believe that we are saved by obedience. Hebrews 5:8-9. Baptism is necessary to obedience. Therefore, "Baptism doth also save us..." 1Peter 3:21.

I believe that we are saved by the blood of Christ. Heb. 9:22; 10:4; Matthew 26:26-28. His blood cleanses us from our sins when we contact it in the baptismal grave. Romans 6:3-5; 6:17-18. Life is in the blood. Gen. 9:4. The blood is in the water. John 19:34; Romans 6. When you are baptized into Christ—in the watery grave, you contact His blood and receive LIFE, spiritual LIFE. "...Baptism also saves..." 1Peter 3:21.

We are saved by receiving the "love" of the truth. 2Thess. 2:10. "Thy Word is truth." John 17:17. Baptism is commanded in His Word. Do you "love" this truth enough to obey?

There seems to be no end to this thought. But, friends, enough has been said to convince any honest person that "...Baptism DOTH ALSO NOW SAVE US..." 1Peter 3:21. Do you believe it? "He that believeth not shall be damned..." Mark 16:16.

Co-operation

Jesse W. Stephens

COOPERATE: "To work or act together or jointly; unite in producing an effect." **COOPERATION:** "The act or fact of cooperating; joint operation or action."

It has always been my conviction that **IT IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF THE WHOLE CHURCH TO PREACH THE WHOLE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD.**

There is but **ONE FIELD** of operation—the whole **WORLD.** "The field is the World..." "The Good Seed is the Word of God"—Seed of the Kingdom. Luke 8; Matt. 13. There is but one Missionary Society through which this work is to be done—"The Church..." (1 Timothy 3:15). The church is larger than any one local congregation. We belong to **THE UNIVERSAL BODY** over which Christ is **THE HEAD** and in which the Spirit Dwells. All who belong to Christ—many thousands of local congregation are included. Paul wrote to "ALL THAT IN EVERY PLACE CALL UPON THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD..." 1 Cor. 1:2. Peter wrote "To them who have obtained like precious faith" throughout "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia." 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1. James wrote "To the twelve tribes scattered abroad"—the **WHOLE church.** James 1:1. "One fold and one Shepherd." John 10:16.

Looking at the WHOLE church, Peter said: "Be ye ALL of ONE MIND..." 1 Peter 3:8-12. "Love the brotherhood." 1 Peter 2:17. We are ALL in the SAME family (have ONE Father, Matt. 23:8-9). We make the same CLAIM and we have the SAME AIM, and wear the same NAME. We have but one BOOK and should ALL be "of one mind and one mouth." Rom. 15:6; 1 Peter 4:11. Jesus anticipated the WHOLE church, when He prayed: "For ALL those also who shall believe on ME through their WORD that they ALL (in every place) may be ONE IN US..." John 17:20-21.

Divine Agencies have always cooperated on a VOLUNTEER basis. This cooperation is seen in Creation. "Let US..." Gen. 1; John 1; Heb. 1. This is also seen in REDEMPTION: God planned, Christ executed and the Holy Spirit Revealed...Nothing but UNITY in Heaven—all the Angels work together in carrying out Heaven's orders concerning those "who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb. 1:14.

Old Testament Examples of Co-operation:

(1) Moses and Aaron, Ex. 4:16-17. (2) Joshua and Caleb. Num. 14:1-10. (3) David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 20; 14:6-7. (4) Elijah and Elisha. 2 Kings 2:9. (5) Aaron and Hur helped Moses. Ex. 17:8-16. (6) Co-operation helps to inspire. 2Kings 6:1-17. (7) It gave Israel success in battle. Judges 20:1, 11. Israel was assembled "as one man" from Dan to Beersheba—ALL the men of Israel "knit together as one man." Beautiful fellowship. (8) Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh were

commanded to UNITE with the rest of the tribes of Israel IN THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN. Joshua 1: All the ARMY OF ISRAEL fighting together, marching together with ONE Goal in mind. (9) Cooperation is seen in REBUILDING THE WALLS of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 4.

New Testament Examples of Co-operation:

(1) Between Paul and Timothy. 2Tim. 4:9. (2) Phebe had not only helped Paul, but she had helped others also. Rom. 16:1-2. (3) Christian family and others. 1Cor. 16:15ff. (4) Disciples and Elders. Acts 11:19-30. (5) Churches and saints in Jerusalem. 2Cor. 8 and 9. (6) Church and church. Acts 15:1-32.

The *general teaching* of the Word of God points to the obligation of mutual helpfulness, fair-sharing. As Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses while Joshua led Israel to Victory in carnal warfare, so should we (all in every place) unite our efforts in pushing to completion the GREAT COMMISSION OF OUR LORD. By thus working together we can "HERALD THE TRUTH" to all the dying sons and daughters of Adam's wayward race. If a great challenge is presented to one congregation and said challenge cannot be met without the assistance of sister congregations, I believe that sister congregations have a right to help. Acts 2:42. Who is going to draw a line in congregational cooperation where God hasn't?

Acts 15:22-32 says:

1. That the Jerusalem church chose men to be sent to Antioch. Verse 22.
2. The Jerusalem church prepared an epistle to be sent to Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. V.23.
3. Judas and Silas were to tell the church in Antioch the same things as contained in the epistle. Verse 27.
4. Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas went to Antioch and delivered the epistle to the church. Verse 30.
5. Judas and Silas exhorted the brethren at Antioch. Verse 32.
6. "They wrote thus by them"—*dia cheiros* (Greek), Verse 23, This is the same as Acts 11:30 "By the hand of" Barnabas and Paul.

Acts 15:22-32 shows:

1. That one church can scripturally assist another church by sending men and supporting them.
2. That this assistance *may involve spiritual matters*.
3. That one church may send a writing to Another church—a tract, many tracts.
4. One church may send funds to another church for spiritual matters.
5. That these funds may be used to purchase tracts, support a preacher, pay for T.V. or Radio time in the preaching of the Gospel.
6. This passage shows *the general teaching of the Bible in congregational co-operation*. There is no single "pattern," no "exclusive pattern," in the matter of one church helping another.

7. That one church may act "through the hand of" a number of men. Acts 15:23; Acts 11:30. Greek term used in these passages is "dia cheiros."

THIS IS ALL THE BIBLE PROOF YOU NEED FOR CONGREGATIONAL CO-OPERATION. THIS IS AUTHORITY FOR CHURCH CO-OPERATION IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS.

For further proof, you may read 2Cor. 11:8. Paul "robbed other churches, taking wages of them"—either directly or indirectly. The Bible does not reveal the details of how these wages were sent. Some have assumed that they were sent direct to the preacher—Paul. But that is only an assumption, Your assumption is worth no more than mine.

2Cor. 8:13-14. "Equality" here means "Fair-sharing or Mutual Helpfulness." "But based upon the principle of mutual helpfulness, your abundance at this present time..." This is another way of saying: "Being constrained by love, help one another." Some churches gave out of "deep poverty."

We have the principle of mutual helpfulness—applying both to individuals and to churches. This involves **GENERAL AUTHORITY**, details are omitted. Method and manner of helpfulness in congregational **COOPERATION** is left up to the judgment of the Elders of each local church.

Acts 2:42, after thousands had obeyed the gospel, shows that "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine and **FELLOWSHIP**..." Multiplied thousands were added and we read that "they were of **ONE heart and one soul**..."

I am indebted to Guy N. Woods, G.K. Wallace and Thomas Warren for some of the things herein mentioned. And, we are all indebted to Christ and His Apostles who were guided into **ALL TRUTH** by Divine inspiration.

“Say not ye, there are yet four months...” (John 4:35)

Elnier Prout

The fields near Omika, Japan, were green with the newly planted shoots of rice. And out in many of the fields the workers, bent double and knee-deep in the mud, still carefully planted row after row of the seedlings. I caught the train south from the station and settled back for the two hour ride to Ryugasaki where I would teach a Bible class later that afternoon. Occasionally I would look up from my book to glance again at the expanse of newly planted paddies.—It was spring and a long time to harvest I thought and turned back to the reading.

But suddenly the view from the train window changed—the fields were no longer green, they were brown and gold, And the men and women were not planting, they were harvesting—cutting, tying, stacking the ripe grain. In less than two hours I had moved from planting time to harvest.

It was like a revelation of the condition of the world. It was like a challenge to awake and see the reality of life again. I had seen the planting in Omika and took it for granted that the whole world was planting. The harvest time was future—it was not time to think of it, yet. BUT the truth was the harvest time was already here! There was no time to prepare for it or wait for it—it was on us and with

a jolt that fact came home. I saw anew that this world is being planted *and* harvested. The words of Jesus rang in my ears—"Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

Sitting with thirty high school students a few minutes later this fact hit me again. With open Bible in my hand I sat in the shadow of the "kami-dana" (god shelf) and we read the story of Jesus. Seeing the shrine-like alcove with its prayer markers, stone statue and scroll I knew afresh that someone had been here before. Someone had planted and someone was harvesting. Shinto is saying: "We believe that the ultimate mission of Shinto is...to bring about universal peace, well-being, and prosperity for mankind..." And the other "isms" add their voices to the cry.

Brethren, the harvest never ends until *the end* (Matthew 28:20). The planting of the seeds of death goes on. I am in Japan—my heart and life are here—but *it is the world that needs the Word*. It is not enough to send out one wave of preachers and teachers. New waves of missionaries must be forming. Parents must be willing to go in the first wave—but more than that they must be willing to encourage their children to be part of the new wave that carries the gospel to the next generation.

"Say not...there are four months and then cometh the harvest...the harvest is now."

Closed Minds

F.L. Paisley

It is safe to say that a closed mind is usually a stagnate mind. Any water that long remains inactive will become stagnate. Minds must be kept open and actively alert to life—certainly there is no growth when so long as they are closed against any further or new information. Nothing contributes to error more than minds which do not desire any information contrary to that already accepted as final. Only a closed mind will say, "I am perfectly satisfied; I do not wish to know anything different to that which I now believe." What a tragedy!—a mind closed against all light when the only "light" such one has is what Jesus called "darkness". Matt. 6:23; Luke 11:34,35. "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in you be not darkness."

The atheist has decided already that there is no God. His mind has been already made up and closed against any evidence to the contrary. The infidel accepts the existence of God, but does not believe that the Bible is His word, or that Jesus is His Son. He is closed against any evidence you might ask him to consider. He thinks himself to be very learned, and you as definitely ignorant. A Christian who has convictions strong enough to withstand a shock should be willing to listen to either disbeliever's evidence he thinks he has to sustain his disbelief.

An informed Christian desires to know the best, the strongest argument that can be stated against Christianity as taught in the New Testament, not as some religionists (mis) represent it!

A denominationalist, independent of and contrary to what the Bible says, has readily accepted the saying that "One church is as good as another," as if it were so stated on every page of the New Testament; and this quoted slogan justifies, in his mind, his belonging to whatever "church" *he* has chosen. He refuses to consider that the Lord might have a right of choice of his own blood bought church in preference to all the man made churches which they choose. Such drastic decisions are made only by minds which are closed while including all human preferences and excluding all divine legislation to the contrary. So far as such a person cares, the Lord's prayer for unity just before his death was offered "in tears and sweat and blood" all in vain. Yes, a Christian's mind should be thoroughly "made up"; but he should be pleased to listen to and weigh whatever a defender of error might advance to support his opinions. By all means let us avoid closing our minds so as not to be able to consider any idea opposite what we now believe. A closed mind is possibly fatal to the person possessing it.

Long ago a large part of the so-called "Christian world" accepted the practise of sprinkling a little water upon a person's head and calling it "baptism", never once stopping to find that the act is not only lacking any Scriptural authority, but is directly *anti-scriptural*. Generations have so long accepted the error that now their minds are closed in advance of any and all evidence they

would be happy to receive if they were searching for the truth, as did the prophet Ezra, (7:10)—“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it.”

But so long as the door of the heart is closed, there is no possibility of getting it to listen to, much less to consider, any indisputable evidence to the contrary. That same part of the “Christian world”, with many millions of others of various doctrines, accepted the playing of mechanical instruments of music in their worship and think it foolish even to question their right to do so. Most of them do not claim one word of New Testament authority for such worship, but depend wholly upon their personal right to worship as they please. Jehovah’s pleasure is not regarded!

Countless thousands of church people definitely reject the act of sprinkling for baptism, but insist that whatever the “mode” of baptism may be—even immersion which they say the Lord commanded—is absolutely unnecessary to one’s salvation any way. Yes, Jesus promised, with all authority in heaven and on earth vested in himself, that the believer shall be saved when baptized, Mark 16:16; and the Holy Spirit declared that the act he called baptism to be “for (or “unto”) the remission of sins” when one has repented of alien sins, Acts 2:38, but those fine people have their minds definitely closed against the clearest of declarations in all such passages and figure that somehow the Lord did not state that which is true on the question. In a public debate Brother V.E. Howard drove a Baptist preacher to say that he would insert a “not” in Mark 16:16, to read thusly: “He that believeth and is

not baptized shall be saved." Let this scribe assure his readers that when a man will make such a daring change in the word of the Lord in debate with V.E. Howard, he has simply not counted the cost!

Yes, all denominational people have closed their minds, but members of churches of Christ have not. We could wish that that were true of all of us. But aged men and of lengthy experience tell me that some of "us" are as badly afflicted with closed minds as is the averaged denominationalist. What! A Christian has his mind closed so as not to hear what he does not already believe? Yes, so I am told. We think we have met some such brethren, but we shall forbear stating what Bible truth they may have closed against all considerations. Suffice is to say that for a Christian to close his mind against hearing anything which might prove to be truth, it is as great a tragedy as for any sectarian to do so. It would be a greater one for me, should I do so!

Jehovah lamented through the prophets of Israel that his apostatizing people had reached the stage of blinded eyes, and that willingly. However honest they might have been in that course, their honesty did not save them from becoming a totally wrecked nation. Right here we almost hear someone say, Yes, Israel closed their minds against very vital truth, but if we have at all closed our minds, it is against some minor, non-essential doctrine. But it might not be our prerogative to decide on just what truth is minor or non-essential. The very spirit, however "unimportant" a certain truth might be, is rebellion against and rejection of both the word of the Lord

and Himself. It might be a very small thing to move the Lord's supper outside the first day of the week, but it is far from being a small thing to close our minds against all pleadings of honest brethren not to do so. It is no small thing to close minds against any truth which God has revealed in his Book.

It is still true that "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32. These are the words from the personal lips of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge us at the last day.

The Great Invitation

L.D. Williams

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30).

These wonderful words of Jesus move the heart of all who love truth. They bring comfort to the mind of sinful man and give him the power to lift himself out of the depths of degradation. The bottomless pit of sin is an abode of despair. In every storm the seaman seeks a haven where he will be protected from the wrathful elements. In the storm of life, the sincere heart seeks a haven of rest where he will be protected from the deathly hand of sin. In Jesus one can find that place of rest.

GOD'S DESIRE TO SAVE

The Bible tells us that the prince of this world is satan. He is the ruler of the hearts of men. Paul said this is the result of the sin of the first man, Adam. When Adam was created he was not a sinful being. But the first man sought to increase his stature of wisdom at the expense of disobedience to the command of God. Thus

sin entered the world. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Therefore, through Adam sin entered into the world and has continued to rule the world from then until now. But God does not wish for man to succumb to sin and die spiritually. (John 3:16), "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." that man might not perish in sin, but that he might live eternally in heaven. Jehovah does not desire that any soul be lost. He paid the supreme sacrifice for us at his own expense; and "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore we know God is willing to save us and desires to do so.

SALVATION IN JESUS

Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him" (John 6:44). And again, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Though Jesus freely invites all to come unto him, all who come must come through obedience to the gospel. Some teach we are drawn to Jesus through some great experience motivated by the direct working of the Holy Spirit on the human soul. But Jesus says we are drawn by learning of him. "It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). Paul says

our being taught of "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4).

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

Though God has done so very much, man must still choose his course in life. Jehovah made man a creature of choice, and each person must either accept the terms of salvation or reject them for himself. God does not desire to compel man to come unto him. The motivation must be love and sincere desire to do that which is right. Joshua stood before Israel and uttered an everlasting proclamation, "choose you this day whom ye will serve;... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). The responsibility for salvation is placed squarely upon man. God in his infinite mercy continues to do all He can, short of violating man's will to move man to respond to His great invitation. But so many will not respond, and thus for them Christ died in vain. This thought brought tears to the eyes of our Lord as he sat on the Mount of Olives and wept over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37). Again to the Jews, "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life" (John 5:40).

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

We can be certain Jesus will receive us if we come to

him. He said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

The greatest invitation ever extended unto man has been given by God through Jesus Christ. And if we respond and "walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7).

Workers for the Lord

Elmer Prout

Singing is a vital part of the worship and teaching programme of the church. (see I Cor. 14:15, 26; Eph. 5:18, 19; Col 3:16). Reading the Bible aloud is equally important in the public services of the church. (cf. I Timothy 4:13; Rev. 1:3; Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27). At times, on a Wednesday evening for example, it is profitable to combine song and scripture into one connected theme for the entire evening meeting. The following outline suggests such a programme on the theme "Workers for the Lord". Brief comments are included to mark the progression of the thought. More songs than can be used in one evening are listed to suggest the scope of the idea.

- I. We have the honour of being redeemed and born again into the family of God. In that family we are workers for the Lord. The gifts of God constrain us to give ourselves in service to Him.
 - A. Reading: Romans 12:1; 6:13; 6:18-22
 - B. Songs: Saviour, Thy Dying Love; My Life, My Love I Give to Thee.
- II. If we give our best to the Lord He will use us in his vineyard. Giving out best to God starts with complete submission and the desire to be used by Him in whatever way He sees best.

- A. Reading: Matt. 16:24; II Cor. 4:1-7;
II Tim. 2:20, 21.
- B. Songs: I Want to be a Worker; To The Work, To the Work.
- III. The Work is that of taking the message of reconciliation to men.
- A. Reading: James 5:19, 20; II Cor. 5:18; 6:2;
Jude 22, 23.
- B. Songs: Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy;
I Am a Stranger Here; Throw Out
The Life Line.
- IV. The calls for the light of the gospel come from afar and urge us to carry the message to every part of the globe.
- A. Reading: Acts 16:9; I Cor. 9:16; II Cor. 4:13
- B. Songs: Of One The Lord Has Made The Race; Seeking the Lost; There's A Call Comes Ringing; Speed Away
- V. The Lord's work is near and far. God may have us serve him at home or abroad.
- A. Reading: Acts 21:13; II Cor. 10:14-16; Eph. 3:7-9
- B. Songs: It may not be on the Mountain's Height; If The Name of The Saviour.
- VI. We do the work of sowing the seed. It is God who brings forth the increase. We must scatter the seed everywhere.
- A. Reading: I Cor. 3:5-9; Matthew 9:36-38;
John 4:31-38
- B. Songs: Sowing in the Morning; Sowing The Seed; Far and Near; Work for the Night is Coming.

VII. We sow in hope of the crown of life which God will give.

A. Reading: Phil 4:1; I Thess. 2:19, 20; II Cor. 1:14; II Tim. 4:7, 8; Rev. 2:10

B. Songs: I Am Thinking Today (Will There Be Any Stars In My Crown); O Land of Rest.

At appropriate times during this service prayers for the work of the church in various places may be offered. Thus the songs, the reading and the prayers unite to impress on the heart the challenge and the blessing of working for the Lord.

Strong Language

Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:1-15.

L.W. Mayo

Introduction:

By the topic "Strong Language" we mean language or talk which must be avoided by Christians. There is no way to understand a person's heart better than to hear what he says. It becomes necessary for us to learn to control our talk. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" Matt. 12:34-35; Luke 6:45.

So as we go through this study we must remember that any time we employ any of the speech, that we shall discuss, we will be evidencing what is in our heart.

The heart thinks, understands and reasons; desires, loves and trusts; intends, purposes and obeys. So, we will be evidencing the character of all these functions of the heart; if we use "Strong Language".

Every type of "Strong Language" is contrary to the teaching of the scripture which teaches that we do the things that become the Gospel of Christ. Phil. 1.27.

We shall discuss the subject under the following headings, and may the Lord bless the study to our edification.

(1) Hasty words. (2) Slurs. (3) Angry Words. (4) Violence. (5) Revelling. (6) Greivous Words. (7) Idle Words. (8) Vain Words. (9) Filthy Communications. (10) Unkind Words. (11) Cursing. (12) Profanity. (13) Guile.

(14) Backbiting. (15) Gossipper. (16) Talebearer. (17) Slander. (18) Blasphemy.

II *Discussion.* Words are signs of ideas. An idea once planted is exceedingly hard to up-root.

1. *Hasty Words.* Words spoken without deliberation or due caution. Prov. 18:13. 20:25 R.V. It shows a man to be a fool and brings him to shame. Makes one to repudiate his own deeds or words later. At the best "hasty words" are very ill-advised and uncertain. Better be slow to speak. Jas. 1:19.
2. *Slurs.* Meaning: to besmirch, to cast aspersion, stain or blot. This kind of language is opposed to every idea of kindness. 11. Pet. 1:5-9. The "slur" is an evidence of an unstable and insecure character. It indicates an overbearing attitude. In it is also a begrudging and childish disposition. The heart that sends forth a "slur" is in a lamentable state.
3. *Angry Words.* Rapid breathing in mental passion. Violent passion, abhorrence, indignation-vengeance. Anger is a work of the flesh. Gal. 5:20. Hence, "angry words" are a product of a work of the flesh. "Angry words" go along with wrath and clamour Eph. 4:31. Every Christian should study anger in the Bible. This will show the character of "angry words" better than anything else. "Angry words" are sure to be "hasty words" also. They will bring shame. "Be angry and sin not" is the teaching of the scriptures. Eph. 4:26. The man who allows the violent mental passion of the mind to express itself in words is as sure to sin as can be.
4. *Violence.* Unjust, damaging, false, injurious, evil

language. The language of a bad doer. Just as a man can be unjust in dealings, he can be unjust in what he says. He can be damaging in what he says, he can be false. "Violence" covereth the mouth of the wicked. Prov. 10:11. The kingdom of Heaven suffered "violence" Mt. 11:12. Not only opposing deeds, but opposing and damaging words. The church today suffers "violence" by secterians. Men in the leadership of the church suffer violence from the members.

5. *Revelling*. To speak impiously, defame or rail. To speak evil of, to cast in the teeth, upbraid, chide, taunt, to reproach vilify. Such was the character and the language of those who crucified the Lord. Matt. 27:39; Mk. 15:32; 1 Pet. 2:23, 29. "Revilers" are classed with fornicators. 1 Cor. 6:10. If I know what "impiously" (which is a part of what 'Revelling' means) means, it would carry with it the idea of such slang-words as we hear used often—such as "heck"—"darn" etc. Such speech does not become a Christian—it is not pious, therefore "revileing" sinful.
6. *Greivous Words*. Words that produce pangs and sorrow. These words are such as will produce anger—therefore cause sin. See. Prov. 15:1. Words used to provoke others, or words used by us that we know might provoke others are greivous words. Christians do not use such words. A Christian is required to do such things as make for peace.
7. *Idle Words*. Unprofitable or pernicious words. Involving blameworthiness. Suggestive and censorious.

Matt. 12:36-37. Words that do nothing good. They do not extend grace nor impart knowledge to the hearer. Here the Lord has in mind injurious words, for which one can be justly blamed. Joking out of place would fit in here. Eph. 5:4. Some joking is not fitting or not convenient. The tenor of our conversation will be held against us in the judgment if it is idle. Character is often judged by our words. They come from the abundance of the heart.

8. *Vain Words*. Lip words, empty words, unprofitable, useless, iniquity, falsehood, ruin, devoid of truth, destitute of spiritual wealth; spoken of one who boasts of his faith as a transcendent possession, yet is without the fruits of faith. Jas. 2:20. Words used by one to vainly build his own hope. Isa. 36:5. They come from under the tongue with mischief. Ps. 10:7. Vain words accompany lies. Ps. 31:6. They are as compatible with the character of a righteous man as the laughter of a fool is with real wisdom and knowledge. Ecc. 7:6. Words of vanity belong unto the enemy. Ps. 41:6, They are words that belong only to strangers from God. Ps. 144:8. Solomon said "remove far from me vanity and lies" Prov. 30:8. "Vain words" will deceive. Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:8. "Christians are taught to avoid vain babblings" 1. Tim. 6:20; 2. Tim. 2:16. Foolish questions and contentions are vain words. Tit. 3:9. Vain words are intended to lead God's people astray. 2. Pet. 2:18.
9. *Filthy Communication*. Foul speaking, low and obscene speech; shameful speaking. Such words are

opposed to the speech of a righteous man, Prov. 16:24; Lot was sore distressed with filthy conversation. 2. Pet. 2:7. Filthy communication must be put away with lying. Col. 3:8. It is just as wrong to use filthy speech as it is to tell a lie. It is classified as "evil speaking" 1. Pet. 2:1. This kind of language includes filthy suggestive jokes, or suggestive speech of kind. If a man's speech is filthy and obscene it is sure that he is filthy in his heart. There is no place for a Christian to tell a filthy joke, nor even a place where he may enjoy one.

10. *Unkind Words*. Jesus warned His disciples of "Unkind Words". Luke 6:28-29. We must not return such words of unkindness. Rom. 12:17-19; 1. Pet. 3:9; 1. Thess. 5:15.

"Unkind Words" are "bitter words." Ps. 64:3; Ps. 57:4; Jer. 9:3. Kindness is as much an attribute of Christianity as Love is a part of God. No heart that is filled with kindness sends forth words that are unkind.

11. *Cursing*. (Greek) An Excommunication, imprecation, revelling. To put under an anathema; vilify, speak evil of, to wish a thing to be barren, to appoint to the penalty of being cursed.

(English) A prayer or invocation that harm or injury come to one. The scripture forbids cursing. It had the death penalty to Israel. Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Matt. 15:4.

Enemies will curse us, but we must not curse back. Lk. 6:28; Rom. 12:14.

"Cursing" is accompanied by one who will or is denying Christ. Matt. 26:74. Mark. 14:71.

"Cursing" is accompanied by other wicked things. Rom. 3:14-15; Ps. 10:7.

“Cursing” is as contrary to the speech of a Christian as bitter water is to fresh water. Jas. 3:10; Prov. 18:21.

The words most often used in “cursing” are “damn”, “dern (darn)” and “ding (dang)” These words are often connected with the name of God used in vain. The word “damn” means “to condemn, to adjudge a person as guilty, to doom to everlasting punishment, to denounce as invalid, to bring ruin upon; to say a thing is distasteful, evil, useless, fit to be destroyed.

The word “dern (darn)” is “A euphemistic way of saying—damn”

The word “ding (dang)” To thrust violently, to throw away with violence, to scold, to bluster.

God is the only one who can decide as to a things’s or a person’s worth and whether it should be destroyed. To so connect God’s name in vain with those or any other violent word is opposed to the teaching of Rom. 12:19. See also Heb. 6:8.

12. *Profanity.* Language of irreverence, obloquy, contempt, to desecrate, to debase by wrong unworthy or vulgar use; not sacred or holy.

It is classed with confusion and idolatry. Lev. 18:20-23.

It is classed with stealing. Lev. 19:11-12. It is just as bad to use profanity as it is to steal.

Paul was accused of profaning the temple (Acts 24:6); though not guilty, it shows how profanity was regarded by the people.

Those who are profane in either word or deed are as murderers of parents. 1. Tim. 1:9.

Repeating of “Old wives tales” (fabricated stories) is profanity 1. Tim. 4:7. “Profanity” is classed with fornication. Heb. 12:16.

13. *Guile*. To catch with a bait, craft, deceit, snare, lure. These are words of deception—intended to lead some one astray or off of the track.

Satan beguiled Eve. Gen. 3:13.

We must restrain our lips from “guile”. Ps. 34:13.

Judas was a man of “guile” Ps. 55:11; For Satan was in his heart. Jno. 13:27.

The Corinthians were caught in guile. 2 Cor. 12:16.

Christians must lay aside all guile. 1. Pet. 2:1.

Christians do not speak guile. 1. Pet. 3:10; Rev. 14:5.

There was no guile in Christ. Jno. 1:47; 1. Pet. 2:22.

14. *Backbiting*. To be a tale bearer, to slander, to make a demon of one, to defame one. Backbiter—one who speaks secretly against another. Rom. 1:30.

This is caused by a jealous and greedy heart.

The backbiter cannot dwell in God’s holy hill or government. Ps. 15:1-3.

Backbiting is prompted by anger. Prov. 25:23 R.V.

The backbiter will be lost. Rom. 1:30; 1. Cor. 12:20.

15. *Gossiping*. An idle tattler, a newsmonger, a carrier of groundless rumors, to engage in foolish talk, to carry tales.

How careless some people are in their conversation. Without regard for or reference to the future, they utter sentence, after sentence, never dreaming that the human memory is prone to store away for future reference remarks carelessly and words thoughtlessly flung off by a made flippant tongue.

Gossiping is the evidence of an apostate soul. 1. Tim. 5:11-13.

The gossipper is never content. III Jno. 10.

The heart of the gossipper only hopes to destroy another by repeating and magnifying what he has heard that another may have done.

16. *Talebearer*. This is closely associated with the gossipper but has some additional features. "One who carries stories among friends, or tells secret things." This kind of a person cannot be trusted. See. Prov. 11:13.

The words of a talebearer are deep seated. Prov. 18:8.

There is never any profit to the talebearer in all that he tells. He is, at best, a verbal sadist—he enjoys punishing others with the stories he tells—What a depraved heart indeed!!!!

17. *Slander*. To defame, give evil report, words of infamy, to push over. A slanderer is a scandal monger, to speak impiously, injuriously, to slink about.

This is a sin of which the tongue is the organ (prov. 18:21; James 3:8. 9.) Springs from the heart as the seat of the inner life (Matt. 12:33-35; 15:19).

As a rule, its mental feature is falsehood. Prov. 10:18.

It is a sign of moral corruption. Jer. 6:28; 9:4: 11 Tim. 3:3. R.V.

Space and time forbids that we examine fully the subject of slander, but we encourage every one to study the subject under the headings of "Slander or Evil-Speaking" in the Bible Dictionary by James Hastings.

18. *Blasphemy*. Simply to lie against or falsely accuse, or to assign the good work of one to an evil source.

Blasphemy comes from the heart. Matt. 15:19.

It is forbidden to Children of God. Col. 3:8.

It comes from the heart of an apostate. 1. Tim. 1:19-20.

It is a characteristic of the Devil.

Note : We pray that these lessons have been beneficial to each of you, and that the subject matter of the same will serve its purpose in helping every child of God to speak such clean upright words as will all be fitting, and that our mouths, as righteous men, be wells of life.

James L. Demmon

I have heard people say that they could not understand the Bible. Some even think that it is impossible for anyone to understand it, except perhaps preachers. IS THAT TRUE? I am convinced that it is not because God demands that we know his word. Certainly he would not give us an unintelligible message, and then condemn us for not understanding it.

He has told my people and destroyed for lack of knowledge because they had rejected knowledge. I will also reject them, that they shall be

no priest to me. Ephesians 3:12 "Whatsoever he will not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

1 Tim. 3:15 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

God being an all wise and loving Father would not communicate with us his children with an unintelligible message. Suppose a man's son is in some foreign country. It is necessary that he communicate with his son regarding a life and death matter. Would he communicate with him by an unintelligible

The Bible :

CAN IT BE UNDERSTOOD

James L. Denison

I have heard people say that they could not understand the Bible. Some even think that it is impossible for anyone to understand it, except perhaps preachers. IS THAT TRUE? I am convinced that it is not; because:

1. God demands that we know his word. Certainly he would not give us an unintelligible message, and then condemns us for not understanding it.
 - a. Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me."
 - b. Ephesians 5:17. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."
 - c. 2 Pet. 3:18: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
2. God being an all wise and loving Father would not communicate with us, his children, with an unintelligible message. Suppose a man's son is in some foreign country. It is necessary that he communicate with his son regarding a life and death matter. Would he communicate with him by an unintelligible

- message? Absolutely not! Then neither will God the Father communicate with us regarding the salvation or death of our souls by a message (the Bible) which cannot be understood!
3. Timothy as a child understood the scriptures. Can a mere child understand that which you cannot?
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:15: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures..."
 4. The Ephesians could understand it by simply reading it. Were they more intelligent than you?
 - a. Ephesians 3:3, 4: "...As I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."
 5. If the Bible cannot be understood, then why would God command us to study it?
 - a. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a worker that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - b. John 5:39: "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me (Christ)."
 6. If the Bible cannot be understood, then the Great Commission is meaningless and vain.
 - a. Mark 16:15: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."
 - b. Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

Would it not be rather foolish to preach and teach the Bible, the Gospel, if the world could not understand it?

7. But the Bible can be understood. It gives us wisdom and understanding.
- a. 2 Timothy 3:15: "...The Holy Scriptures...are able to make the wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
 - b. Psalms 119:98: "...Thy commandments (the Bible) has made me wiser than mine enemies."
 - c. Psalms 119:104: "Through thy precepts (the Bible) I get understanding."
 - d. Psalms 19:7: "The testimony of the Lord (the Bible) is sure, making wise the simple."

A MERE EXCUSE

I fear that the statement "*I can't understand the Bible*" is merely an excuse which many people use to cover up their negligence of meditating upon God's truth. The idea that "*you can't understand the Bible*" I fear is an excuse some offer in order that they may be able to palm off on the unwary various false doctrines as teaching of the Bible.

Doubtless, however, there are things in the Bible which are hard to be understood. But the above scriptures and thoughts show us that we can nevertheless come to a knowledge of the truth. Furthermore James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

REASONS PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

If people can understand the Bible, then why is it that many do not? There are a number of reasons for this, such as:

1. The idea that one can't understand it! With such an idea one is defeated before he begins. For either he will not try, or else he will not do his best.
2. Some are prejudiced like those of whom Christ spoke in Matthew 13:15. He said, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." These people didn't want to understand! Many are like that today. Others have simply pre-judged without first investigating.
3. Some do not respect the silence of the Bible. 2 John 9 (Revised Version) says "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." Such people allow the burning of incense, counting of beads; sprinkling, infant baptism, instrumental music, special religious days, etc., to be observed because they think the Bible has not specifically condemned them. BUT we cannot speak as the Bible speaks (1 Pet. 4:11) and allow these things; for the Bible has not spoken in their defense.
4. Some do not study the Bible in a systematic way. Their study is a hit and miss, skip around, affair.

Suppose you were to study law, mathematics, medicine, etc., in that way? You should study the Bible either book by book and chapter by chapter, or topically.

5. Some do not understand the Bible because on difficult passages they build elaborate theories which then conflict with plainly stated passages. They should make the difficult passage harmonize with the plainly stated and understood ones.
6. Some do not rightly divide the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15). They do not assign to the Old Testament that which belongs to it, and to the New that which belongs to it. Nor do they separate the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian laws from each other. To properly divide the Bible, and understand it, you should always know "Who is speaking," "To whom is he speaking," "What is he speaking about," and "Why is he speaking."