



**THE
BIBLE
TEACHER**

LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL

1. *That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, and about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 16:18). That congregations of His one church everywhere may be known as churches of Christ, as we read at Romans 16:16. That there should be no denominations or sects in the name of the church. (1 Corinthians 1:10).*
2. *That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as is revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. All must be told to believe in Christ, to repent of wrong, to confess Christ the Son of God, and to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-38). Those who obey these commands of salvation are saved by the Lord and He Himself adds the saved ones to His church (Acts 2:47); which is His spiritual body. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4; 5:22).*
3. *That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, after His name alone, as it was in the beginning. (Acts 4:12; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). That all other names which exalt and glorify any other name of a man, or a doctrine, or a day or a movement, etc., must be forgotten.*
4. *That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with other books written by men, and only the Bible which contains God's inspired message for man must be followed in all spiritual matters. (Matthew 7:21-23; John 12:48).*
5. *Let us accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).*

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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"

One need to decide by his or her own choice for becoming a follower of Christ. The desire of becoming a follower of Christ should be ones' own. No one can force one to become a Christian. There is no power in any man or woman to convert one to become a follower of Christ. Even when Christ was living on earth as a man he threw the challenge before all by saying that IF any one desires to come after Him, then that individual should deny himself, that is, cease to live for himself, and take up his cross daily, the cross which was the symbol of death and sacrifice and of suffering and love for all humanity, and then follow Him, that is, live as He lived and do as He did. (Luke 9:23). Christ also taught, at Matthew 18:3, that "unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." It is most worthy to note that this particular statement was made by Christ to His own disciples! This shows to us that all people need to convert or change. One need to convert himself or herself. The word "convert" means to change; and all need to change; because all have sinned against God. (Romans 3:23). That it is the responsibility of each indivi-

dual to convert or change himself/herself is also evident from Peter's statement at Acts 3:19, wherein he exhorted people by saying to them: "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." When or at what point is one converted to God, or for salvation, to be reconciled to God?

At Psalm 19:7 we read, that the word or the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The need to change or convert is felt in ones own heart or mind when one hears the word or the message of God. For example, when the gospel message of Christ was declared the first time on earth, at Jerusalem, amongst thousands of people, nearly two thousand years ago, those who had heard the heart-rending story of the Son of God dying on the cross for the sinners, had responded by saying: "Men and brethren what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). They had now changed their minds and attitudes toward Christ, to whom they were prejudiced before through ignorance. No longer they hated Him, but began to see Him as one who loves them and gave His life for their sins. Hence they wanted to know what they ought to do to change? Peter, in response to their query told them: "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized for the remission of sins, in the name of Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts. 2:38). And, we read next that they did exactly that, as they were told, about three thousand did that. Here we see how the word of God preached to them changed them, and how they changed themselves by obeying the word of God that was preached to them.

Many are lost in the world, in their sins, by rejecting Christ and His gospel of love, through ignorance and prejudice. Their opinion about Christ is based upon what they have wrongly heard from some source, or in what they might have seen in some who claim to be Christians but are not living the life of a Christian. I urge, one and all, therefore, to please investigate what true Christianity is; because it is not simply a religion, but it is the Way of God for all people. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," Christ had pointed out. "No one," said he, "comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6). Do not reject Him, therefore, before you have investigated His life and mission on earth; who He was and what He has done for you; and what He

offers you. But the desire or the decision for becoming His follower must be your own. Remember, too, that becoming a follower of Christ demands self-denial and taking up of ones' own cross daily! Let no one deceive you that by becoming a Christian all your life's problems would be solved; or your various diseases would be healed; or that you would receive some sort of physical or monetary help. Beware of such preaching!

Are There Many Ways To Heaven?

J.C. CHOATE

In the religious world, including both those who believe in Christ and those of other religions, most believe that there are many ways to heaven. They explain that even though different roads may be taken, all are headed for the same destination. That sounds good, but that is not what the Bible teaches. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6). Here Jesus is saying that there is but one way to heaven, and that he is that way.

Who said that there are many ways to heaven? Jesus did not say that, and neither did those who know what the Bible teaches on this subject. Those who say that there are many ways to heaven are those who believe all kinds of things concerning heaven and how to get there.

On another occasion Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." (John 10:1). Now I didn't say that but Christ said it. He is the way to heaven and therefore Christ says that when one tries to go another way then he is a thief and robber because he is trying to go a way that he has not authorized.

It is true that in this world there are many roads to travel to go to a particular destination, and most people apply that same idea to spiritual matters. They picture themselves as travelling different roads that will lead them to heaven, but Jesus is the one and only way to heaven and he has not seen fit to authorize any

other way.

But thinking about the many roads that lead to a particular city, suppose you are officially authorized to take only one of these routes. In that case you would have to take that one way to keep your boss pleased with you. If you took another way, not only would you be going against the wishes of your boss but you would also lose your reward at the end of the way. So it is with the spiritual way. Christ has authorized only one way. He is that way because he came into this world to live among men and to die on the cross, to be buried, and then to be resurrected, to assure man of salvation. If he paid that kind of price then he has every right to make it clear what he expects of one if he is going to save him and take him to heaven. In this case, there is no other way.

The scripture reveal that the Lord has but one way to save man, one church for him to be a member of, one name for him to wear, one way for him to worship, one way for him to live, and one home for his soul. If this is enough then to take one to heaven, why would it not be sufficient to take all to heaven, that is, all who will submit to the Lord, and follow his directions in all things?

The Bible says there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one body or church, and one hope. (Ephesians 4:4-6). There is also one way to worship, and one way to live, that is, being faithful unto death. (John 4:24; Revelation 2:10). There will also be but one judgment, and one heaven and one hell for all eternity. (Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 25:46).

With the foregoing being true, why would there be more than one way to heaven? What would be the reason for it? Surely the Lord knows what is best for man and he has prepared a way, one way for him to be saved, and one way to heaven. Christ says that the majority will be on the broad way that leads to destruction but only a few will be on the narrow way that leads to heaven. (Matthew 7:13, 14).

Which way are you going? We urge you to let Christ be your way, the only way that leads from this world to a home in heaven with the Lord forevermore.

“You’re Lost!”

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

Rachel sat very still, holding the sleeping Timothy. He had played energetically all morning, so he was more than ready for his afternoon nap and had nestled contentedly in her arms as she rocked him to sleep, singing softly. Her heart swelled with thankfulness for such a precious baby—such a precious gift and responsibility. He was growing strong and healthy, with an alert expression in his eyes as he seemed to be watching everything going on around him. “What will you be?” Rachel asked, stroking his dark hair. “What differences will be made because you lived? How well we guide you? I pray that we will help you to learn that God must be the most important One in your life.”

Rachel was surprised to hear Andrew at the door. “Is something wrong?” she asked, laying Timothy in his bed and going to Andrew. “You’re home from work early!”

“Nothing’s wrong. But I was thinking about the studies we’ve been having and suddenly a terrible thought came to my mind! We’ve been so intent on understanding what the Bible says and about how those early people were saved and about the church, wondering which church to join, and all of those questions. But, just now at work, I thought, “You’re lost, Andrew! You see yourself as a good person, obedient to civil laws, good husband and father, so you’ve been feeling comfortable in all these studies. But the truth is, *you’re not saved!* If you died this minute, you’d be lost eternally. As much as you think you love Jesus, *He’s not your Savior! You’re not a Christian! You’re lost!*”

“Oh, Andrew!” Rachel said, sudden tears forming in her eyes. “You make me look at us as God must be seeing us! How could we have been reading all of these things and studying all of these questions without realizing the urgency of obeying God, so that our sins could be forgiven and we could be safely born into His family?”

"I don't know," answered Andrew with a puzzled frown, "but the question now is, 'How are we going to be baptized?' There's no one here who's teaching just what we've been reading in the New Testament, so there's no one to baptize us."

They sat in silence for several minutes, studying over their problem. Finally Andrew said, "We know that baptism is a burial in water, and. . ." Picking up the Bible he turned to Acts 2:38 and read, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." So we understand *how* baptism is to be done, that it is for the forgiveness of sins, that it marks the beginning of a new spiritual life."

Rachel also opened her Bible and turned to a verse she remembered reading in Matthew. "Before Jesus went back to heaven, He told the apostles here in Matthew 28:19, 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

"And the place in Romans—where was that?" Andrew questioned as he turned pages. "Here it is, Romans 6:3,4: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

"Now, let's write on paper each of the things we've learned about salvation from these verses," Andrew suggested. "First, because we believe in Christ as God's Son, we repent of our sins before we can be baptized."

"Don't forget that Philip told the Ethiopian that he could be baptized if he believed in Christ, and so he made a confession that he believed that Jesus is the Son of God," Rachel reminded.

"Yes," agreed Andrew. "Jesus had said that we have to confess Him before men if He is to confess us before His Father. So the confession must be made. Then baptism itself is in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; it's for the forgiveness of sins; the one who is baptized receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, making him alive to God instead of being dead in

sin. Baptism is a burial in water, because the sinner goes down into the water to wash away his sins, as Jesus was buried, and then he comes up out of the water as a new creature before God. As the sinner obeys God in these things, he is born again—we read that in John 3—and God adds him to Jesus' family, the church He had promised to begin when He was talking to the apostles in Matthew 16."

"So in this process," Rachel said, "we are doing what was described in Romans 6: being buried with Christ in likeness of His death so that we can be resurrected like Him too."

"O.K." Andrew concluded, "so we know exactly *how* to receive forgiveness, *how* to be baptized, how to become a part of the church — at least, *according to all of these verses we've read in the Bible.*"

"But what can we do about it?" asked Rachel.

"Well, suppose we go to the Baptist preacher and tell him all of these things we've learned, exactly what the Bible teaches about salvation and baptism and His church, and then — what do you think about asking him to baptize us in just this way? Not according to Baptist doctrine, and not to be joining the baptist church, but so that God can add us to His church?"

"Oh, Andrew, what a wonderful solution to our problem!" Rachel exclaimed, jumping up to give him a hug. "Let's call and see if he would be willing to do that, and when we can come over!"

Later that night Rachel and Andrew sat in the darkness of their bedroom. Though no words were being spoken, the feeling of sweet peace was strong between them. Finally Rachel reached over and took Andrew's hand in hers. "This has been the best day of our lives! Before, the day of our marriage was the best, and then the day of Timothy's birth, but nothing can be better than knowing that we are forgiven, and that we can truly call God our Father."

"Yes," Andrew responded. "Probably Mr. Thomas wasn't too happy about baptizing me according to our understanding of the Scriptures, since it differed so much from his, but I'm thankful he did it."

"And I'm so happy I thought to ask you to baptize me,

Andrew. It makes it even more special that it was by your hands that I could be born again. Knowing that everything we've done has been exactly as we've read in the Scriptures gives me such a feeling of joy and contentment in my heart."

"Me too," agreed Andrew. "But this is only the beginning. Jesus told his followers to go into all the world and preach the gospel. You know, Rachel, we feel alone just now, not knowing if there are other Christians just like us in the world. I believe there are, and surely we'll find them. But until then, we have so much studying and growing to do. If we're the only voice here in this town, speaking out for just what the Bible teaches, then we have a huge responsibility. How can we understand these truths and not live them before our family and friends, and how can we keep quiet and not try to teach them what we've learned?"

"The first thing is to start thinking about worship on Sunday," suggested Rachel. "In order to have the supper like the early church did, we have to locate the unleavened bread like they used—or surely I could make some. It would only be flour, salt, oil and water—that shouldn't be too difficult. I'll buy the grape juice at the market."

"And I'll plan a lesson from the Bible for us to study," offered Andrew. "Just think what it means to be actually going into the presence of the One who created the whole universe and everything in it, and to be *allowed to worship Him as His children and to call Him Father!* Somehow, I'd never thought before what an awesome thing it is to be able to worship God."

"I want to talk to my sister about what we've done, and also Elizabeth down the street. I believe that if they understood these things, they would want to obey God, too. Maybe they would come over for our period of worship Sunday," Rachel suggested. "That's a wonderful idea," Andrew agreed. "I've already been talking to John who works in my office. I'll ask him if he wants to come Sunday. It's so exciting, just thinking about being able to help people we love understand the truth, so that they can be saved too."

Then Andrew turned to Rachel, taking her hand in the darkness. "All along we've been praying, asking God to help us understand what we were studying. Now, we can pray in this new relationship, as His children." He bowed his head. "Our

Father in heaven, thank You that You have helped us to understand and to be able to obey You. Thank you that we can go to bed tonight with the peace in our hearts that comes from being forgiven and knowing that we are saved. Thank you that we can worship You and that we can share these precious truths with those we love. Most of all, thank You that we can teach Timothy as he grows, so that he will also be saved eternally. You've blessed us with so much, Father, and we thank You for Your love and the love of our Lord Jesus. Help us, now at the beginning of wearing the name 'Christian' never to shame that name by our speech or behaviour, and help us to be faithful to the commitment we've made to be Your children. In Jesus' name we ask these things. Amen."

To be Continued . . .

How Is Your Health?

FRANCIS DAVID

A lot of time we see, people enquire about our health. Some of our well-wishers want to know that how we are doing. Our loved ones and our friends are concerned about us and they are interested in knowing about our well being. We ourselves are also conscious about our health. There is no doubt that we want to keep ourselves fit and healthy. There are some who do a lot of exercises and also take all kinds of vitamins in order to keep themselves healthy. On the other hand we find, many people who are not concerned about their health and therefore get all kinds of diseases. Its all because of carelessness. If we are careful, we will try to keep ourselves healthy.

Now we come to spiritual side, and we see many are spiritually sick. Apostle Paul, while writing to Christians at corinth, some of who were spiritually sick, he said "Many are weak and sick among you" (I Cor. 11: 30). In I Timothy 4:8, he gives more importance to the spiritual exercises, and he puts it in this way by saying "for bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and

of that which is to come." Its good to have physical exercise but it is more important to have spiritual exercise because it has more value.

As children of God, His own people, are we spiritually alright? Are we walking as he wants us to walk. Are we following the Lord with all sincerity? If you are not walking with God rightly then you are in darkness and are spiritually sick. Apostle John says: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him (God), and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth." (I John 1:7). Writing again to Christians, Paul says: "If you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.Therefore he says in order to keep yourselves healthy spiritually, you *put to Death* your members which are on the earth: Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry. He says further that once you walked when you lived in them, that means when you were spiritually sick. But now to keep yourselves spiritually healthy you **MUST** put off all these things: What are these things? Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds. (Col. 3:1-10).

Have you obeyed the gospel of Jesus. The gospel is good news about Jesus. The good news is that Jesus died for your and mine sins. He was buried and resurrected from the grave on the third day. Today he is our saviour and Lord. He has power to save you from your sins. This gospel has the power to save you from your sins. (Rom. 1:16). If you truly believe in Jesus and obey the gospel, you will be saved from your sins. If you are in sins and sick spiritually, please come to him, confess him as the Son of God, (Mt. 10:32-33, Acts 8:36), repent of your sins (Acts 2:38, 18:19), leave the sinful life, and then be buried in the watery grave of baptism, that means you need to be baptised for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 22:16). Now after doing these things you will be a Christian and as a Christian you need to keep yourself healthy and fit spiritually. As servant of Jesus Christ, you need to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing your labour is not in vain in the

Lord. (I Cor. 15:58).

In Revelation chapter two and three, we read some churches were spiritually sick and Lord had to warn them about their spiritual sickness and he told them that they need to repent. Today if anyone is spiritually sick or if a congregation has any spiritual sickness the time is to repent (Rev. 3:19). How is your health?

The Importance Of Consistency

BRIAN WAKEFIELD

As most people see it today, the worth or greatness of something is demonstrated in how consistently it performs its purpose. A good, dependable car is one that starts, runs, and drives the same way on a day-to-day basis without troubles. A great quarterback is a player who is consistent in his play, completes passes, and carries out the instructions of his coach. Consistency, by our own standards is a crucial element in being considered "good." We want our children to consistently bring home good grades, and we require our employees and fellow workers to be consistent on the job. With all this talk about consistency, we sometimes forget an important question - am I consistently living my life for Christ? When people see my life, do they consistently see someone who stands for the truth and demonstrates love? Keeping in mind that Christianity requires us to be responsible for our own actions, let's take a look at "consistency."

In order to live consistently, we must know our purpose. Our Lord said in the sermon on the mount, "*Ye are the light of the world*" (Matthew 5:14). Our purpose is to spread the gospel of light in a world of spiritual darkness. In 1 Corinthians 1:21, we read that "*it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*" God not only chose preaching to save the lost, but he also chose us to do the preaching! Later on in Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul says, "*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase*" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

We preach the gospel of Christ to them that are lost, and whether we plant the seed or water the plant, all the glory goes to God! Glorifying God should motivate us to live as consistent to the word of God as possible.

Secondly, in order to live consistently, we must know our **debt**. In Romans 3:23 we read, "*for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" Every man is a sinner and in need of God's grace and forgiveness. Before we can strive to be consistent with the perfect word of God, we must first understand that we are imperfect and are saved by God's grace. Because of our sin, we are not worthy of eternal life, and because of that amazing blessing, we owe our lives to our Father.

Lastly, in order to live our lives consistently, we must know our **Lord**. The only man to walk this earth and lead a perfect, sinless life was our Lord Jesus Christ. He left us with an awesome example of Christian living. Of course, we will never be able to live as he did, but part of being a Christian is striving to walk as he walked. Peter, in writing about the day of the Lord, charges the brethren to "*be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*" (II Peter 3:14). Being blameless is to live your life in such a way as to give no one a reason to blame you for any wrongdoing. In other words, to live as consistently as possible.

We have all heard the saying, "practice what you preach." How important that is! Your life is what confirms the gospel that you preach as being the truth to people who know not God. How can we speak of the love of God if it is not evident in our own lives? Our prayer should be that we, as Christians, strive to live our lives consistently.

Within Thine Own Power

GLENN A. POSEY

Luke says, "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part,

and laid it at the apostles feet. 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? While it remained, was it none thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:1-4). Note the two questions: Was it not thine own? And, Was it not in thine own power?

1. Your body is within your own power. Paul said, "Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" (Romans 6:13). Actually our bodies belong to God. He has just loaned them to us for a while (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). But, everyone makes a decision how the physical body is used. It is "within thine own power."

2. Your talent is within your own power. No accountable being is empty handed of talent. It is obvious that some have more talent than others, but God expects each person to do what he can, in keeping with his talent (Matthew 25:14-30). Use your talents for the "glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

3. Your money is within your own power. Just remember, "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Solomon said, "There is a sore evil, which I have seen under the sun, namely riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt" (Ecclesiastes 5:13). Jesus said, "He which is faithful in that which is least is also faithful in much" (Luke 16:10).

4. Your influence is within your own power. The Bible says, "For none of us liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself" (Romans 14:7). Man is not an island within himself. Your influence is like your shadow, it is there, either for good or bad. Just remember it is within your own power.

5. Your soul is within your own power. You can either save it or loose it (Matthew 16:24-26). God wants you to save it (2 Peter 3:9). But, it is your decision or choice, it is within your own power. Obey the gospel and be saved (Romans 1:16).

The decision/choice is within your own power. God said, ". . . I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Improving Attitudes Within The Church

1. Remind yourself over and over that you are not perfect, therefore, you would not fit into a congregation of perfect people, if such a congregation existed.

2. Instead of picking out the worldly hypocritical members of the church to point to, pick out the sincere, dedicated, spiritual members and thank God for them.

3. If you are old, treat the young with the consideration you desired as a young person. If you are young, treat the old with the respect you will want when you are old.

4. When you are tempted to criticize the elders, deacons, minister, Bible teachers, and other Christians, pray earnestly for them first. This will not only have an effect upon them, but it will do wonders for your own attitude.

5. When you see work being neglected, instead of being critical roll up your sleeves and get to work.

6. Never blame others for your own failures. Every individual can be faithful to God in spite of the bad examples and discouraging attitudes of others, if he/she is determined to be.

7. Remind yourself everyday that the only way you can improve the world and church is to begin with yourself. Make self-improvement a daily goal for yourself.

How Do You Want To Be Treated?

MIKE BENSON

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and The Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). The "Golden Rule." While it may not be possible to get the world to put this principle into action, imagine what a difference it would make if the church would do so. Consider the following:

How we treat others, regardless of how they treat us, is

an expression of the depth of our FAITH. *A deep and abiding faith expresses itself in ACTS OF LOVE. Love even when our first inclination may be to fight back. "[Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, Love never fails. . .]" (1 Cor. 13:4-8a). John urged, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in DEED and in Truth" (1 Jn. 3:18).*

A weak and shallow faith expresses itself in ACTS OF VENGEANCE. When we do not show love to our enemies but strike back at them, we are usurping God's prerogative to mete out justice. *"O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs. . ."* (Psm. 94: 1a; cf. Nah. 1:2). *"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). Man is incapable and unqualified to mete out justice on his own. He doesn't have all the information. He wants to "get even," and then some. Returning evil for evil is the practice of the world; returning good for evil should be the practice of the church. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. . . For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:43-45a, 46-48).*

How we treat others, regardless of how they treat us, is an expression of the SINCERITY of our heart. Sincerity expresses itself in SELFLESSNESS. The golden rule always seeks the highest good of others (Lk. 10:30-37). Paul told the church at Philippi, *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Phil. 2:3).*

Hypocrisy expresses itself in SELFISHNESS. *"Woe to you,*

scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matt. 23:23).

I knelt to pray when day was done,
And prayed, "Lord, bless everyone;
Lift from each heart the pain,
And let the sick be well again."
And then I woke again one day,
And carelessly went on my way;
The whole day long I did not try
To wipe a tear from any eye.
I did not try to share the load
Of any brother on the road;
I did not even go to see
The sick man just next door to me.
Yet, once again when the day was done,
I prayed, "Lord, bless everyone."
But as I prayed, to my ear
Came a voice that whispered dear,
"Pause, hypocrite, before you pray,
Whom have you tried to bless today?
God's sweetest blessings always go,
By hands that serve Him here below."
And then I hid my face and cried,
"Forgive me Lord, for I have lied;
Let me but live another day,
And to live the way I pray."

How we treat others, regardless of how they treat us, is an expression of our Submission To God. Submission expresses itself in OBEDIENCE. The golden rule says, "No matter how you treat me, I'm going to treat you the way I would like to be treated." *"For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and*

suffer for it, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps 'Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth' who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:20-23; cf. Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60; 2 Tim. 4:16; Rom. 12:20-21).

Some years ago, an article appeared in The Reader's Digest which advanced this important truth. It was entitled, "Anyway:."

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds. Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.

Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you've got anyway.

While submission expresses itself in obedience, rebellion is SIN (1 Jn. 5:17a). The golden rule is not some cafeteria-style principle which we can choose not to follow (Matt. 5:38-42). Our Lord did not give His life on Calvary so that we could live as we so choose. Rather, He died in order to provide us with an opportunity to live as God chooses for us (2 Tim. 3:12). Dear Christian, please remember this — ill-treatment at the hands of others (including and especially our own brethren) does not

license you to sin (Acts 16:16-25; 1 Cor. 6:6-7) in return!

We cannot mistreat others and then expect them to treat us kindly in return (Acts 8:3; 1 Tim. 1:13; Acts 9:26-27). *How do you want to be treated?* With compassion? With understanding? With forgiveness? Then how do you treat others? Think about it.

Do You Like A Challenge?

JOHNNY RAMSEY

There is no greater challenge than being a Christian nor richer reward for one's endeavor than pursuing the way of righteousness. If there were no eternity, judgment day, heaven or hell, still, by far the best way to live upon this earth would be the life of a genuine Christian. The demands of the gospel make better people of us and make us far more valuable to those about us as we strive to walk in the footprints of Jesus (1 Pet. 2:21). But it is not an easy way to traverse though the effort is well repaid. Even the Savior marked the roadway as one of self-denial (Luke 9:23) and Paul referred to the necessity of bringing one's thoughts and actions into subjection in order to be victorious as a Christian (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 10:5). Some folk cannot meet the challenge of the gospel because of their lack of conviction and desire. How sad it is to realize that many who once were loyal servants of Christ have now turned back to libertine existence because of the appeal of fleshly appetites (2 Peter 2:18).

The demanding nature of Christianity is based upon the integrity of the Bible. The depth of the sacred page is beyond the shallow pace of earthly existence and millions are just not willing to pay the price of stalwart devotion to the Man of Galilee. It takes no effort at all to follow Satan while the Redeemer will accept only the finest devotion (Luke 14:33). It will not work to try to compromise the integrity of the Scriptures to mesh with the lackadaisical attitude of mankind. Jesus made it clear that the message of salvation could not be compromised (John 10:35; 15:3). The poet pungently reminds us:

We have traveled together
My Bible and I,
Through all kinds of weather
With smile or with sigh,
In sorrow or in sunshine,
In tempest or calm,
Thy friendship unchanging,
My lamp and my psalm.

What consolation the precious Book divine is to all faithful students of its delightful contents. The message of the Bible provides a richness that demands the best within us!

Christianity is challenging because it is built upon the deity of the Master. He has the words of eternal life (John 6:68), a name above all others (Phil. 2:9) and a glory unsurpassed (John 14:6). To the King of kings we owe allegiance that propels us into a sojourn that people of the temporal world cannot fathom (Acts 4:13). Even Napoleon, in his famous speech to General Bertrand, admitted that "the spirit of Christ overawes me." As another leader of men later wrote, so we believe as well, that our blessed Lord supersedes all rulers, armies, navies and heroes that ever lived in power, splendor and influence.

The impact of Christianity challenges us also because it is promulgated by the great commission and not by some bombastic plan set forth by mankind. The parting words of the Savior prior to going back to heaven are so simple and yet so profound. Nothing could have permeated the Roman Empire so successfully as the humble servants of the crucified Nazarene pressing the claims of the Messiah upon that profligate society. The early saints "went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4) and soon the message of redemption covered the ancient world as the waters cover the sea!

Truth never dies. The ages come and go,
The mountains wear away; the stars retire,
Destruction lays the mighty cities low,
And empires, states and dynasties expire,

But caught and handed onward by the wise,
Truth Never Dies!

Christianity demands our very best because it is demonstrated by purity of life. The basic, fundamental values of the religion of the Son of God can best be seen in the dedicated demeanor of fervent disciples of the Lord. Too many times the world received a faulty impression of the way of the Cross because of our failure to portray the ethics of godliness. There is an enthralling stanza in a seldom used gospel song that ought to ring in the ears of every Christian:

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity;
May His spirit divine all my being refine,
Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

In Philippians we learn anew of the intense value of power of a life that magnifies Christ and shares the message of the Redeemer with others! Oh, what demands the gospel place upon the devotees of the Saviour!

Christianity is great because it brings optimism, hope and joy into the daily walk of children of the heavenly Father. Trusting in the Creator (Proverbs 3:5) instead of earth's vain trinkets gives us the enrichment that only the hope of heaven can bequeath to us. We never look back to a life of sin but ever press on to the beautiful home of the soul. As parents we choose early in life to indelibly etch into the mural and fabric of our children's lives that this world is not our home (Heb. 11:10).

A careful man I ought to be;
A little fellow follows me;
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he will go the self-same way.

Let us, therefore, meet the challenging nature of Christianity with a firm commitment and deep resolve that, one day by the grace of God, when the saints go marching in to glory, we shall be there!

Destroy The Seed Of Evil

DAVID WADE

Aesop relates the story of the farmer sowing hemp seed in a field where a swallow and some other birds were hopping about picking up their food "Beware of that man!" said the swallow. "Why, what is he doing?" asked the other birds. That is hemp seed he is sowing. Be careful to pick up every one of the seeds, or you will regret it said the swallow. The birds paid no attention to the swallow's admonition.

By and by, the hemp grew up and was made into cord and the cords into nets. Many of the birds who had despised the swallow's advice were caught in nets made out of that very hemp.

The moral of the story is, "Destroy the seed of evil, or it will grow up to your ruin."

How well this fable illustrates the teaching of Paul, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:7-8).

Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!" (Numbers 23:10). Balaam could not die the death of the righteous because he had lived the life of the wicked (Numbers 31:8,16). Peter describes Balaam as one "who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15). Truly Balaam reaped what he sowed. It has been said, "Sow a thought, reap an act Sow an act reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny."

Jesus said to the rich man who lifted up his eyes in torment, "son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise, Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented" (Luke 16:25).

All need to learn the lesson by admonition and not by experience that God will render to each one according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). Paul states the choice clearly, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put

to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13).

Each day we are sowing seed. We are either sowing the "seed of the kingdom" or the "seed of evil." Which is it?

Tongue Control

LEVI SIDES

On a windswept hill in an English churchyard stands a drab, gray slate tombstone. This stone bears an epitaph not easily seen unless one stoops and looks closely. The faint etching reads:

Beneath this stone, a lump of clay,
Lies Arabella Young,
Who, on the twenty-fourth of May,
Began to hold her tongue.

To the physician the tongue is a two-ounce slab of mucous membrane enclosing complex array of muscles and nerves that enables one to chew, taste and swallow. How helpful!

The tongue is the major organ of communication that enables one to articulate distinct sounds so other can understand. How essential!

Without the tongue, no mother could sing her baby to sleep tonight; no attorney could defend the truth in court; no minister could preach the Gospel; no teacher could stretch the minds of students; and no military officer could lead his men in battle. Seldom do people pause to realize just how valuable this little muscle really is.

But the tongue is as volatile as it is vital. James wrote:
"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity:
So is the tongue among our members,
That it defileth the whole body,
And setteth on fire the course of nature;
And It is set on fire of hell.

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents,
And of things in the sea, is tamed,
And hath been tamed of mankind:
But the tongue can no man tame;
It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (James 3:6-8)

James tells the three powers of the tongue: the power to direct, the power to destroy and the power to delight (James 3:1-12). James gives two illustrations with each of these three powers of the tongue. With the power to direct, he uses the illustrations of the bits in the horses' mouths and the rudder on the ships (James 3:3-4); with the power to destroy, he uses the illustrations of fire and the animals (James 3:5-8); and, with the power to delight, he uses the illustrations of the fountain and the fruit trees (James 3:9-12).

The tongue can ignite flames, which quickly spreads, wrecking reputations, destroying friendships, breaking hearts, and rendering worthless a man's religion! On the other hand, the tongue can speak many wonder-working words as "I am sorry;" "I was wrong, will you forgive me;" "I love you;" and, "You are an inspiration to me."

God has always been concerned about the use of the tongue. Two of the Ten Commandments refer to the sins of the tongue: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.." and "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:7,16).

"These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him." Three of these have to do with the tongue: a lying tongue, a false witness, and he that soweth discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Jesus warns: ". . .that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. . .and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matthew 12:36-37). The half brother of Jesus wrote: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James 1:26). "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Solomon wrote: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is

wise" (Proverbs 10:19). "He that hath knowledge spareth his words . . ." (Proverbs 17:27). "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). ". . . a fool's voice is known by multitude of words." (Ecclesiastes 5:3). David's prayer included: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. . . Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 19:14; 141:3) "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." (Proverbs 25:11).

If you are tempted to reveal
A tale to you someone has told
About another, make it pass,
Before you speak, three gates of gold.
These narrow gates: First, "Is it true?"
Then, "Is it needful?" In your mind,
Give truthful answer. And the next
Is last and narrowest, "Is it kind?"
And if to reach your lips at last
It passes through these gateways three,
Then you may tell the tale, not fear
What the result of speech may be.

Speech is a marvelous gift from God. Properly used, it brings Him honor and glory; improperly used, it profanes His great name. A controlled tongue helps ensure abundant life (1 Peter 3:10); and, an uncontrolled tongue brings promise of everlasting torment. In the day of judgment we will face the record of our word (Matthew 12:36-37). Arabella Young began tongue control too late!



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