

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## *Editorial*

### **What Does the Bible Teach?**

***"God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows,  
that he will also reap"***

This is true spiritually and it is also true physically. We do not expect to reap wheat, if we have sown rice; and we do not expect to reap tomatoes, when we have sown potatoes. We get what we put. We cannot expect to have a generation of people who are God-fearing, morally upright, who respect their parents and the elderly, when they have not been taught to fear God, and live good moral lives and respect their parents and the elderly. In fact, parents today have no time to sow the right seed. They are too busy. On the other hand, T.V. today has become a great seed-sower in today's society everywhere. Seeds of worldliness are being sown in the minds of this generation from their childhood through T.V. and Cinema and filthy literature. What we are witnessing around us today has been foretold in the Bible in the long ago, in these words: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy

3:1-4).

"Do not be deceived," says the Bible, "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." How does a man sow to the flesh or to the Spirit? I believe the answer is supplied to us in 1 John 2:15-17 in these words: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

God has not only created man, but He has also given to man His will in His book—the Bible, and He expect from man to know His will and do what He says. When man does such things which God has not taught him in His book, but, in fact, has condemned them, not only man tries to mock God but he also sows to the flesh by doing such things. On the other hand, when man listen to God and does that what God has asked him to do, by doing this not only he shows his love and respect for His creator, but he also sows to the Spirit, and therefore, has the promise of God that such a person will live with God forever in His heavenly home.

God is not the respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). He has given the choice of heaven and hell to all people alike. We have been given the power to sow whatever we want to reap. We have been created free being. We can choose to obey Him or refuse to obey Him. We can choose to worship Him in the way he has asked us to worship Him, in His book, or we can choose to worship someone or something else. He does not force us to do His will. It is upto us to believe in Him and to accept His Book—the Bible as His will for us. God will not send a person to hell. He is love. He wants all to repent and be not perished in hell. (2 Peter 3:9). Each one of us has a choice to make. We shall reap what we sow!

# ***New Religious Practices***

**J.C. CHOATE**

The religious world is constantly changing. There are practices today that were not even thought of just a few years ago. There are new churches, new names, new ways of worship, new leaders, new teachings, and new philosophies.

Among the Pentecostals, for example, this practice has developed in recent years: people who want to be "healed" or to have a special "anointing" of the Holy Spirit are lined up on the stage. The celebrity preacher stands before them, and as he walks by he reaches out to touch them. One by one they fall backward as though they have been "hit" by some invisible power and are passing out or becoming unconscious. As they fall, someone positioned behind each one catches them and lays them down on the floor. Recently, on TV I saw such a preacher in such a performance. He merely waved his hand in the direction of the line-up and the people began to fall backward. Others tried to pick them up, and they would also be "knocked down". He began to laugh and to mock them, saying, "I challenge you! Reach out and pick him up!" When the person would try, he would again be "hit" by the invisible stroke of power being wielded by the preacher. I felt sick, just watching such mockery being made of the Holy Spirit and the portrayal of Him and His work in the New Testament. No where do you read of such shams and performances. Throughout the Scriptures whenever you read of people realizing they were in the presence and the power of God, their response was one of awe and even fear. We never read of anyone being "knocked down" by the Spirit, or of anyone laughing and making a mockery of the power of God.

In more recent times the Pentecostals have begun explaining that the speaking in tongues that they do is a heavenly language. Again, where in the scriptures do you read of such? Speaking in "tongues" is completely misunderstood by these people. Only the Apostles, and those they laid their hands on, were able to speak in tongues or languages they had not studied. But when they thus spoke, everyone understood what they were saying. Please read Acts 2 where the Apostles began to speak in tongues and the

people responded by saying, "*How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*" Of course "tongue" here meant "language". When the Apostles spoke in tongues or languages, they were not making unintelligible sounds but they were speaking in the languages of their hearers, so that they could teach them about Jesus and what they should do to be saved. There is no "tongue" or language-speaking today as practiced by the Apostles. That was for a special time for a special purpose.

Another practice of modern-day Pentecostals is lifting up their hands and going through all kinds of gyrations as they sing and pray. Their actions would only cause onlookers to question a religion that would lead them to behave as they do. Again, we do not read of such practices in the scriptures.

Here we have people claiming to have *the baptism of the Holy Spirit*, and therefore **the guidance** of the Holy Spirit, but we find them practicing and teaching many things that conflict with the Scriptures. In the first place, though many different groups of Pentecostals claim to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they themselves are **divided, practicing and teaching things contradictory to each other, with each one claiming that they are right and the others are wrong.**

In the next place, these people are in churches that we do not read about in the Bible, wearing names that have nothing to do with Christ, teaching people that they can be saved by saying "the sinner's prayer", and engaging in several unscriptural practices in their worship. For instance, they (1) use mechanical music in worship (Ephesians 5:19), they (2) take up collections on days other than the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2), and then they (3) fail to partake of the Lord's Supper each first day of the week. (Acts 20:7). Out of five parts of worship as mentioned in the New Testament, it is amazing that they have missed three out of the five! And all the while, they claim to be led by the direct power of the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writing of the directions in the New Testament! In this, as in many other of their teachings, they would have God's Holy Spirit to be contradicting Himself!

Speaking of "the Sinner's prayer", many religious groups encourage those who accept Christ to repeat this so-called prayer to be saved. No where do we read in the scriptures where anyone

was ever asked to say such a prayer. Rather, Christ commanded that the gospel should be taken into all the world, promising that those who believe and are baptized will be saved. (Mark 16:15,16).

You are encouraged to go to the scriptures to know all the Lord requires you to know to believe in Him and to obey His will to be saved. When you do this, the Lord Himself will add you to His church, the one He promised to build, the one He died for, the one He is saviour of, and the one that wears His name. Only then can you be saved and have the hope of eternal life.

## ***The Lord Is Coming Back***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

Time and time again people have speculated the coming of Christ, We know the Lord is coming back but we don't know when. Many false teachers had predicted times and dates of second coming but they failed, The Bible says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father (Mk. 13:32). Can you imagine the angels and even the Son are ignorant about his, coming back. But he will surely come one day. One man by the name of William Miller set the date 1843, but he did not come. Then he said it would be in 1844 but again he failed.

In Acts chapter 1, beginning from 9th verse the record says as Christ was going back to heaven, "Now when He had spoken these things while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Verses 9-11). The Lord is surely to come but not on this earth, as many teach and preach that He is going to come here to reign for one thousand years. The Lord will not set His foot on this earth. Why? because this earth and its works will be burned up. This is what we read in the inspired Scriptures, "But

the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (2 Pet. 3:10). The Lord's people will meet him in the air or clouds. According to apostle Paul, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord, (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

In the first century and till today people always doubted about the Lord's coming but we know and we believe that He is surely going to come back. Peter says, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:8,9). The Bible says, "The Lord has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world." (Acts 17:31). When the Lord comes there will be a judgment and we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, You will be there, I will be there and we will all stand there, Paul tells in 2 Cor. 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Can you imagine such a day is going to come? This day will be the day of accountability, as we read in Romans 14:12, "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

Friends, the Lord is coming back, but we don't know when. We need to be watchful, for the Lord said, "WATCH therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42). Are we ready for his coming? The Lord said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—"lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. "And what I say to you, I say to all: WATCH" (Mark 13:35-37).

# *Jesus—The Anointed Saviour*

T.R. DOHLING

"The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all" - 1 Timothy 1:15.

Here we have Paul, the Apostle to the nations, concisely reminding us of solid and vital truths by which we can confidently live, fully accept and confidently pass it on to others.

"Christ Jesus came into the world." He Who was one with the Father in eternity, became the Anointed Saviour, Whom the one eternal God sent into the world and chose to use, by His representative life, death and resurrection, to restore divine relationship with sinful humankind. Throughout the gospel according to John, Jesus personally claims to have come from God. Among all humanity, Jesus alone enjoys unique relationship in both identity and in purpose with God (read John for confirmation and be impressed by Jesus' sayings regarding Himself in relation to the Father). Paul refers to Jesus' dual identity as the God-Man in passages such as Romans 1:1-4, 2 Cor. 5:16-19, 8:9; Gal. 3:16-20; Phil. 2:5-11; Colossians 1:12-20 and 1 Timothy 3:16.

Jesus' primary mission in coming to earth was "to save sinners." This was the specific purpose for His coming (Matthew 1:21). Teaching and setting an example for living were secondary in nature and He invites us to learn from Him and to follow Him personally. Jesus means Saviour. That was His mission on earth. We humans needed saving for we were sinners (Rom. 5:8). Because of our sin, we were enemies to God (Rom. 5:10). We were helpless to save ourselves (Rom. 5:6). So, God intervened by stepping in and doing for us what we needed done, but could not do for ourselves. Through Jesus' atoning death and sinless, eternal life, God removed the hostility that separated us from Himself and rescued us from every dark and destructive power that kept us from God's goal for our lives now and forever (Rom. 5:10). God punished Himself, in Jesus, for our sins! (See Isaiah 53.) He poured out His wrath on His only begotten Son, Jesus the man, and was satisfied.

Jesus was delivered up to die because of our trespasses and raised up from the dead because of our justification. We have been justified because of our faith in God's redeeming work done in Christ Jesus. We have peace with God because of Jesus' obedient life and death. Jesus' obedience on our behalf, satisfied God's righteous requirement. Through Jesus, we have access to God's grace (justification, peace). We stand before God because of God's grace revealed in Christ Jesus! We have been justified by Jesus' blood. We are saved from God's wrath by Jesus (see Rom. 4:25-5:9).

By one act of righteousness, obedient death on the cross, Jesus justified us before God and imparted eternal life to us (Rom. 5:18). Even as Adam's disobedience led to many being made sinners, Jesus' obedience makes many righteous. These are the ones who trust in (believe) Jesus' finished work on their behalf, repent of their sins, confess Jesus as the Son of God and their Lord and publicly display their faith in Jesus by obeying His command of immersion in water (being baptized). Our salvation hinges on Jesus' righteous act on our behalf! When hanging and suffering on the cross, people mocked Him saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself (Matt. 27:42). Though He could have, he refused to come down (save Himself) from the cross. Jesus remained on the cross because He didn't come to save Himself, but sinners. Jesus Himself said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10) and "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47).

How have you received this news? Do you, like Paul, acknowledge yourself to be a sinner, one for whom Jesus died? Then come to the cross in repentance, acknowledging Jesus as God's Son and your Saviour, be immersed in water as He commanded and be reconciled to God. Then keep walking with the Anointed Saviour into eternity.

## ***"I will, be Thou Clean"***

**KABITA GOOTAM**

A great multitude of people followed Jesus, when he came down concluding the sermon on the mount. Among them was a



leper who begged Jesus to heal his illness. He felt the fatal power of the terrible disease. His illness separated him from the society. He knew only God can heal him. He must be listening to Jesus' sermon from a distance and was told the wonders which Jesus was performing.

Faith comes from hearing. He heard Jesus, believed in his words. He believed him, as the Son of God, who only could heal him. He came to him for mercy. He said, 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean' (Matt. 8:2). From his approach, he expressed his willingness to be clean and His faith in Jesus' healing power. He did not say, 'Lord, I know you can heal me!' But here he begged for Jesus' willingness to heal him. He begged for his mercy.

From this incident we can derive an important lesson for our lives. First of all, the leper's willingness to be cleansed. It was natural on his part. We know about Naaman, the leper. He also earnestly wanted to be clean. He travelled all the way upto Samaria, believing the information he got from the little servant maid. Another man laid for thirty-eight years by the pool of Bethsaida, wanting to be healed. Jesus asked him, "wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6). And healed him. The woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, had a strong desire to be healed. She said to herself, "If I may touch his clothes, I shall be whole" (Mark 5:28). She came to Jesus when great multitude of people were around him. She touched his garment and was healed.

Jesus put forth his hand, touched the leper and answered, 'I will, be thou clean'. Jesus want everyone to come to him and get the healing touch. As the leprosy to the body, so is sin to our soul. The redeeming power is only with Jesus. Like the leper, we have to go near Jesus for our remission of sins. If we go to him with uncleanness of our of soul, He says to us that, 'I will, be thou clean' As James has said, "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh unto you" (James 4:8).

The Lord said, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11). God does not want a single soul to be lost. He wills that, everyone should go near him and be clean. "Who will have all

men to be saved and to come unto knowledge of the truth". (1 Timothy 2:4). The death of the wicked is due to their own will. He wills to die, who travels in the 'Broad way' of death. The sinner wills his death by disobedience to God's word. So the wicked die in their sin. God does not desire their death, but earnestly desires their salvation and prepared the plan of salvation. The Lord turned Saul into Paul, for he had a strong zeal to serve the Lord. The Lord sent Phillip to the Ethiopian eunuch, for he had strong desire to know the truth. The Lord sent Apostle Peter near Cornelius, for he had a strong desire to lead a righteous life.

God expressed his will to save us by sending his only begotten Son to die for us. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Roman 5:8). God expresses his will to save us by giving the word, The word of God - the scripture. "All scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching for reproof for correction for instruction which is in righteousness that the man of God may be complete furnished completely unto very good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17). God expressed his will to save us by establishing the church. God expressed his will to save you by letting you hear his word through the preacher, through literature, tracts, radio and TV etc.

Jesus' will is to save you, to clean you. Do you have the will? Prophet Isaiah said. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." (55:6).

## ***Good News!— You Can Be Sure***

**DAVID THURMAN**

Are you saved? Are you sure? This is one of those issues that has bothered believers for many years. Can a person know if he or she is saved? Some have gone overboard, teaching an unscriptural position. According to these people, once you are saved, you are always saved. That is, you cannot lose your salvation. God never taught this, and the Bible is full of examples of individuals who were in covenant with God and still were cut off due to their sinful choices.

So, because "once saved, always saved" is not biblical, some have gone to the other extreme. Their approach seems to be, "once saved, maybe saved." That is, they contend you can never know for sure if you are right with God, you can never be confident of your salvation. Today, the good news is, you can be sure you are saved.

*"And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 John 1:5-2:2).*

In the above verses, the apostle John tells us of our assurance. He is refuting the idea you can live anyway you want and still call yourself a Christian. And, he is refuting the idea that sinful people cannot know they are saved. Lets take a closer look at this good news.

### **GOD IS LIGHT - NO SIN ALLOWED**

*"God is light, in Him there is no darkness at all."* John doesn't want us to misunderstand. God does not save people in their sin, He saves them from their sin. God doesn't tolerate sin and accept sinners. He is light and will not be where darkness is. In fact, God's presence drives away all darkness. Sin and sinners will not be comfortable in the presence of God and His holiness.

So, John warns us we cannot live in darkness and think we are living with God. People who choose the world and its ways will not be with God. People who choose sin and make selfishness their goal cannot have fellowship with God. This means that believers who choose to return to a sinful life cannot have

fellowship with God. This is a deception from Satan. John tells us that we are not living the truth, but instead, we are living in darkness.

### **GOD IS TRUTH - NO DECEPTION ALLOWED**

Several times John speaks of walking in the truth, or doing the truth. God is truth and will not tolerate lies. In this passage the great lie is that you can live any way you want and God will still save you. Instead, we are to walk in the light. That means we must accept God's holiness, His standards and his will. When you walk in the light, you are not perfect, but you are willing to admit and confess your sin. God's presence in our lives shines light on who we are and how we live. Instead of running from that light, we accept it and use it to repent and change our ways.

Walking in the truth is not sinlessness. John says we can never claim we have no sin. In fact, walking in truth means we honestly admit our failings. We cannot deceive ourselves into thinking we are sinless. We will not foolishly think we are good enough to be in God's presence. Walking in the light will expose our failings. Walking in truth means we will know and admit our sins.

### **GOD IS MERCIFUL - NO GUILT ALLOWED**

John wants us to see how merciful God is. He tells us that if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father who will intercede for us. When we walk in the light, we have nothing to fear. Our sins are cleansed and we are kept holy in God's presence. God did not send Jesus to die for you so you would continue to wallow in your guilt. *"He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again"* (2 Cor. 5:15). He sent Jesus to free you from your sin and from the guilt that comes with sin.

This cleansing does not come from your goodness. As John says, we can never say we are not sinners. You will never live your life in a way that you do not sin and don't feel the guilt that comes with sin. But God sent Jesus to cleanse you from that guilt, and to keep you cleansed of that guilt. John says it plainly, *"If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us*

from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin, all the time. The Greek language says it even more strongly than our English translations. The Greeks says, "*The blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing us from all sin.*" The Greek describes continual action that constantly keeps those walking in the light cleansed of their sin. There is no guilt in the blood of Jesus.

But, what is included in walking in the light? John will give us three things that describe people who walk in the light.

### **WE ARE SINNERS**

The blood of Jesus would not need to keep us cleansed if we were not guilty. We are sinners and John tells us to face that fact. We did not live well enough before Christ to stand in God's light. We will not live well enough in Jesus to stand in God's light. It is the blood of Jesus that allows us to walk in the light.

This is hard for many people to grasp. If we are sinners, how can we be sure we are saved? Because walking in the light means we accept our sinfulness. It means we examine ourselves in God's truth. We accept his judgments of right and wrong as they apply to our lives, to our hearts. In the honesty of self examination by God's light we will see our sin clearly. We will not pretend we are holy. We will accept the will of God that we must change. We will live in such a way as to constantly be repenting and refining our walk with God.

### **WE MUST CONFESS**

John says, "*If we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us.*" This is much more than merely admitting mistakes. This is the humility that comes from a person who realizes he or she cannot stay out of sin. We cannot say we are not sinners. We must say that we are unworthy before God's holiness.

Any time people confessed their wickedness, God was quick to forgive. The willingness to stand in God's holy light and allow Him to expose our sins is the attitude God is seeking in all of His children. So, if you want to be sure of your salvation, develop an honest heart that admits sin. Develop a humility that confesses before God. Develop the spirit of brokenness.

## **WE LIVE CLEAN**

The good news is that we are clean before God. He is light. He will not put up with our darkness. God sent Jesus, allowed His blood to be shed to cleanse us and keep us clean. We now live clean before God, because of what He has done for us. The reality is that we must be clean to come to God. But, we are never clean because of our sin. So, God uses the blood of Jesus to keep us clean, so we can be sure of our salvation.

Your assurance does not depend on you, it depends on God. If you are honest and confess your sinfulness, God will cleanse you with the blood of Jesus, daily, always, continually. Your assurance of salvation is based on what God does for you in Christ, not on your ability to be good enough. If you walk in the light, you can know you are saved, because God says you are.

### **BE CLEANSED IN THE BLOOD**

The most critical part of all this is the blood of Jesus. Without His blood you and I would have no chance to walk in the light and be clean. You can be sure of your salvation if you are cleansed by the blood of Jesus. How can you come into the blood?

*"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom. 6:3-5).* The apostle Paul tells us where and how to contact the blood of Jesus. The Roman Christians had been baptized into Jesus' death (His blood). They had been raised to walk in newness of life (walking in the light). Since they had trusted in God to cleanse them in their immersion, they had assurance. Paul tells them (and us) that if we experience the likeness of Jesus death (baptism) we will experience the likeness of His resurrection. Life will be different, we will be walking in the light.

You need to put your faith in His plan to save you. You need to admit your sinfulness and confess your sin. You need to come

into the death of Jesus to be cleansed by His blood, and let Him keep you clean. Then, you can be sure you are walking in the light.

## **Best Things in Life**

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

Money cannot buy the *the peace that passeth understanding*" (Phil. 4:7). Fame cannot compare with the satisfaction one gets from *"seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* (Matt. 6:33). Prestige among men is not even a hollow facsimile of a closer walk with the Lord the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:10). Athletic ability will never measure up to spiritual varities: *"Exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come"* (1 Tim. 4:7-8). Special honours from the elite always come in second to the sacred word of Jesus: *"Enter into the joys of thy Lord."*

People living in the luxury of houses worth crores fancy automobiles, boats, summer houses and constant entertainment - must admit that "the best things in life are free." The beauty of nature - a babbling brook, a shady forest, a snowcapped mountain - often thrill us far more than all of the performances and "rides" of the finest amusement park or the greatest sports activity. Truly, the psalmist captures this salient point: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, And night unto night sheweth knowledge"* (Psa. 19:1-2).

One of the best things in life is knowing that we have spent one day in the service of the Master. Many times, late on Sunday night, after preaching and teaching four or five times that day, I have had the most satisfying calmness flood my soul. The privilege of proclaiming God's sacred Scriptures had overwhelmed me. Leading lost souls out of darkness into light had been the burden and urgency during the day the Lord had made. There is no grander feeling in the world. Praise God for the honour of

serving Him! Sadly, many have never comprehended the joy of such a moment. It reminds me of Rom. 5:5, "*The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us,*" and, "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice*" (Phil. 4:4).

It may seem strange to include the following observation in an article on the best things in life, but, nevertheless, I never cease to thank God for the power, beauty and comfort of the Bible, when I'm called upon to console an audience during a funeral service. Especially have we noticed the impact of the Word upon the bereaved family. I have preached at funerals where flowers worth thousands of rupees also paled into nothingness as far as real comfort was concerned. What a joy it has been to let the Bible speak to broken hearts and swollen eyes and lonely spirits and to observe the deep compassionate tenderness of its tones upon the lives of those present. Money cannot buy the things that really count.

Can any earthly transaction even touch the hem of the garment when placed beside the abiding grandeur a parent basks in when his "*children walk in truth*" (3 John 4)? What supreme blessings we enjoy when beloved offspring grow up to shed abroad the glory of Christ to their fellows! To hear a son preach the gospel, lead singing, direct minds in prayer, teach a Bible class or take charge of the Lord's Supper - and do so in reverence and in depth - truly makes every parental effort worthwhile. I have always thought Prov. 23:26 was powerful: "*My son, give me thine heart.*" But there is one thing greater: sons and daughters who give their hearts to God!

May God help all of us to so live that, as parents, when we come to die, and our children stand over our lifeless forms, they can honestly say: "Daddy was a Christian" or "Mother was a genuine follower of the Lord." The best things in life are free, but we must work diligently to make them come true!

### **THE SOUL OF A CHILD**

*The soul of a child is the loveliest flower  
That grows in the Garden of God. Its climb is from weakness to  
knowledge and power,  
To the sky, from the clay and the clod.*



*To beauty and sweetness it grows under care,  
Neglected, 'tis ragged and wild. 'Tis a plant that is tender and  
wondrously rare,  
The sweet, wistful soul of a child!  
Be tender, O gardener, and give it its share  
Of moisture, of warmth and of light. And let it not lack for thy  
painstaking care  
To protect it from frost and from blight.  
A glad day will come when its bloom shall unfold, It will seem that  
an angel has smiled,  
Reflecting a beauty and sweetness untold, In the sensitive soul  
of a child.*

## **Christian Please Come Back To The Lord!**

**BOB DANKLEFSEN**

Several years ago, after reading through part of the New Testament, I remember getting on my knees and asking, "What must I do to be saved?" I had been reading about the apostles and early Christians who were willing to be beaten and even die for Christ, (Hebrews 11:35-40). This moved me to want to be like these early Christians who accepted Christ not only as Saviour but also as Lord. (Galatians 2:20).

After obeying the gospel, I knew for the first time that I had a purpose for living. I belonged to Jesus and had received the promise of spiritual blessings in this life, (Mark 10:29, 30) and life in heaven for eternity. (1 Peter 1:4).

Christian, as you think about your own spiritual condition, can you with confidence say that you know for certain that you will be with God throughout eternity? The Lord says that we can know, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life," (1 John 5:13). Paul said that he knew that he had eternal life, (2 Timothy 4:6-8). If you can not answer "yes," consider this message

seriously.

If on the other hand you answered, "yes, I have eternal life," answer if you will, what would be some characteristics of a person who had fallen away from Christ. Would he no longer exhibit a consistent and regular prayer life? (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Would those at his place of employment say, "He used to be so pure in his conversation and actions, but now he's different," (Ephesians 4:22-25). Would he deliberately absent himself from the worship services and Bible study? (Hebrews 10:24, 25). Would he no longer be with and exhort Christians several times a week? (Hebrews 3:12, 13).

The reason I ask these questions, is that sometime back, I talked to someone who said, "Don't worry about me, I'm alright, I still believe in God and Jesus." I know that this individual attends the services only periodically, and that their employment takes first place in their life, (Matthew 6:33). Then it was brought to my attention that God looks upon one behaving in this manner as an *unbeliever*. Notice how clearly the Lord describes people having these characteristics, "And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who *disobeyed*? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their *unbelief*," (Hebrews 3:18, 19). When one refuses to obey the Lord's commands, God counts this as unbelief. (Luke 6:46). Note what the Lord teaches concerning the unbeliever, "But the cowardly, the *unbeliever*, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolators, and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death," (Revelation 21:8).

Today, there are many Christians who once walked in the light, (1 John 1:7). Yet, now they do little if anything at all to reflect a Christ controlled life. What once was a life with meaning on earth and the joy of a promised eternal inheritance, became a life of disinterest and will eventually result in eternal anguish. (Hebrews 10:26-31). This need not be the case in your life. Let's look back to the day God's word was sown in your heart.

## **GOOD NEWS CAUSED YOU TO ACCEPT THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST**

You may remember how God showed His concern for His creation by sending a member of the Godhead to earth to become a man. (John 1:1,14). This Jesus was tempted to sin just as we are today. (Hebrews 4:15). Yet He never sinned, (1 Peter 2:21-24). God's Word teaches that Jesus voluntarily took our punishment on the cross, so we would not have to pay for our crimes, (Isaiah 53:4-6). Then the third day after His crucifixion, He raised from the grave to show us that Christians need not fear death, (1 Corinthians 15:20; John 8:51). Today, as a man, (1 Timothy 2:5) Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father to plead for Christians as their lawyer, (1 John 2:1,2). Some day He will appear in the heavens to reward the faithful and to punish the lost including unfaithful Christians, (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Romans 11:22).

## **YOUR OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL**

You may remember the day that in trusting faith you decided to turn from a life of sin, repent, and be buried with Christ in baptism, (Romans 6:1-6). As you arose out of the watery grave, you realized that the Lord had erased from His mind every sin you had ever committed, (Acts 2:38). The assurance that you possessed was that as long as you walked with God as a faithful Christian, He would continue to wash away your sins through Christ's blood, (1 John 1:7).

## **DRIFTING AWAY FROM THE SAVIOUR**

Normally when one departs from Christ, it bothers him at first. Then as time passes, it becomes easier and easier to miss worship and fellowship with the saints. Sadly, many progress to the point of no return. The Hebrew writer states, *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."* (Hebrews 6:4-6).

## **WHY DO CHRISTIANS TURN AWAY FROM THE SAVIOUR?**

Some very quickly go back into the world, (Luke 8:13). God's word tells us of numerous people who have turned away from the crucified Saviour. Hymenaens, Alexander, Demas and Simon of Samaria are a few who left the Lord, (1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 4:10; Acts 8:18-21).

It is difficult to list any one reason that causes Christians to fall away. One thing is evident there is no desire to let Christ be Lord. (Romans 14:9).

1. One reason people go back into the world is because their mind is on worldly things. This may start while one is still faithfully attending all the services of the church. Jesus in His description of these worldly disciples says in the parable of the sower, "The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries and pleasures, and they do not mature," (Luke 8:14). Often these unprofitable servants fall away.

The opportunity to make extra money by working rather than worshipping God on Sunday has led many to eternal ruin. Surprisingly, many who never intended to let their work interfere with their service to God, are spiritually starved to death, (1 Peter 2:2) and they die from a lack of knowledge, (2 Timothy 2:15; Hosea 4:6).

2. Others fall away because of laziness and the desire to get involved in things not characteristic of the Christian life. After being away from the Lord's people a short time, often they try to justify their absence by saying, "I don't want to worship with all those hypocrites."

Many people sadly enough use this for an excuse not to worship the Saviour of the world. Apparently they have never stopped to think how by actively serving Christ they can, by example, lead the hypocrite out of his hypocrisy.

3. Family pressure may draw Christians away from the truth and back to Satan. Jesus spoke of this influence when He said that those of one's own household may cause a Christian to leave the faith, (Matthew 10:34-39). Such a person is not worthy of

eternal life. I have personally seen senior citizens living in a nursing home turn their life over to Jesus only to have their children ridicule and mock the Lord's church to the extent the new Christian never again worships with the family of God.

4. False teachings have led people from the Lord's Church into man made organizations. Pressure from a marriage partner or other relatives have drawn many away, especially those who do not study the Bible diligently. Paul told Timothy, "Turn away from godless chatter and the opposition of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith," (1 Timothy 6:20). See also 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Corinthians 11:3,4, 13-15).

5. Pain, sickness, and death of a loved one have caused some to leave Christ. The Father did not withhold these things from His own Son. Satan is the author of sickness and death. For example, the sin of fornication brings venereal disease yet who is often blamed? — God. See 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

6. Even racial prejudice has led many to their doom. Paul had to correct Peter for this very problem, (Galatians 2:6-14). Jesus, a Jew, died for all races, (Hebrews 2:9). Since God is no respecter of persons, do we have the right to be? (Acts 10:34, 35).

### **AN ACCUSATION NEVER MADE BY A FALLEN CHRISTIAN**

On many occasions I have heard accusations brought against Christians by an unfaithful member. The Lord says that Christians will sin (1 John 1:8-10). And He also requests that differences be settled between parties in the church, (1 Corinthians 6:1-6).

There has never been an accusation against Jesus in all the discussions I have had with fallen Christians, yet this is the one they reject by failing to worship and serve Him, (John 14:15).

I once heard of a Christian woman who because of her deep love for Christ would come home from worship and then her husband would beat her for going to church. She never complained as each Sunday this hideous act was performed on her. Soon the novelty wore off and eventually her husband

became a Christian. This woman chose to lay up treasure in heaven rather than to escape pain, (Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 11:24-27).

### **CHRISTIAN, PLEASE COME BACK TO THE LORD!**

Please come back to the Lord. Contact a church of Christ in your area and through repentance and the prayers of concerned brothers and sisters you will be able to rejoice that your name once again will be recorded in heaven, (Hebrews 12:23).

The Father awaits with open arms, (Luke 15:11-22). Please come back - please!!

## ***Josiah, The Mistaken King***

**W.A. HOLLEY**

Following the entrance of Israel into the land of Canaan it was God's divine purpose to govern them through Judges. These were 15 in number — Othniel being the first; Samuel, the last one.

In the course of time the people became dissatisfied with God's way of ruling them and demanded a king to rule over them. We read, "When Samuel was old, ... he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his first/born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah: They were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice" (I Samuel 8:1-3).

The conduct of Samuel's two sons represented no weakness or fault of God's system of government; but it did show a marked and shameful disregard of his will. When elders, deacons, preachers, and other members 'mis-live' their high calling, it does not mitigate the will and way of the Lord. The Lord's law is right, even if all the members of the church go wrong!

The people of Samuel's day demanded a king to rule over them. "We will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (I Samuel 8:19-20). How foolish! Instead of God's ruling over them, they wanted a king. In our time many are dissatisfied with God's way (the New Testament way), but desire

a Pope, or a bishop or denominational machinery to rule over them. Such wish to be "like all the nations."

In due time a king was granted them. Saul, David, and Solomon reigned for 120 years. Then the kingdom was divided: Two tribes, Benjamin and Judah, became the Kingdom of Judah, with Rehoboam their first king. The other ten tribes, under Jeroboam, became the Kingdom of Israel - a rebellious kingdom. In these kingdoms some rulers were good, and some were bad. Idolatry and apostasy became the order of the times.

It was during one of the darkest periods of Jewish history that Josiah King of Judah was born. He was a subject of wonderful prophecy: "And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of Jehovah unto Bethel: and Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar by the word of Jehovah and said: O altar, alter, thus saith Jehovah: Behold a son shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which Jehovah hath spoken: Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out" (I Kings 13:1-3).

Here is one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible. This prediction was about 350 years before the event took place. The child to be born was "Josiah" whose name was called 350 years before his birth! How could the "man of God" have known? The answer is found in that he spake by the inspiration of the Spirit of God (Cf. II Timothy 3:15-17; II Peter 1:20-21).

The prophecy mentioned in I Kings 13:1-3 finds its fulfillment in II Kings 23:15-16. Josiah was on the throne of Judah. He came to Bethel, the right place. The Bible says: "Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, even that altar and high place he brake down; and he burned the high place and beat it to dust, and burned the Asherah. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount; and he sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and defiled it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these things."

Josiah made war against idolatry throughout the land. He destroyed everywhere high places, groves, images and all outward signs and relics of false worship. He restored the Temple, finding therein the book of the law of Moses, which he endeavoured to impress afresh upon the minds of his people. Perhaps, his greatest day was the celebration of the Passover (in his 17th year) which had long been neglected. He was a great reformer!

What was Josiah's mistake? He was a meddler. He became involved in affairs which were not his own. Pharaoh-Necho was on his way to wage war against Assyria, but Josiah attempted to intercept him, and was slain in battle near Megiddo. We suggest that our readers turn to II Chronicles 35:20-27, to learn of the sad fate of Josiah. Josiah seems to have been 'spoiling for a fight;' he should have known that it is never right to intrude into the affairs of others. But Josiah would not listen when he was told to stop his efforts to interfere in the affairs of Pharaoh: "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house where-with I have war; and God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not" (II Chronicles 35:21). Despite the foregoing warning, Josiah would not control himself: "Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight against him, and hearkened unto the words of Neco from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo" (Verse 22).

In the battle that followed, Josiah was mortally wounded (verses 23-24). Here is a man who should not have intruded into the affairs of another. Should we not learn from this incident?

"He that passeth by, and vexeth himself with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears" (Proverbs 26:17). In the New Testament we read: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:15-16).

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