

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## *EDITORIAL*

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

***"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."***

This is the message of the entire Bible. Nothing is more valuable in this world than the soul of man. Throughout the centuries man has been trying to find a way to free himself from sin and thus to become able to enter heaven where God is. Man himself has devised many different ways to please and appease God by worshipping Him in various ways and forms and by offering Him all kinds of offerings. Man knows that he is in sin and that he needs salvation from his sins to become worthy to live with holy God in His heaven. God too knows that there is nothing that man himself can do to redeem himself from the wages of sin, which is eternal death or separation from God. Yet man is the crown of God's creation. God loves man so much that the Bible says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). In the Bible is the message of God for man that when man was lost in sin; God became man and came on earth to save man from sin and to give man the opportunity to become in Him the righteousness of God. In Jesus Christ, the Son, God came on earth!

"For when we were still without strength," says the Bible at Romans 5:6-8, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man

someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Christ died for us. For our sins He died. Instead of us He took the wages of our sins upon Himself. This is Good News. This is the Gospel. Paul, one of the apostles of Christ, explaining the message of God wrote: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, *that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them* and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Christ, therefore, said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6). He is the way of God. But there is also a way of man, as the Bible says in Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the death." As long as man remains on earth he has the opportunity to make the choice which way he wants to travel. God does not send no one to hell; those who reject God's way will themselves be responsible for going there.

## **Unity Of God's People**

**J.C. CHOATE**

God has always had a people. He will continue to have a people to represent him as long as time shall stand. Without such people then there would be no purpose for the world to continue. God's people represent him; they represent what is good and right. They are the light of the world, the hope of the world.

One of the things that God has always wanted in his people is that of unity. That is because he has always wanted them to be together, to be united, and to be one. God's people, and the unity of God's people, represents God himself, and that is beautiful to behold. It represents power and influence for good.

At the same time, God hates division. Solomon said, "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief. A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:16-19). Jesus said, when he was being accused of doing his works by the power of Satan, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." (Matthew 12:25). Paul exhorted the Christians of his day, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Romans 16:17, 18). So in all of these verses of scripture, and many others that could be given, we can see how God frowns on division and why he is opposed to it.

We know that the religious world is divided, and even among those who claim to represent God and his Son Jesus Christ, there are so many opposing groups. The believers are in all kinds of organizations, churches, and groups. They preach different doctrines, worship in different ways, and engage in different types of work. But God is not divided and his people are not divided. The majority of the religious people of our day do not worship and serve God, but rather follow the teachings of men. This is so sad because the masses of the people are confused and find it difficult to tell who represents God and who does not. Of course this would not be difficult if they would but read the scriptures and come to know the truth about God, his people, and their work.

While the world sees the division, the word of God is emphasizing peace, oneness, and unity. Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth, "Now I beseech you, brethren by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10). Even while Christ was on the earth, he prayed to his Father concerning his apostles and those that they would convert, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one

in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John 17:20-23). Please notice that Christ prayed there that we might all be one. Are we one? Are we doing what we can to help answer the Lord's prayer? Unity among God's people will do more to encourage unbelievers to become believers in Christ than all the public preaching that we might do. There is nothing like practicing what we preach. In Ephesians 4:1-6, the apostle Paul writes, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." While we might discuss the oneness of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and so on, with profit, I would especially like for us to think about the one body here, since the body represents the church and the church represents God.

As stated, the one body here has reference to the church. Paul defined the body as the church when he said that Christ "is the head of the body, the church: who: is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Colossians 1:18). Now if there is but one body, and it is the church, then that means that there is but one church. But which church? That would be the one that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18), the one that was established on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem, in approximately A.D. 33 (Acts 2), the one that Christ died for, is head of, is saviour of, and the one that he is coming back for one day. (Ephesians 5). It is also that church that wears the name of Christ (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 12:27), and the one in which its members are called Christians. (Acts 11:26). Now this is the one church of the Bible. It belongs to the Lord, serves the Lord, worships him, and represents him. These are God's people. They are one in Christ and Christ has promised to be with them unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:20).

Those who will believe in God, and believe in Christ as being

his Son, will repent of their sins, will confess Christ as the Son of God, and will be baptized for the remission of their sins, then the Lord has promised to save them and to add them to his church. (Hebrews 11:6; John 14:1; Matthew 10:32; Acts 2:38, and Acts 2:47). If all would do that then all would be members of the same church, and all of the believers in Christ would be unified. How wonderful that would be, and what a blessing it would be to the whole world. Regardless of what others do, let us be sure that we obey the Lord, and that we become what he would have us to be—his children and his people. Being united in Christ then that makes God's people one with God. Our Father will accept nothing less than that.

## ***The Spirit And The Bride Say, "Come!"***

**THOMAS DOHLING**

"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." - Revelation 22:17.

Testifying to the churches in Asia Minor in the book of Revelation, and to His churches in general, Jesus says, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to each one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Rev.22:12, 13). Reading further in verses 14 and 15: "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie."

Jesus states His Being and inherent authority in verses 12, 13 and 16. He is the Supreme One especially to His church or assembly of followers, those devoted to Him. It is through His people that He appeals to those who are spiritually thirsting. The invitation to "take the water of life freely" is for "whoever desires." There has to be a thirsting and a desiring for things spiritual. With a hungering, thirsting and desiring, one could never be satisfied. The deep emptiness people experience in spite of great worldly possession arises from being spiritually dry and barren.

Jesus is one with His bride, the church. He is the Spirit inherent in His bride. He carries out His purpose in the world through the church, His physical representative on earth, to reach out to the lost and spiritually thirsting souls with the invitation: **"COME!"**

The Father has been merciful. He has poured out His love on humanity and He joins in imploring lost humanity to look to the cross where Jesus, His only begotten died, having become the sacrificial Lamb which takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus says, "My reward is with Me, to give to each one according to his work" (v. 12). The work begins with doing "His commandments" (v. 14). Those who obey "have the right to the tree of life" and are granted entrance "into the city." Eternal life in the presence of God is assured here.

Life is very short. It is gone before we even realize. Are you coming to Jesus? Will you heed His voice and the church's invitation to "Come!" There is much to gain in being reconciled to and united with the ONE Who is Eternal. It is an assurance of our eternal being. So, come and "take the water of life freely."

## **Persistence**

**ROY BEASLEY**

Who is an "over-achiever"? Studies have been made and books have been written on the subject. What makes an over-achiever different from the ordinary? What is the secret of their success? The answer may be surprising. One common trait was discovered. Not a high IQ. Not good fortune. Not special advantage. It was *persistence*.

When Winston Churchill became old and feeble, he was invited to speak at a graduation. Against the advice of his friends and family he accepted. When the time came for him to speak, he rose from his seat and walked slowly to the podium. There he stood silent for a long time looking over the audience. His aids became nervous. The audience became restless. Then he spoke. He said: "Never give up. Never give up. Never, never, never." Then he sat down. That perhaps turned out to be one of the most memorable speeches he ever made. And perhaps it was the best advice that

graduating class ever received.

While persistence may appear to be a simple virtue, Jesus stressed its importance. It is essential in every area of life — even in prayer. The Lord taught that we *"ought always to pray and not to faint (or lose heart)"* (Luke 18:1). We are to pray and pray, and keep on praying. Don't give up. To illustrate His point, Jesus told two stories. One involved a friend who came during the middle of the night requesting bread. Although the man was in the bed and was annoyed at this late-hour visit, he responded to the persistent knocking. The point is that if a friend will answer such an appeal, how much more will our Father in heaven respond to us? (Luke 11:5-8). Jesus concluded by saying in verse 9, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

The second illustration was that of a widow who kept coming before an unjust judge to make her request.

*"...There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, Neither regarded man; And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet Because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.*

*"And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, Though he bear long with them. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"* (Luke 18:1-8).

The point is that if this cruel judge would respond to the persistence of a poor widow, how much more quickly will God listen to the prayers of His saints?

Jesus also taught persistence in faithfulness and preparedness. He described a *"faithful and wise servant"* as one who continues to do his duties in the absence of his master. He said, *"Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods"* (Matthew 24:46,47).

Yes, persistence pays. It becomes our greatest strength when it is anchored in God. As Winston Churchill said: "Never give up — never, never, never."

# Why We Believe In God

GEORGE W. DEHOFF

Can we prove the existence of God? Not to a man who does not want to see nor to one who is incapable of seeing, but can we demonstrate to the fully developed, studious man standing in the light of this age arguments which will lead him to believe in the existence of God?

## **1. We believe in God because Athelism, the only other alternative, cannot be proved.**

Every atheist occupies a forced position. Over him will always hang the possibility that there is a God. He alone claims to believe he has no maker, no creator. Before one can proclaim "There is no God" he ought to have made extensive explorations in heaven and earth, in the material world and the spiritual world, in time and eternity. Before a man can *know* there is no God he would himself have to become one — he would have to be omniscient or the one thing he did not know might be that God exists.

## **2. We believe in God because it is reasonable to believe that the eternal existence is God—not matter.**

A skeptic recently told me not to be guided by the Bible when seeking to learn of the eternal existence but to be guided by reason. It did not occur to him that the Bible might be reasonable or that perfect reason cannot be manifested by man who has always demonstrated his imperfection. Nevertheless, let us take his advice and see what reason teaches us.

Something is, therefore something always was. Had there ever been a time when nothing existed then nothing could have existed at any time for something cannot come from nothing. Had nothing existed, there could have been no event for there would have been no cause. These statements are axiomatic. *Something* has existed from all eternity.

There are but two things in existence — mind and matter. (Force is not an entity but the energy manifested by one or the other.) As to the eternal existence but three things can be supposed: Dualism, which says both mind and matter are eternal; Materialism, which says that matter is eternal and mind is a result of certain combinations and properties of matter; and Theism, which affirms that mind is eternal and that matter is a creation of mind.



Dualism is unscientific. To suppose two eternal existences would solve no difficulty and would give us all the difficulties of Atheism and Theism. The great majority of thinkers have discarded Dualism and divided themselves into two groups. One group supposes that matter is eternal and has created mind, intellect and life; the other group supposes that mind — Almighty God — has existed from all eternity and has created the material universe. Which position is the more reasonable?

It is reasonable to believe that this eternal force was *mind*, not *matter*. (1) *Mind is superior to matter*. Mind knows but matter is the object known. Mind moves and modifies matter. Matter is the servant of mind. The chemist is greater than the chemicals which he handles and the mind is greater than the body which it guides and perhaps destroys. (2) *That which existed from all eternity has spontaneity and force*. Without spontaneity it would have remained dormant, without force it would have caused no event. Mind possesses these qualities. It can move bodies and cause events. Matter is destitute of these qualities. Matter remains in the condition in which it is, whether of rest or motion, until something from without changes it. Matter could have produced no change in its eternal state of rest or motion. If we are free to entertain a theory as to the eternal existence why entertain the one least likely to be the truth? (3) *The one original existence must have had other attributes which mind possesses but which matter does not possess*. There must have been in this original being all that is developed and manifested in the universe. It possessed the power to think, plan and feel. It had the capacity to love and to hate, to make moral distinctions, to choose between right and wrong. It cannot be proved that matter possesses these attributes in any degree. These powers do inhere in mind. Mind, therefore, was eternal and not matter. (The principal objection to this line of reasoning has been the childish suggestion that we do not know the difference between mind and matter. Certainly we do not know all about either but we do know something about both. They have some attributes in common as do all things which exist. The fact of existence is one point in common. Matter is known by its qualities, mind by its activities; consciousness reveals the one, the senses the other; one is dead, the other alive; one is senseless, the other full of thought and feeling; one is passive, the other active; one is amenable to physical law, the other to intellectual and moral law. It is as

reasonable to question the existence of matter as to question the existence of mind. Indeed, some philosophers have insisted that matter exists only as phenomena revealed in the mind.)

**3. We believe in God because the universe exhibits marks of intelligent causation.**

All the works of man are examples of causation. We see a house and we know it has a builder. "Every house is built by some man," and though we never find the builder, yet we will know he exists. I look at my watch. It had an intelligent maker. He possessed power. These things are self-evident. Though I never see that watchmaker, yet I know he existed and I know something about him from the product he made. In the same way, we may know that God exists and we may know something about Him by seeing the things which He has made.

Did the electric system of your city and of the nation have a maker? Then what of man's brain and spinal cord with nerves running to every part of the body? Did the telescope "just happen," did it "just make itself? If not, how could the human eye make itself? Is there an intelligent cause for the water system running to all parts of the city? Then what of the system of veins and arteries throughout the body?

Look into the sky. In the day there is the proud monarch of the sky who shakes off the sleep of night and makes his journey through space. He operates with mathematical precision. At night with the naked eye one may see as many as six thousand stars. With the telescope one may see millions of stars and suns flaming like arch-angels on the frontiers of stellar space. They do not run into one another. They do not go by chance. Men may judge planetary movement of the future by that of the past. Our closest neighbor among the starry host is twenty-five trillion miles away. The light which left this star (Alpha) five years ago is just now reaching the earth having been travelling all this time at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. Pollux, the brighter star of the twins, is thirty-two light years from the earth, a distance of 192,000,000,000,000 miles! Astronomers by present methods of calculation are able to measure a distance of 15,000 light years or 100,000,000,000,000,000 miles out into space. An astronomy teacher once said, "This shows that there is not a great God watching over one little planet called the earth." To which I replied, "On the contrary, it shows how great God is to create and direct

so many more things than men formerly supposed." David said, "When I consider thy heavens, the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8).

It is said that Benjamin Franklin, while in Paris, made a model planetary system showing the earth and the planets nearest it. Many astronomers copied it to use in their studies. One day an atheist friend saw it and asked, "Who made it?" "No one made it," answered Franklin. "It made itself, it just happened." "What," cried the man, "you're joking." "And so is the man who says the universe just happened," replied Franklin.

Two friends slept in their tent on the desert. One put his head out the following morning and said, "Some camels passed here last night." "How do you know, did you see them?" his friend asked. "Oh no, but I see their tracks," he replied. If we do not see God we see His handiwork and we know He has been here.

An atheist once said, "Show me your God. Let me see, hear, feel, smell or taste him and I will believe." To which a Christian replied, "Show me your brains—let me see, hear, feel, smell or taste them and I will believe." We cannot see life. A man waves his hand and we see the effect of life. We do not hear life. As we speak we hear only the effect of life. We do not feel life. We may feel the pulse of man but that is only the effect of life. Life cannot be demonstrated to the senses. Yet we know men live by the way they behave—and perhaps misbehave. There is life back of the action and though it cannot be demonstrated to the senses yet we believe it exists. In the same way, we know God exists because of the way the universe behaves. There is power back of the orderly arrangement, the evident design and precise operation of the universe.

If the universe exhibits design, there must be a great *Designer*; if it shows thought, there must be a great *Thinker*; if it is run by the laws of nature, there must be a great *Lawgiver*; if it operates with mathematical precision, there must be a great *Mathematician*; if the universe gives us important chemical combinations, there must be a great *Chemist*. Thomas A. Edison said that the universe is such an engineering feat, "There must be a *Great Engineer*". From these conclusions there is no escape. *God exists*.

"I do not have to open the Bible to learn that. (The existence

of God.) It is enough that I open my eyes and turn them on that great book of nature, where it is legibly written, clearly revealed on every page. 'God' — that word may be read in the stars and on the face of the sun; it is painted on every flower, traced on every leaf, engraven on every rock; it is whispered by the winds, sounded forth by the billows of oceans, and may be heard by the dumbest ear in the long-rolling thunder. I believe in the existence of a God, but not in the existence of an atheist, or that any man is so who can be considered in his sound and sober senses. What should we think of one who attempted to account for any other works of beauty and evident design, as he professes to do for those of God? Here is a classic temple; here stands a statue, designed with such taste and executed with such skill that one almost expects the marble to leap from its pedestal; here hangs a painting of some dead beloved one, so life-like as to move our tears; here, in 'Iliad' or 'Aeneid' or 'Paradise Lost', is a noble poem, full of the grandest thoughts, and clothed in sublimest imagery; here is a piece of most delicate, intricate, and ingenious mechanism. Well, let a man tell me gravely that these were the work of chance; tell me, when I ask who made them, that nobody made them; tell me that the arrangement of letters in this poem, and of the colors in that picture, of the features in the statue, was a matter of mere chance; how should I stare at him? and conclude, without a moment's hesitation, that I had fallen into the company of some drivelling idiot. Turning away from such atheistic ravings about the infinitely more glorious works of God, with what delight does reason echo the closing words of the seraphim's hymn, 'The whole earth is full of His glory!'" (Guthrie).

***4. We believe in God because the moral government of the world implies a moral governor.***

Man is a subject of moral government. His conscience tells him there is a right and a wrong and that he ought to do the right. In his heart man believes justice will be done. Since nature knows nothing of justice, there must be One above who will finally mete out justice to all. All guilty men fear the day of retribution. Martyrs to truth and righteousness in every age have committed their cases to a Higher Court. To destroy the belief that right will triumph, that there is a great Moral Ruler who will see that truth does prevail, is to remove the very foundations of moral and social rectitude.

Our faith in God gives promise of victory to those who labour for that which is good; it lets us know that our efforts can never be

futile when they are for truth and righteousness; it means that in every storm we can harbor a great tranquility within our souls. Our belief in God means that we will face life optimistically for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

**5. We believe in God because the majority of scientific men and philosophers in all ages have believed in God.**

Few indeed have been the great thinkers who did not believe in God. Socrates held that the Supreme Being is the immaterial, infinite Governor of all, that the world bears the stamp of His intelligence, that He is the author and vindicator of moral law. Aristotle believed in God, he said, for three reasons: the Ontological, founded on our necessary idea of an eternal existence; the Cosmological, based on the fact that for every effect there must be a cause, back of all harmony there must be intelligence; and the moral argument which has already been given. Copernicus and Galileo believed in God and believed the Bible also. Sir Isaac Newton, who discovered the law of gravity; Joseph Priestley (a preacher) who was co-discoverer of oxygen; Michael Faraday and Lord Kelvin, the great British scientists; Jenner, who discovered the principle of vaccination; Robert A. Milligan, who isolated the electron, as well as thousands of other outstanding scientists and philosophers of all time have expressed firm faith in God. Darwin said, "The question of whether there is a creator and leader of the universe has been answered in the affirmative by the greatest spirits that ever lived." He also said he could not conceive of the origin of life unless God had created it. Thomas A. Edison said, "There is a great directing head of things, a Supreme Being, who looks after the destinies of the world." Sir Charles Lyell, a great geologist, said, "In whatever direction we may turn our investigations, everywhere we are met by the clearest proofs of a creating Intelligence." Such testimonies could be multiplied without limit. We do not seek by sheer authority to prove the existence of God but simply to show that the multitude of common people, all Christian scholars, and all others with only an exception here and there have believed in the existence of God. The man who does not believe in God should be able to show that he has made a more profound study of the evidence than have these men, else, how does he expect to impeach their testimony?

**6. We believe in God because of the abundance of the evidence.**

Most people believe in God for reasons the sufficiency of which they have never had occasion to question. Yet, the questioning mind can find almost an unlimited number of reasons for believing in God. We decide other questions by the preponderance of evidence. Why not this one? Suggestive of the lines of proof which might be developed, a friend of mine writes that he believes in God for these reasons: Intuitional, Ontological, Cosmological, Geological, Astronomical, Physio-Theological, Psychological, Historical, Providential, and Ethical. Yet skeptics claim they cannot find any line of proof to indicate the existence of God! Shall we say they *cannot* or *will not*?

***7. We believe in God because all the objections to believing in God lie with equal force against Atheism.***

Atheists have objected to a belief in God because, they say, we seek to rise from the finite to the infinite; that from finite reasoning we seek to draw an infinite conclusion. We do, of course, seek to pass from the finite to the infinite in our reasoning. Just as the limited suggests the unlimited; as finite time suggests infinite time and finite space suggests infinite space, so finite intelligence suggests Infinite Intelligence. But the Atheist, since he claims to know that there is no God, believes that matter is eternal, self-existent and infinite. Something is infinite in eternal existence. The Atheist believes it is matter; the Christian believes it is God.

Atheists have said that the conception of an intelligent First Cause proves nothing as the First Cause would then need to be accounted for. We do not need to account for the first cause because it is the *first* cause and there could be no cause back of it. Since we cannot go back of the first cause it is more reasonable to stop at mind than matter. If this be a difficulty, however, Atheism is likewise beset with it, for if matter is the eternal existence what was before it? Matter gives no evidence of self-existence.

Skeptics have objected that we do not know God perfectly. Indeed, we know nothing perfectly. If we knew God perfectly, we would then be gods ourselves. However, matter in none of its forms is known perfectly. If we must know a thing perfectly before we can know it exists, then we cannot know that matter exists. Probably no one will ever understand a being of greater measure than himself. Some men cannot understand how others can be noble, unselfish and sacrificing. They do not have any standards by which to measure them.

Every objection which an Atheist can make against the existence of God can be made against his belief in the eternal existence of matter.

**8. *We believe in God because Atheism has insuperable difficulties of its own.***

The Atheist criticizes the Christian for assuming that God exists. He then assumes the eternal existence of matter, that the forces of this world are self-active, that the laws of the universe are eternal, and that nature continually repeats the same cycle of changes (else it would have run its course and have become inactive long ago). Atheism assumes that nature exhibits no thought, no design, no plan. Bold indeed are these assumptions and not one of them can be proved.

Atheism assigns an inadequate cause of the universe. Matter does not possess the qualities of thinking, feeling, and volition which we see in the universe. It is, therefore, an inadequate cause of the universe.

Atheism assumes that life came from dead material without outside stimuli. This would be a greater miracle than the resurrection of the dead.

Atheism maintains the absurd position that all things exist as the result of chance. Theists believe in design. The opposite of design is chance, sheer chance. A watch cannot by chance bring itself into existence, neither can a universe. If the pieces of a watch were placed together in a box and shaken for a million years they would not arrange themselves into a watch. The organs of the human body could not have arranged themselves by chance; the design of nature did not just happen. In fact, nothing runs by chance. We are justified, therefore, in believing in an Eternal Mind and in discarding chance (whatever that may be).

**9. *Intelligent causation and design is always associated with personality. God must; therefore, be a Personality, a divine Being.***

There is nothing in nature, there is no known fact, principle or law which disproves the existence of God. Atheism is without foundation. "No syllogism can be formed that will prove it, no experiment performed that will certify it." All we know of intelligent causation and design is associated with a person. We have no knowledge of abstract intelligence. We are, therefore, justified in concluding that God is a divine Personality, a divine Being and not

an abstract idea or fact. There is strong resemblance in the design of nature and the design of man. Man looks at the movable joints of his hand and makes a wrench. He observes the valves of the heart and the pulley of the eye and models his invention after them. He sees the great mountains with broad bases and the low center of gravity, and models his pyramids and tall buildings after them. We conclude that as these things are the result of deliberate planning on man's part, the universe is a result of deliberate planning on God's part.

Man must believe in God or in Atheism. These are the two positions challenging our attention. Thomas Jefferson, one of America's Presidents who was inclined to be skeptical, considered the evidence and wrote his friend, John Adams, "An Atheist I can never be." It is more logical to believe in God than not to believe. It is difficult to believe sometimes but far more difficult not to believe. Shall we say, "In the beginning *matter* created all things" or "In the beginning *Eternal Nothing* created all things" or shall we say, "In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth"?

## **Whom Do You Serve?**

**DILLARD THURMAN**

Jesus said, "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other*". (Matt. 6:24). But, in stating that no man could serve two masters, Jesus implied that man does serve some master. We are either servants of God, or we serve the devil. As the Lord said, "*He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth*" (Luke 11:23).

The apostle Paul wrote, "*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness*" (Rom. 6:16-18). The yoke of bondage is thrown off when we have obeyed the form of doctrine delivered by inspired men. They preached the gospel, as the Lord had directed (Mark 16:15), "I



*delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4). He preached the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. We die to past sins when we truly repent of them. Then in the act of baptism we are buried with those sins in the grave of water and then raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-7).*

Christ is inviting us to accept His yoke. He pleads, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). How different this yoke is from that burden imposed by Satan! The Savior pleads for us to exchange the intolerable yoke of bondage for the easy yoke of spiritual obedience.*

While wearing the yoke of bondage, we are associated with unbelievers. We stand in the same camp with all who revile Christ Jesus. We are in the devil's territory, and doing his bidding. Therefore, Paul warned, *"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18). While in bondage to sin, we are yoked together with all evil people. When we accept the yoke of obedience to the Lord, we become allied with all of God's people, the best people on earth.*

In writing to the Saints in Philippi, Paul referred to them as *"true yokefellows"* because they labored in the same righteous cause (Phil. 4:3). He made this relationship even clearer in these words, *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:19-20). Surely*

our association is much better while wearing the yoke of obedience to the Lord.

While wearing the yoke of bondage to sin, we are moved by baser desires. There the love of the world is uppermost. But we are warned, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever"* (1 John 2:15-17). Those who mind earthly things will perish along with earthly things. But those who, in obedience to God, labor under the yoke of obedience will live forever with the Father. Remember, Jesus said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15), and this makes the loyal service.

But when one dons the yoke of obedience, his love and affection is transferred to spiritual matters. To those who have accepted the yoke of Christ, it is written: *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Col. 3:1-2). Those accepting voluntarily the yoke of obedience do so in love of the Master. Our eyes are turned in love toward Him. *"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself"* (Phil. 3:20-21). Who wouldn't love a Master like this?

Those who throw off the yoke of bondage imposed by sin will find true freedom in Christ Jesus, our liberator. *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"* (Gal. 5:1). Even the yoke of the law of Moses is thrown off when we accept the yoke of obedience to Christ. Peter referred to this freedom in asking, *"Now why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"* (Acts 15:10).

There is a wonderful freedom awaiting those who accept the yoke of obedience. Jesus said, *"ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). Obeying this truth gives us

freedom (Rom. 6:16-18). It also purifies, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth"* (1 Pet. 1:22). Therefore, this is referred to as the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). As Paul wrote, *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another"* (Gal. 5:13). How all of us should desire this freedom found under the yoke of obedience to Christ!

Those under the yoke of bondage to sin are engulfed in the pollutions that mire them. These things should be far removed from those in Christ. *"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them"* (2 Pet. 2:19-22). How can anyone, having been cleansed from those worldly things, turn to them again? The whole catalogue of the pollutions is found to be the works of the flesh, warring against the spirit (Gal. 5:16-23).

But a wonderful change is effected when we accept the yoke of obedience. Paul says, *"But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Cor. 6:11). This sanctification is manifest by the works of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-23). While wearing the yoke of bondage, we are affiliated with the elements of the world of sin. *"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world"* (Gal. 4:3). Again, Paul refers to the evil relationship of those in bondage to sin: *"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"* (Gal. 4:9).

Those who accept the yoke of Christ are separated from the world. In His prayer for the disciples, Jesus said, *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"* (John 17:16). God separates His own from the world, and they stand forth as a peculiar people, *"God's own possession, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:14). God blesses those who wear His yoke of obedience: they are His people - and He is their God.

# ***Achieving Unity in Religion***

**JOHNNY RAMSEY**

First of all, there can be no "Christian Unity" unless we believe, teach and practice what Christ authorizes in the New Testament. Any system short of that would be mockery. It is one thing to agree upon the teachings of the Bible, it is quite another thing to just agree to disagree. The Lord commands to "*keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph. 4:3). If the entire religious world were united on some, doctrine that violated the Scriptures, it would not be the unity which Christ desires for us. There is a difference between union and unity. The recent "Ecumenical Councils" evidently have overlooked this fact. Were we to tie two cats together by their tails, and throw them over a clothes line, we would have union, but we certainly would not have unity!

## **Some Reasons for Religious Division**

There is only one way to achieve unity in the Lord. It cannot be a matter of legislation by any hierarchy. Synods and councils cannot vote it into reality. In fact, such complex systems in religion help to create the "Babel" of voices already in our midst. The only answer is an open heart toward the word of God! Until men are willing to put aside denominational allegiance and sectarian strife, we shall see division running rampant. The creed books and catechisms, authored by men, have helped create the problem of division that exists. If we are to achieve unity, we must leave all these behind and let Christ, the author of Christianity, rule our lives by the New Testament Scriptures.

In the United States, at the beginning of World War II, a fervent appeal was made to the entire nation. We were urged to be just Americans - not German-Americans, not Japanese-Americans, not Irish-Americans, not French-Americans - just be Americans, nothing else. We need to drop the hyphenation in Christianity, also! And for exactly the same reason - it divides people.

If we teach, practice and obey the same message that was preached in the first century, we will be exactly what Paul, Peter, Philip and Stephen were. They were Christians, members of the church which Jesus built. Nothing more, nothing less, nothing else! What denomination were they members of? Why, none, of course! We read all about the church they were members of in the New

Testament. This is unity as Christ prayed for it (John 17:20-21). Nothing short of it will suffice, *"I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Cor. 1:10). Are we willing to pay the price, to do just that? How glorious it is to be neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jew - but just to be a Christian!

### **Is the Church of Christ a Denomination?**

The church which Jesus established, according to the Scriptures, is the spiritual *"body of Christ"* over which our Lord rules as head (Col. 1:18,24; Eph. 1:20-23). The church is not a building, nor a social club, nor a denomination, nor a political organization. The church which Jesus built (Matt. 16:18), and for which he died and shed His blood (Acts 20:28), is a divine institution authorized by God and promulgated by the gospel of His dear Son (2 Tim. 1:10).

The church consists of those who have been added to it as a result of their obeying the simple commands of the head of the church, Jesus Christ. When people heard His gospel (Acts 2:16-26), *"They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved"* (Acts 2:37-38,41,47). Saved people are the church because the Lord who saves them puts them there.

### **Terms Applied in Scripture to the Church**

The church of Christ is the kingdom of Christ. Our Redeemer rules over it as *"King of kings and Lord of lords"* (1 Tim. 6:15). Christians, members of that church, are citizens in the kingdom of heaven (Phil. 3:20). And the gospel of Christ is the *"seed of the kingdom"* (Luke 8:11) and the law of the kingdom (Rom. 1:16; 2:16).

The church of the Lord is His army, and members of the church are soldiers who *"put on the whole armor of God"* (Eph. 6:11). As the apostle Paul wrote, *"We do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds); casting down*

*imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Cor. 10:3-4). Thus, the church is a militant force in the world, in a spiritual battle, not a carnal one.

The church is the bride of Christ: *"For the husband is the head of wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it. . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife . . . I speak in regard of Christ and the church"* (Eph. 5:23-32). The church, therefore, should be pure and unblemished. To the church at Philippi, Paul said, *"That ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world"* (Phil. 2:15).

What is the church? It is the "called out" group! The Greek word "*ekkelesia*" is the word from which the term "church" is derived. Literally, it means "the called out body." Paul writes that God has *"delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Col. 1:13). The apostle Peter writes, *"Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house"* (1 Pet. 2:5). The church is composed of men and women who have been called out of sin, error and shame into the kingdom of Christ: *"A people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"* (1 Pet. 2:9).

Certainly, from the above Scriptures, one can see how wonderful the church is in God's divine plan. You cannot afford to go through life without being a member of Christ's church. No, the church of the Lord established in the first century was not a denomination. The same church is not a denomination today. It has none of the characteristics of a sectarian body. According to the Scriptures, we read that the church is *"the fulness of Christ"* (Eph. 1:23) - not a segment, or part, of Him!

### **God Deplores Religious Division**

The term, "denomination," means the number of times the unit is divided. Thus, when the bank teller asks, "What denominations do you want that Rs. 500 in?" and you reply, "hundreds," you have set the denomination of hundred for each bill. That is the way the Rs. 500 is divided. In the first century, after the beginning of the

church in Jerusalem, division was condemned and never condoned. Read carefully 1 Cor. 1:10-13 where followers of Jesus were exhorted, "*Let there be no division among you*" and then asked, "*Is Christ divided?*" Would that all religious people would honestly answer that question today.

And yet we hear preachers and church leaders thank God for religious division! In every form of communication, we hear the plea, "Go to the church of your choice." This sincere, but mistaken, idea makes havoc of the prayer of our Lord in John 17:20-21, when He prayed that all those who believe might be one, even as He and the Father are. No, Christ did not shed His precious blood to purchase a denomination. The apostles did not set up sectarian groups as they preached the gospel. They simply established the church which Jesus had promised to build. That church has no earmarks of a denomination.

### **The Power of Truth**

Jesus shows us the importance of truth: "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . Father, sanctify them in the truth, thy word is truth*" (John 8:32; 17:17). We must know the word of God, if we would truly be free. One of the besetting sins of modern society is a lack of knowledge of the Bible. It really is no marvel that so much ungodliness runs rampant, because a lack of scriptural emphasis will always bring chaos into our lives. Men have forgotten Christ and the bulwark of righteousness which He provides. The statement of Solomon long ago is still true: "*Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*" (Prov. 14:34).

We need to get back to the Bible teaching with regard to proper respect for authority. The Holy Scriptures inform us to pay taxes, obey the rulers and to pray for those in authority (Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1; 1 Tim. 2). This is the only way to stop the rioting, school shootings and other forms of anarchy in our society today. The Bible alone has the answer to our dilemma. Let us have the courage to return to its sacred teachings.

You and I certainly need to return to God's word for moral purity and holiness. In an age of nudity, filth and sensuality, all of us must return to the modesty, integrity and spirituality of New Testament Christianity (Phil. 4:8). Some church councils may sanction homosexual preachers, but the Bible clearly rebukes such sinfulness (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9). It is long overdue, but we still

plead for all men everywhere to return to the wholesome purity Jesus stressed in Matt. 5:8, "*Blessed are the pure in heart.*"

There is a genuine need for each one of us to go back to the Bible for God's plan of redemption. The Lord promised, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16), and He sent Ananias to Saul to tell him, "*Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins*" (Acts 22:16). The apostle wrote in Rom. 6:3 and in Gal. 3:27 that we are "*baptized into Christ.*" Bible baptism is clearly set forth as a "*burial*" in water (John 3:23; Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), and the purpose is set forth just as clearly (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4).

Jesus promised in Matt. 16:18, "*I will build my church.*" We must go back to the Bible for that glorious body over which He rules as the head (Col. 1:18). May we all get back to the Bible - starting right now!

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#### FORM IV

(See Rule 3)

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