

# THE BIBLE TEACHER



## **LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL**

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

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## *EDITORIAL*

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

***"Old things have passed away; behold,  
all things have become new"***

When a person becomes a Christian, and tries to live daily as a Christian, his whole life goes through a constant change. This is what is called "conversion." (Matthew 18:3). Before becoming a Christian, if the individual was in the habit of using his tongue for speaking bad and foul language or cursing words, he must now use his tongue to speak such words which should impart grace to the hearer. For the Bible says to the Christian: "Let not corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." (Ephesians 4:29). In becoming a Christian one is expected to repent, which means to change one's life style or way of life in every way, and be baptized (Acts 2:38), which symbolizes or portrays the burial of the dead person and the birth of a new person in Christ. Colossians 3:8, therefore, says, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth." The Christian is no longer the old person, he is a new man in Christ.

Before becoming a Christian, if the individual was in the habit of drinking strong drink or alcohol, or was a smoker, a drug addict, or was living in a wrong relationship, or was engaging in any sinful activity, then he is no longer expected to continue in any of them as a Christian. Speaking to Christians, the Bible says, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of

God dwells in you? If any one defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." (1 Corinthians 3:16,17). Again, it says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

The Christian is a new person in Christ, inside and outside. He is now a child of God (1 John 3:1), who is holy, and therefore must try to be like Him by following the steps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21). As a follower of Christ, the Christian must constantly watch his life, and should be willing to repent of any wrong that may inadvertently enters his life. He has the beautiful promise of God, that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

By way of warning, the Bible admonishes Christians in these words: "Now the works of the flesh are evident which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21). To Christians who lived at Corinth, the apostle Paul said, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived," he said, "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Before becoming Christians some of them, to whom the apostle was writing, were fornicators, and idolaters, and adulterers, and homosexuals, and sodomites, and thieves, and covetous, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortioners, that is, they were practicing all kinds of sinful activities. But in becoming Christians, they were **washed** of all their sins, and were **sanctified** and **justified** in Jesus Christ. This also shows that anyone can become a Christian, and that there is hope for every person on earth to become worthy of heaven.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ," The Bible Teaches, "he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17). Remember, that it says, "If anyone is in Christ." The new life is in Christ. "For the wages of sin is death," says Romans 6:23, "but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." God's offer of salvation from sin, and heaven worthy new life, is in Christ Jesus. Are you in Him? (Gal. 3:27).

## *The Facts of the Gospel*

J.C. CHOATE

The scriptures clearly teach that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and then was resurrected from the grave. These incidents in the story of Jesus are referred to as the facts of the gospel. Paul mentions each one of them in writing to his Corinthian brethren, showing the relationship of their salvation to these facts: *"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: 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 Corinthians 15:1-4). In other words, the gospel of Christ rests upon these truths. Had Christ not died, been buried, and resurrected from the grave, there would have been no gospel, and therefore no salvation. But inasmuch as He died, was buried, and was resurrected, then we do have a foundation for the gospel, and therefore it has changed the world.

Just now we want to consider the facts of the gospel, one by one, to see what they hold for you and me:

### **1. The Death of Christ**

The Bible says again and again that Christ died. But listen to the word of God itself: *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of*

men. And being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

For whom did Christ die? He died for everyone as we have just noted in Hebrews 2:9. The scriptures also tell us that He died for sinners. Listen: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). But why did He die for sinners? To provide salvation and hope. We read, "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). "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 Peter 3:9).

That means that someone died for you and me. Just think about it. Although we were sinners, and enemies of God, and not deserving of such grace and mercy, nevertheless, Christ was willing to leave heaven to come to this world of sin and sorrow and to die upon the cross that we might be saved and have the hope of eternal life (Romans 5:6,7). How wonderful! But just think, He likewise died for all of the world—yesterday, today, and tomorrow. How thankful we should be, and it should result in our obedience and faithfulness to Him. How could we dare do any less?

## **2. The Burial of Christ**

After Christ died on the cross, the record says, "Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb" (Matthew 27:57-61).

In many ways there is nothing different or unusual about the Lord's burial, especially for that time. Men die every day and are buried. This is true around the world and has been true since the

creation. But the Lord had promised that if He died and was buried that He would rise again. He declared, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"* (John 2:19). Of course, they did not understand Him then, but would they have believed Him if they had understood? What happened after His death and His burial? The disciples seemed to have entered into a state of shock, feeling that all was lost. Then what happened? Jesus came forth as He promised that He would.

### **3. The Resurrection of Christ**

Had Christ died on the cross and then remained in the grave, the world would have forgotten Him, unless it might be for remembering Him as an imposter. Had He died and remained in the tomb it could be said that He was no more than any other man. But Jesus was different. He was the Son of God. He said that He would rise from the grave, and He did (Matthew 28). As a result of His resurrection, there is salvation, assurance that all will be resurrected, and the hope of eternal life.

Before going further, let us notice some verses of scripture that speak of the Lord's resurrection. *"And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"* (Romans 1:4). *"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death"* (Philippians 3:10). *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* (1 Peter 1:3). *"There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not for removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 3:21). *"Knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him"* (Romans 6:9). *"For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living"* (Romans 14:9).

Inasmuch as Christ died, was buried, and was resurrected from the grave, He is now our Lord and our Saviour. He reigns at the right hand of God (Acts 2), and has promised to come again one day (John 14:1-3).

With the death of Christ, His blood was shed that men might have the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7). It is

through one's obedience to the gospel of Christ that one comes into contact with that blood and thus his sins are remitted or blotted out (Acts 2:38; 22:16). In the lessons that follow we will see more clearly how this is done.

• Be assured, one and all, that as a result of the Lord's resurrection, He lives today. As His obedient followers, we likewise live and will reign and live with Him forevermore, even throughout all eternity.

## *All That We Have*

J. ROBERT SWAIN

Jesus never got excited with people who did things halfway. We are told in the Scriptures to dedicate ourselves to God's cause. We are told to sing *with our hearts* in Ephesians 5:19. We are told to study to show ourselves *approved* in God's eyes in 2 Timothy 2:15. We are even told to pray *without ceasing* in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. God wants us to be committed, and He delights in our efforts to please Him!

In the book of Revelation, Revelation 3:14-22, the Lord told the church in Laodicea that He wished they would make up their minds to be either hot or cold, but because they were lukewarm, they made Him nauseous. In a sense, Jesus was saying, whether it is good or whether it is bad, be convicted and committed to your cause! Don't do things halfway.

Our worship to God is exactly like what Jesus was talking about... No halfway efforts! We are encouraged to be committed, encouraging one another as we worship and show our dependency upon Him. Commitment to our worship should never be taken lightly. In fact, worship and praise to our God should cost us something.

I am reminded of the story in Genesis chapter 23, when the old patriarch Abraham lost his wife Sarah in death. Out of respect for him, Ephron, the individual who owned the piece of land where Abraham wanted to bury his wife, tried to give the old man the property. Abraham would not accept it. He surely appreciated the offer, but he was adamant that something this important should not come from someone else. The burial place for his wife had to be what he had provided for her.



When we worship, it should cost us something. We sacrifice our **time** when it would be easy to sleep in or be preoccupied with other things. We sacrifice our **will** by humbly bowing our heads to His rule, to worship Him in spirit and in truth. We sacrifice our **money** by giving from our heart to help His church function and grow.

Our worship should cost us something. Sacrificial worship and true devotion simply do not happen by accident. They require effort on our part. We must consciously make the decision to sacrifice, or it is not a sacrifice... it is an accident, or a routine, or simply a ritual!

I'm also reminded of the account found in Mark 12:41-44. Jesus was watching different individuals put in their tax into the temple treasury. Many wealthy people put in large amounts out of their great wealth. The individual who was praised by Jesus was the little widow lady who gave two coins with no practical value. The temple did not need these two coins, worth less than a penny. But *the lady needed to give them*. The tax was not a civil tax, it was for the temple, for her God. Jesus said excitedly that she had given everything she had. Nothing was held back. No halfway measures, no lukewarm worship! That's why Jesus was excited. He had found someone who got it right.

God doesn't want just a *part* of us... He wants *all* of us! Jesus was in a position to know and understand this. He was God. This was His temple. This tax was for Him. He deeply appreciated this widow's humble and dedicated act of worship. Let's follow her example and give God all that we have. No halfway efforts!

If you need a further reminder of why we give Him everything in our worship and praise, just read John 3:16 again: *"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."*

## ***"Do Not Be Conformed To This World"***

**CLEM THURMAN**

*"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed*

*to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect"* (Rom. 12:1-2). We often hear an apologetic statement, "Oh, he just hasn't been able to adjust himself to the world." It is usually spoken disparagingly. Yet, if we would only realize it, that can really be a great compliment!

Jesus Christ spent all of His life on this earth NOT adjusting to the world. He not only did not adjust to the world, He never tried. No adjustment was necessary, nor desired. Jesus stood apart from the world, and He offered no apology for refusing to conform to the world. He required the same of His followers, and told them, *"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil"* (John 7:7).

Later, Jesus explained to the disciples, *"If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* (John 15:18-19). If we will just conform to the world, then the world will accept us. But Jesus never did conform to the world, nor does He expect us to conform to it.

### **"Love Not This World"**

Christ is looking today for people who will be Christians, people who will stand forth as unadjusted individuals in a sinful world. As the apostle wrote, *"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 vain glory 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 for ever"* (1 John 2:15-17).

Jesus Christ knew that His true disciples would never become adjusted to the world in which they lived. The Lord warned clearly of this in John 15:19, *"If ye were of the world, the world would love its own."* In other words, if we expect to get along with the world, it has to be on the world's terms. When we do that, we forsake the Lord. The standards of the world say it is fine to commit adultery, lie, get drunk, read and look at sexually explicit material, curse and use vulgar language and a host of other such things. While these things are accepted by the world, Christians are not to be conformed to the world. We are called to a higher standard of morality than that.

## **"Seek the Things that Are Above"**

Those who have been *"buried with Christ in baptism"* (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) are called to look beyond this world for ideals, focus and hope. The Lord wasn't calling for us to conform to the world when He had Paul write, *"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry"* (Col. 3:1-5).

Our focus, as that passage shows, is to be on the spiritual things. Our text in Rom. 12 shows that, also. How important is your business, your home, your investments, your soul? Jesus put it in perspective in Matt. 16:24-26, *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The attitude of the Christian is expressed this way by Paul, *"Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed from day to day . . . While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen"* (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Instead of conforming to the world, we are to *"walk by faith, not by sight"* because we have become *"new creatures in Christ"* (2 Cor. 5:7,17). Our goal, focus and hope are different from that of the world.

## **Don't Let the World Set the Standard**

Too many people are wearing the name of Christ while forming a coalition with the practices of the world. Some have become so conditioned by worldly standards, that sin is not only condoned but sanctioned and joined. The line of demarcation between the world and Christ has become obliterated by such conduct. After naming various kinds of *"works of the flesh,"* the apostle Paul then warns, *"They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Gal. 5:19-21).

There is a lot of "peer pressure" with which we have to contend, at every stage of life. Teens often say, as they try to persuade their parents to give them permission for some questionable activity, "Everyone is doing it." Young adults, and older, face exactly the same peer pressure. Of course, the truth is, not everyone is doing it. And, even if they were, we still dare not let the world set the standard of morality by which we live. If we continue to allow Hollywood, Bollywood, TV and politicians to set the moral standards of conduct, our society will simply "*proceed further in ungodliness*" (2 Tim. 2:16). We are called to a higher, and better, moral standard than the world offers.

The world offers the allure of fame, fortune and popularity. Christ offers humility, meekness and service. Instead of avidly seeking after material gain, the Christian follows the injunction of the Lord: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*" (Matt. 6:33). There are more important things than bank accounts and big houses. The rich man of Luke 12:15-21 found that out. Too late!

### **The Transformation the Lord Expects**

In becoming a Christian, one is "*born of water and the Spirit*" (John 3:5), thus being "*baptized into Christ*" (Rom. 6:3-4) and being made a "*child of God*" in Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). That means that a new life is expected: "*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold all things are become new*" (2 Cor. 5:17). This new life in Christ calls for a different direction and different emphasis than the world has: "*That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man . . . And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth*" (Eph. 4:22,24). This adjustment is not easy, but with God's help, we can make it.

Once we set our affections on "*things above, where Christ is*" (Col. 3:2), we will not yearn so much to conform to this world. God's people ought to turn in disgust from the sexual immoralities, the lying, moral filth, crime and such. Rather than adjusting to, or conforming to, this world in these matters, we need to show by our lives a higher standard, the standard of morality which God has taught us in His word.

Some say, "We have a lot to learn from the world about how to influence people." Maybe this is true. But it doesn't help to make progress if we are heading in the wrong direction! The great need

of the church today is not for better adjustment to the world, and conforming to its methods. It is for all of us to live the life of Christ before the world. We must set our affections on "*things above*" and show to the world that we are more interested in being "*transformed*" into the image of Christ than in being conformed to the world.

## *Can He Depend on You?*

JOHNNY RAMSEY

Years ago, a Christian wrote a stirring gospel song that still challenges us today:

*Can He depend on you*

*His blessed will to do?*

*Will you be crowned*

*With the faithful and true?*

*Can He depend on you?*

One of these days, we shall all stand before the tribunal of God to answer that burning question. "*For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. . . So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12). What a solemn thought! An old hymn speaks cogently of the proper response to our benevolent Creator:

*My stubborn will, at last, has yielded;*

*I would be Thine, and Thine alone.*

*Lord, let in me Thy will be done.*

It is not an easy matter for frail and frivolous humanity to surrender totally to Jehovah. So many distractions pull us away from genuine commitment to a higher call. Jesus gave all for us, but we neglect to surrender fully in His blessed work. The Scriptures instruct us clearly in the pathway of holiness (Rom. 12), but Satan erects barriers and obstacles along the highway of life (1 Pet. 5:8).

*Close to Thee, close to Thee;*

*All along life's pilgrim journey,*

*Savior, let me walk with thee.*

Growing up, in our congregation back home, we used to sing

that haunting refrain. In today's secular society, we seldom even think that way. Sad, indeed! The prophet tells us, "*And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought*" (Isa. 58:11). Do we even seek God's guidance in this era of time? Would we be very comfortable following divine guidance and providence? If our sojourn is filled with the pursuit of materialistic matters, how can we look for spiritual challenges?

A famous maxim reminds us that, "We are what we think." A very wise person gave us these words of wisdom, "No farmer ever plowed a field by turning it over in his mind." Christ cannot depend upon those who only **DREAM** of success, and never act upon their good intentions! Consider the following categories of dependability. Can He depend on us to:

### **Be Kind and Loving**

Yes, even to our enemies! Jesus said, "*Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you*" (Matt. 5:44). The apostle Paul echoed that later, "*Render to no man evil for evil.. If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves*" (Rom. 12:17-19).

### **Spread the Glad Tidings of Salvation**

Someone must take the parting words of Jesus seriously, and get the gospel to the lost: "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). The early church certainly took it seriously, for they "*went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:4).

### **Restore Erring Brethren**

The Bible demands that we make a sincere attempt to bring wayward sheep back into the fold of God. "*Let him know, that he that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death; and shall cover a multitude of sins . . . Exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called Today; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*" (James 5:19-20; Heb. 3:13).

### **Engage in More Bible Study and Prayer**

God exalts as true, spiritual, nobility the practice of the Bereans: "*They received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things be so*" (Acts 17:11). How can we honestly defend, and live by, that which we

do not even know (Phil. 1:16-17)?

We must wear "work boots," if we would leave footprints in the sands of time! A helping hand is much better than a pointing finger. As a wise person once said, "Too many people itch for things they are not willing to scratch for." Nearly a half century ago, a man handed me a little folder, entitled: "SECRET OF SUCCESS." When I opened it, the answer was profound. It simply said, "Go to work!" It is hard to argue with that.

Can the Savior depend on us to do His glorious work? Eternity awaits our answer.

## ***Evangelists Are Not Pastors***

EVERETT FERGUSON

A preacher recently commented in reference to Acts 18:1-11 that "Paul pastored in Corinth for 18 months and then moved on." No! He evangelized and taught there. Luke's own words are that Paul "dialogued" (or "argued") in the synagogue (v. 4), "gave his attention to speaking" (v. 5), "testified" (v. 5), and "taught the word of God" (v. 11). This preacher's words, however, reflect a growing trend to use "pastor" in an unbiblical sense.

Evangelists and pastors are separate functions in the New Testament church. Among Christ's gifts to the church are "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). Each has a distinct work in the church. An evangelist is one who preaches the good news. A pastor is one who shepherds, that is feeds and guards sheep (or in a religious context, souls).

The designation "evangelist" is used for Philip (Acts 21:8) and Timothy (2 Timothy 4:5).

Besides its literal use for actual shepherds (Luke 2:8, 15, 18, 20; John 10:2) and metaphorical use for leaders (Mark 6:34), the word "pastor" or "shepherd" (alternative English translations of the same Greek word) is used most often for Christ (John 10:11, 14, 16; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25).

The verb form "to pastor" or "to shepherd," apart from its use for a work in the church, describes the literal care of sheep (Luke 17:7; 1 Corinthians 9:7), false teachers (Jude 12), Christ's work (Matthew 2:6; Revelation 7:17 and elsewhere), faithful Christians

who will share in Christ's rule (Revelation 2:26-27), and Christ's charge to Peter as an apostle (John 21:16).

The New Testament ascribes pastoral work in the church to elders. Paul instructed the elders at Ephesus, "Take care of yourselves and all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to pastor the church of God" (Acts 20:17, 28). Peter exhorted elders, "Pastor the flock of God among you" (1 Peter 5:1-2). This responsibility is not given to evangelists, nor to any other functionary in the church.

Evangelists may indeed do pastoral work. They do so, however, as Christians, not as part of their evangelistic office. All Christians have a responsibility to look out for the spiritual welfare of other Christians: "Look out [exercise the oversight] so that no one falls short of the grace of God" (Hebrews 12:15). Similarly, evangelists may do diaconal (benevolent and other) work, but again they do so as Christians and not in their capacity as evangelists.

If preachers are doing the work of pastors and see themselves as such, changes need to be made. They and elders need to rethink their roles. Perhaps the elders are not doing the pastoral, shepherding work they should.

One result of the confusion of roles is likely that the evangelistic task is being neglected. One reason that the churches seem not to be growing may be that preachers are not evangelizing.

We should not let modern usage dictate our understanding of biblical words. We have rightly insisted that "baptize" be defined according to biblical teaching and not according to modern-day practices. The same goes for other biblical words, including "pastor."

## ***Why Is There Confusion About the Woman's Role in the Church?***

**WILLIAM E. BRACK**

God has given women an honorable role in life and in religion. Women have the intellect and the ability to achieve the goals they desire. In many circumstances, they are able to do



things better than their male counterparts. Most men, especially if they are married, would agree to this statement. In Galatians 3:28, Paul teaches that males and females regardless of their status in life have souls of equal value in the eyes of God. In Philippians 4:3, Paul speaks of women who labored with him in the gospel and whose names are in the book of life. Jesus Christ praised and honored certain women during His ministry.

According to the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12), there are restrictions concerning women's role in the church in mixed worship services. Confusion has arisen over woman's role in church. Some people ignore it or perhaps feel no restrictions are placed on women in God's Word. Such individuals have allowed women to become evangelists, elders or church leaders, thereby allowing them to become preachers, to lead public prayers in mixed assemblies, to direct the mixed assembly in public song services, and to teach a class of men.

Their justification for allowing a woman to take these roles is, "If an elder or leader gives them the authority to do so, then it is okay." The implication is, "As elders or leaders we have the authority to approve it." But the Bible does not teach that kind of reasoning just because God vested authority in men. Men cannot give away this authority because it is not man's prerogative to do so. Only God—who gave it—can take that authority away and give it to another. Hence, any woman engaging in such leadership roles by permission from elders or any other man, or any woman taking it upon herself to do so, does not have the permission or the approval of God according to His Law.

God's Law goes back to the Garden of Eden and to the fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), long before the church came into existence. The fundamental principle is for women to be under obedience, in subjection, never usurping authority (1 Timothy 2:11-15). The key to understanding 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 correctly is to recognize that Paul is concerned with the subordinate position of women to men. The apostle is forbidding a woman to engage in an activity that would put her in a dominant role over a man.

The Bible forbids a woman to speak or to teach or to be a leader whenever and wherever she usurps the authority of a man. This is why she cannot teach a class of men or a mixed assembly. This is why she cannot be a preacher because the Bible teaches that the preacher is to "exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Titus

2:15 NKJV). A woman may teach other women or young children or sing during the worship service with the congregation (Colossians 3:16). However, the apostle is teaching God's law in exhorting women not to engage in activity that will put her in a dominant role over men.

In 1 Timothy 2:12, the word "nor" (Greek *oude*) is a negative conjunction and is explicative in force. The kind of teaching forbidden is the kind involving the exercising of dominion over. This passage doesn't mean a woman can't teach in her role (Titus 2:3). First Timothy 2:12 points out two practices for us to remember; they are (1) teaching and (2) having dominion over. Grammatically, the word "over" goes with the word "dominion" and not with the word "teach." This is why it is so important to recognize the explicative force of "*nor*"/*oude*. When Paul said, "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor [*oude*; in another way] to have dominion over a man" (ASV), then we know the kind of teaching which is forbidden.

This restriction is not a New Testament principle exclusively but goes back to the Old Testament, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Timothy 2:13). The apostle also makes it clear that the principle stressed in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is applicable at all times, in all places and in all circumstances.

## *The "Teaching" Of Scripture*

JUSTIN ROGERS

The Bible says a lot about teaching. In fact, the principal word for "teaching" (*didaskein*) appears 156 times in the New Testament. The term occurs 90 times in all four accounts of the Gospel alone, all concerning the work of Jesus. These data make for an interesting study of the word "teaching."

As modern Christians, most of us associate teaching with the classroom. However, in New Testament times, this was not the case. The term encompassed the practical training one received in preparation for life. Thus, it was roughly equivalent to a combination of education and apprenticeship.

Every young boy in the first century learned a trade. Jesus studied to be a carpenter (Mark 6:3). Others were fishermen (Matthew 4:18), tanners (Acts 9:43), soldiers (10:7) or tentmakers

(18:3). Educating a young person in his or her individual area of expertise is termed *didache*, or "teaching."

Obviously, young people learned through practice, not books. The teacher physically displayed the lesson, and the student applied the knowledge to practical work (an apprenticeship, in modern terms).

Even in the academic worlds of Judaism in the time of Jesus, students memorized Scripture by repetition. In a day when 90 to 95 percent of the people were illiterate, this repetition became an important and effective teaching tool. Likely the early church repeated and memorized individual sayings of Jesus, and those sayings circulated worldwide within decades of His death. We have one such example in Acts 20:35, a saying found nowhere else.

This repetition is likely responsible for the agreement between the first three accounts of the gospel. With written documents available from the hands of first- or second-generation believers, oral tradition slowly became obsolete. Nevertheless, a close connection between verbal instruction and practical application remained the heartbeat of early Christianity.

Jesus Himself understood that teaching was of little value if not supplemented by practice. The true implications of His teaching appear in His words: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8). This statement often occurs after a parable or a similar explanation of deep spiritual truths. It encourages the audience to pay attention to or meditate on the preceding instruction. They are to listen and then put into practice what they heard.

Perhaps the most famous single block of teaching found in the gospel is the Sermon on the Mount. Closing this revolutionary speech, Jesus explained the fate of the obedient and disobedient hearers (Matthew 7:24-27). Both the wise and the foolish hear the Word. The difference between the two is action.

Another example of Jesus' call to obedience is the parable of the sower (Mark 4:3-20). The seed of the Word of God falls on all kinds of soil. The difference is not the message, but the reception. Built into the teaching is the tacit need for application. As the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states, "Thus, *didaskhein* [teaching] is the word used more especially for the imparting of practical or theoretical knowledge when there is a continued activity with a view to a gradual, systematic, and

therefore all the more fundamental assimilation" (vol. 3, p. 135).

As we look at our world today, we find many so-called Christians who repeatedly hear the Word of God. By comparison, we find few who put it into practice. Rare is the story told of a Christian man who offers his coat to one who has inadequate clothing (Matthew 25:36) or the poor woman who gives more than she can afford because she sees a greater cause for her money (Mark 12:42).

In our world, these stories are exceptions, rather than rules. We read them in newspapers and novels. They are the basis of inspirational tales written on our calendars. They ought to be regularly taking place before our eyes!

As people become increasingly selfish and indifferent about those in need, the church has a mission. Our faith is more than simply a "book religion." It is active. The word "teaching" in the New Testament implies this activity. Let us take courage not only to hear and meditate on the teachings of the Bible but also to put them into practice. In doing so, we are sure to transform our world as well as ourselves.

## *Developing Good Attitudes*

STAN MITCHELL

We can choose our attitudes! This might surprise you, but the Bible insists it's true. Good thinking is an attitude that can be cultivated. "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24 NIV). We can determine to have a positive attitude toward a new day. We can decide whether to be cooperative and pleasant to the people we meet this day or cantankerous and resentful.

Scripture tells us to capture our thoughts and make them God's. "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). This is an astonishing insight. That our actions and our words needed to be obedient to Christ we knew, but our very thoughts too?

Someone might object, "I can't help the way I think. I have no control over the way I feel!" Yes, you do! I'm not talking about a momentary feeling-grief over the death of a loved one or anger

at the mistreatment of a child. I am talking about the way we dwell on certain things. If we nurse our grudges and dwell on resentments, our thoughts will control us and not the other way around!

Paul urges us to think about "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable" (Philippians 4:8) as opposed to dwelling on the ugly, the impure and the sinful. Many of us perversely enjoy negative feelings. We love to nurse a grudge, recall a wrong done to us, and feel sorry for ourselves.

We're dwelling on the negative! This goes beyond the shallow tenets of vacuum cleaner salesmanship; this is not Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* principles with a sprinkle of Bible thrown on top. The Lord Himself tells us not to dwell on the ugly and bitter but on the good and the uplifting!

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). We need to change our thought pattern to make it a Christlike one! There is a clear difference between a Christlike mindset and an un-Christ like mindset.

Half the problem in religion these days is that unspiritual, worldly minded people have taken over the mechanism of teaching and decision making in the church. That's how you get people saying things like: "It's what the 20-somethings (or baby boomers, or the young people) want," or "I don't think God would demand that we do that" as if we know what God would wish apart from what His Word says. Paul is not impressed with human reasoning, referring to it as a "depraved mind" (Romans 1:28). This is a pretty stunning description of the way humans think. Why do Christians put such great stock in the demands of society? "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking" (Ephesians 4:17).

### **Start With the Heart!**

"For out of the heart," Jesus observed, "come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matthew 15:19). Evil actions spring from evil attitudes. This is not a new concept. In Noah's day God saw "how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time" (Genesis 6:5).

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8). Meditate on the law. Our thinking these days is not only worldly, but shallow. We need to "meditate"—take some time to think over what God has said and allow this meditation to wash over our souls, and saturate our thinking. Be sure of this: the way we think is the way we will behave!

Because our televisions, friends, schools—and our own degenerate thinking—are so worldly, a lot of God's Word is needed to compensate. "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14). So often in religion we hear people talk of what they received (or didn't) in church, how they were pleased (or displeased) with what went on. We cannot afford to forget that the bottom line in Christianity is whether what happened was "acceptable in God's sight."

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:1-2).

Is your thinking influenced by "the wicked," the "mockers," the "sinner," or by God? I have observed, over the years, that brethren are even affected by the Christian companionship they keep. If you are around a negative, resentful Christian, that's the way you become! David instead determined to "meditate on" God's "precepts and consider" His "ways" (Psalm 119:15).

"Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29). God promises Israel, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart" (Jeremiah 24:7). This is what God wants of us, too.

## *Presuppositions And The Bible*

HOLLIS MILLER

Jesus believed that men who willingly listened to Him were able to understand His teaching. On more than one occasion He

said: "*He that has ears to hear, let him hear.*" What, else could Jesus have meant than that those who would listen to Him would be able to understand? Yet, many failed to understand because their minds were closed by presuppositions.

As was true during the earthly ministry of Jesus, so it is today. Presuppositions often keep individuals from understanding the Scriptures. One who approaches the Bible under the guidance of Calvinism will not be able to understand the biblical teaching that God would have all men to be saved. Such passages as 1 Timothy 2:4, Hebrews 2:9, and 2 Peter 3:9, which teach that God would have all men to be saved, will be given a different slant from what they "seem" to be saying.

The Jews crucified Jesus because their presuppositions about the nature of the Messiah to come were not met by the Messiah that came (John 1:11). The philosophers at Athens did not listen to Paul very long because of their presupposition that one cannot rise from the dead (Acts 17:32).

So long as one presupposes that salvation is by faith only, the biblical teaching about baptism will not be understood. Should the presupposition that *many faiths can save* reign dominant in one's thinking, the New Testament teaching that there is only one saving faith will not be comprehended (Ephesians 4:5; Acts 4:12). The presupposition that the New Testament is culturally affected will lead one into a more liberal view of its teaching than would otherwise be the case.

When one approaches the Bible, all presuppositions need to be laid aside. The Word of God, which is intended to lead mankind into truth, cannot instruct one as it should so long as one "knows" before investigating what the biblical text says.

Dear reader, let the Word of God, and not presuppositions, guide you.

## *The Paradox Of The Church*

HARDEMAN NICHOLS

When a congregation is established according to the divine pattern of the New Testament, it is composed of elements of perfection and imperfection. Since it is a divine institution, it deserves respect and appreciation. Everything that such a church

is and does, as authorized of God, is divine. God's part is perfect. He has designed a perfect plan of salvation and a perfect system of worship (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). The Bible is its only guide, *"the perfect law of liberty"* (James 1:25). The church has a perfect Savior who holds before us His perfect life for our goal, saying, *"Follow Me"* (Matthew 16:24).

But here is the paradox. Man is not perfect, nor does he perfectly follow the Lord. The human element in the church is as imperfect as its members. The church would have been an imperfect institution if it had been designed only for perfect people. It would have no members at all, *"For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"* (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Its perfection is retained by the way it deals with our imperfections. It does not overlook sin, but believes the grace of God is perfect in dealing with it. And it must distinguish between the penitent and rebellious, between the humble, weak and willful reprobate. God now *"commandeth all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30). The church believes that Christ promises pardon for all imperfect beings who, in godly sorrow for their sins, penitently seek mercy and forgiveness. His invitation is to imperfect men. When one repents and is baptized, Jesus forgives his sins and adds him to His church (Acts 2:38, 47).

The church offers strength to help us in our weaknesses, courage when we are faint-hearted, comfort when we are sad, and *"joy unspeakable and full of glory"* (1 Peter 1:8), along the way. Its call is to all men to come and be saved. Its God-ordained teachings and services restore lost humanity back to God. Thanks be unto God for His perfect church and its wondrous benefits to imperfect men.

## **God's Glorious Church**

**MACK LYON**

The church has come in for lot of bad publicity in the liberal media who are anxious to publicize and magnify the mistakes of some church leaders.

Many people, having been disillusioned by the bad press given the church, have come to believe a person's salvation is strictly between himself and God, apart from the church. They



honestly believe they can be faithful Christians and never be a member of the church.

It is a matter of Scripture teaching that the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), all of them, every one of them. Nevertheless, the saved are still human, and they are not sinless, except in the fact that they have been forgiven and continue to walk in the light of the Lord (1 John 1:7).

Behavior of some church members brings reproach upon the church, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, and the brother in Corinth who had taken his father's wife (1 Corinthians 5). But the glory of God's church is not in the human element.

The church has a **divine** side as well as the human, and herein lies the strength, the beauty, and the glory of the church of God.

### **The glory of God's church is in its divine origin.**

It is not a man-made arrangement, nor was it an afterthought of the Lord when His plan to establish the kingdom failed due to His rejection by the Jews; but it was a part of God's redemptive plan from the very beginning (Eph. 3:10).

### **The glory of God's church is in its builder.**

The church is not a human institution; it was not built by Luther, Wesley, Campbell, or any other human being. When Peter confessed, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16:16), Jesus pronounced a blessing on him, then replied, *"... Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it."* Does anyone doubt He fulfilled that promise?

### **The glory of God's church is in its foundation.**

Every movement, whether social, political, religious, or otherwise, is founded on some basic tenet which adherents believe to be truth. The truth upon which Christ founded His church is not the preeminence of Peter, as some interpret the above-quoted conversation with Peter, but upon the truth Peter had confessed—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That makes it impregnable.

### **The glory of God's church is its head.**

The Bible teaches that upon His resurrection God has highly

exalted Christ *"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all"* (Ephesians 1:21-23). The church is not subject to the dictates of any pope, or college of cardinals, or conference, or convention of mere men, but to Christ alone (Ephesians 5:23-27).

**The glory of God's church is in its divinely-given mission.**

Some people became disillusioned with the church when it did not succeed in works in which the church should not have been involved in the beginning. As noted before, God's original purpose for the church was *"to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God"* (Ephesians 3:9-10).

The passage can be interpreted to mean that the very existence of the church declares the manifold wisdom of God. But it really means that it is the church's mission and work to declare the manifold wisdom of God, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30) to all the world. What a glorious purpose for existence!

**The glory of God's church is in its eternal destiny.**

When Jesus comes He will take it to be with Him in eternal glory (Ephesians 5:27; 1 Corinthians 15:22-24).

The church should not be rejected because of the weaknesses of the human element, but accepted because of the beauty and glory of the divine element. Be saved, my friend, and the Lord will add you to His church. Then you can share in His glory. (Acts 2:47).



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