

Monthly

July, 2012

Price: Rs. 2/-

THE BIBLE TEACHER



Back to Basics

Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:118). His promise was fulfilled when His church came into existence on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter commanded the multitude assembled on that day: "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). Those who gladly received his word were baptized (Acts 2:41), as a result three thousand were added to the church on that day by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). That was the beginning of Christ's church.

Of what denomination did those three thousand become members? Our contention is that they joined no denomination. Indeed, denominationalism such as we know in today's world did not even exist then. They had simply obeyed the Gospel and were added by the Lord to His church. They wore no sectarian name, adopted no denominational creed, and belonged to no ecclesiastical hierarchy. They were simply children of God, members of the church, were called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Churches of Christ today everywhere plead for a return to that same church with that same simplicity. We do not claim to be a denomination. Our goal is to be that church—nothing more, nothing less—just basic New Testament Christians as people were in the first century.

We teach the same plan of salvation—faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sins. We practice the same worship—teaching, giving, observing the Lord's Supper, praying, and singing praises to God. (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; Ephesians 5:19). We follow the same congregational organization—elders, deacons, saints (Philippians 1:1), without offices and positions unknown to the Christians in the beginning.

If you want to be just what people were in the New Testament, then we urge you to investigate churches of Christ. We strive to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where the Bible is silent.

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 43

July 2012

No. 3

Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

God Has Joined Together Baptism And Salvation

Suppose someone sows seeds in four different soils, in different places, and reaps corn from the first place, peas from the second, cucumber from the third, and beans from the fourth place. The obvious inference would be that four different kinds of seeds have been planted. On the other hand, what would be the conclusion if only corn is reaped from every place? That would mean that only corn was planted in every place. Now let us learn a Bible lesson from this illustration:

When Phillip, the evangelist, had gone into the city of Samaria, as we read in the 8th chapter of the book of Acts, the Bible says in Acts 8:12 that he preached there the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. What was the result? In the same verse of the Scripture it says that both men and women were baptized.

In the same chapter of Acts 8, a little later, we find Phillip preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch, and in verse 35 it says, "Then Phillip opened his mouth, and beginning at the same scripture, preached Jesus to him." What did Phillip preach? It says he preached Jesus to him. What happened as a result? The very next verse number 36 says, "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Phillip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So he commanded

the chariot to stand still. And both Phillip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him."

Now let us turn to Acts chapter 16, there we read that Paul and Silas were in Philippi, where they met a certain woman named Lydia who worshipped God. Evidently she was a very religious and God-fearing woman. In Acts 16:14, it says that "The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul." And immediately, after that we read that she and her household were baptized. (Acts 16:15).

Again, in the same sixteenth chapter of the book of Acts, we read that Paul and Silas were imprisoned because they were fearlessly proclaiming to all the way of God's salvation. However, at midnight, as we read, there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were loosed. The keeper or the jailer of the prison thought that the prisoners had fled, taking advantage of the events. Knowing the severe punishment that he would receive the next day from the authorities, because of the negligence of his duty, in panic he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul saw him, and called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." We can imagine the happiness the jailer must have felt. And, therefore, we read, "Then he (jailer) called for a light, and ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately, he and all his family were baptized." (Acts 16:25-33).

From all of these instances we learn a very important lesson. That is, in the beginning, in the time of the apostles, wherever and whenever the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ were preached, when Jesus was preached, when God's word or the word of the Lord was preached, people everywhere were baptized as a direct result.

Also, it is most important to learn from the above examples of the Bible that one cannot truly preach the kingdom of God, and Jesus Christ, and the word of the Lord without preaching what Christ has taught that a person must do to be saved. (Mark 16:15, 16).

Too, one must note the fact, most importantly, that in the passages cited above from the Scriptures in none of the instances or cases was baptism specifically mentioned as a subject of the lesson. But in every case, people were baptized immediately after "the kingdom of God," or "the name of Jesus," or the "word of God" was preached to them. What does this teach us? Isn't the conclusion obvious and clear? The point is: It is impossible to preach the message of the kingdom of God or the name of Jesus Christ or the word of the Lord, in the complete biblical way, without telling the audience or the people that Jesus Christ has commanded that to be saved one must believe and be baptized.

New Testament Worship

Lesson Twelve

GIVING

J.C. CHOATE

Finally, we come to the last act of New Testament worship and it is that of giving. If the Bible teaches anything, then it is this. Yet, most people are very ignorant of this subject. Therefore, we want to see what the scriptures say about it. We'll begin by noticing some key-passages of scripture.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 16:1,2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Now before we go further, let us analyze these verses to get the points that he is making:

1. This giving was to be done on the first day of the week. Why? Being the day that Christians meet for worship then this was the time chosen in which the collection would be taken. But what about other days? Nothing is said about other days. As far as this command is concerned then it is specified that it is to be done on the first day of the week. Now various religious groups have a collection or more every time they meet, even if there are times that they meet every day. However, as far as this particular act is concerned then it must come at the time specified if we are going to abide by the scriptures. Churches of Christ therefore meet each first day of the week and this is when the members are expected to give.

2. All of the Christians were expected to give. Of course this was provided they had been prospered during the week before. The Lord does not expect his people to give if they have not earned anything. However, he does expect them to give if they are able to do so, and to refuse to do so is a sin.

3. They were to lay by in store according to what they had. In that time that could have meant vegetables, livestock or whatever they might have had. It could have also meant money. Today we usually give money since most people turn much of that which they have into cash or else work to earn financially each week. But it would depend on the place, the people, and the situation, whether the contribution might be given in terms of money or various commodities.

4. They were to give as they had been prospered. That is, they were to give according to their earnings. But how much of their earnings? That would be up to them and the same is still true today. The New Testament does not teach tithing or that we should give one tenth. Rather, we should no doubt give more than a tenth inasmuch as we live under a much better law than the Jews lived under and they gave a tenth. But if we have a better law, better promises and greater hope, then why shouldn't we give more? I notice here in Asia that everyone wants to give but usually it is a small amount. In some cases this may be as much as a person can give, but in all probability, all could give much more than they do. I also notice that the people of Asia have money for cinema, tobacco, and many other things. I realize that these people are of the world, but if they have money for these things, then what do you do with your money? You may also be using some of it on such things or on similar things. Yes, even here we can do much more than we are doing. The Lord said that we should give as we have been prospered. You know what you have been prospered and you know how much you should give. But in all probability it should be in terms of giving paper money instead of coins. In some cases, some of you may be able to give a good bit more of that paper money than you might think. Of course I can't tell you what you should give, and neither can you tell me, but the Lord knows that we should give, and therefore it is time for us to begin to give more. Don't you agree?

5. They were to go on and give so that there might not have to be any gatherings on his arrival. In other words, if they would follow his exhortation then on his arrival everything would have already

been taken care of and he could proceed to take care of the need that was at hand. The same is true today. If we will give as the Lord intended that we should then we will have the necessary funds to go on with the Lord's work. Now out in the religious world most churches do not follow this teaching and therefore they are constantly begging for money. Instead of giving themselves, then they go out into the world to beg for help. Some of them sell magazines or books. Some of them have some kind of bazaar. Some of them put on some form of entertainment. But the Lord has commanded his people to give of their means that the needs of the church might be cared for. This is the Lord's way of doing things and as far as he is concerned it cannot be improved on.

Now let us proceed to notice another text that deals with giving. It is found in 2 Corinthians 9: 6,7: "But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." Now observe these following points:

1. He says that we will reap according to the way we have sown. If we sow a little then we'll reap a little. But if we sow much then we shall reap much. Now this is true in farming, in business, and in all walks of life. It is also true in the Lord's work. The more we put into it the more we'll get out of it. The reason a lot of people never get anything out of it is because they never put anything into it. You can't just keep taking from the church without ever giving to it. I am afraid most of us don't believe the Lord enough to take him at his word. But we should try him. If we would I am confident that we would find that it is true that the more we give then the more we will receive.

2. He says that each one should give as he has purposed in his heart. Before coming to worship we ought to have already made up our minds as to how much we are going to give. That is what he is talking about. Don't wait until it is time to give and then to fumble around and to try to come up with something to put in the collection. But know what you are going to give, based on what you are able to give; and then give.

3. He says that one should not give grudgingly. That is, you should not feel forced or compelled to give. If you give, when you really didn't want to do so, and you had preferred to keep it for something else, then your giving is in vain as far as you are concerned and as far as the Lord is concerned.

4. He says that one should not give because he feels that it is necessary to give. The Lord is not trying to force you into a situation where you feel that you have to give. Certainly not.

5. Rather, he says that God loves a cheerful giver. How does he want you to give? He wants you to give cheerfully, because you want to, and you are happy to be able to do so. This is the kind of givers we ought to be always.

Now in closing, we should remember that the Lord himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20: 35). I am afraid though that many of us have turned that around to make it read, "It is more blessed to receive than to give." Why? Because so many of us are covetous, stingy, selfish, and therefore we rob God of that which rightfully belongs to him. May God help us to wake up and to begin to return a portion of that which we have to him which in reality already belongs to him. We will never be the kind of Christians we ought to be until we learn how to scripturally give.

PRINCIPLES AND DIRECT COMMANDS

BYRON NICHOLS

The Bible is God's inspired Word, and that it is our only authority. This principle is made clear by such Scriptures as Matthew 28:18, 2 Timothy 3:16,17, and 2 Peter 1:20,21. Adhering to and abiding by this major principle will help us to more consistently let God guide us in making our decisions and choices. In those times when we are unsure about a question, a doctrine, or a practice, we must cling to what we already know from the Scriptures that may have application to the matter under consideration.

It has often been said that "the Bible is its own best commentary." It is critically important that we realize that any part of the Bible must be understood in relationship to the overall teaching of the Bible. We see from 2 Timothy 3:16,17 that the Scriptures claim to provide for man everything that he needs for his religious instruction. The Bible cannot be what it claims to be and be self-contradictory. It cannot make conflicting pronouncements. It must agree with itself. This is one of those exceedingly important biblical principles.

THE BIBLE DOESN'T SAY, "THOU SHALT NOT..."

Sometimes, it is contended that the absence of a specific

command in the Bible that either prescribes or prohibits something gives us the liberty to deal with that matter in whatever way we choose—but the absence of a specific prohibition in the Bible never automatically allows an action. For example:

(1) Where does the Bible ever say, “Thou shalt not engage in drug abuse”? It doesn’t ever mention drug abuse, but it does condemn such a practice—through biblical principles. For example, please read carefully those fundamental principles that are noted at the conclusion below.

(2) Where is the Bible verse that says, “Thou shalt not use biscuits and milk at the Lord’s Supper”? No such verse can be found in the Bible, can it? However, the absence of a direct condemnation of such in no way excuses or authorizes such a practice. The Lord’s specification of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine that He wanted to be used automatically eliminates the need for any “Thou shalt not’s” with respect to any other proposed elements.

Any number of other examples could be given, but again, the absence of such commands does not mean that these matters are totally ignored by Scripture. Any time that the Bible tells us what to do, it inherently also tells us what not to do. Anything that is inconsistent with a biblical instruction regarding what to do cannot be acceptable to God.

Often, prohibitions and positive commands are covered by broad principles, such as what we call “The Golden Rule” in Matthew 7:12, wherein the Lord Jesus said, *“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”* It wouldn’t take any of us very long to enumerate several situations where this principle of behavior would most definitely be applicable. Other such broad principles are found in the Bible, principles with a host of applications, but without a detailed list. The Lord expects His people to use common sense in making appropriate use of these general principles.

We must realize that the principles contained in the Bible reveal much more of what God deems as right or wrong than the direct commands that are recorded in the Bible. For the Bible to contain a special, direct command governing everything that is either good or evil would require a volume so large that it would be difficult to even carry such a Bible!

Insisting on the citing of a specific verse that explicitly condemns something that we want to do is sometimes an effort to get freedom

to do what we already know is questioned by many and is controversial in nature, but what we may very well plan to do regardless. This kind of thinking is somewhat reminiscent of the thinking and actions exhibited by some toward Jesus. Let's look at just three such instances:

(1) **Luke 11:14,15**—(*the seeking of another sign*)

"And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.' Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven" (emphasis added). Please notice that to some people only *one miracle* is insufficient as proof of identity, power, or authority.

(2) **John 6:1-14,22-30**—(*immediately after witnessing Christ's miracle of feeding 5,000*) **6:30**—*"Therefore they said to Him, 'What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?'"* (emphasis added). It seems obvious that it would not have made any difference in those folks' obedience had Jesus performed several more miracles. Their minds were already made up.

(3) **Luke 16:19-31**—(*the parable of the rich man and Lazarus*) The rich man and Lazarus were dead, and the rich man implored Abraham to send Lazarus to testify to his living brothers so that they could escape the place of torment. Notice verses 29-31: *"Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead'"* (emphasis added).

The presence of a direct command or example doesn't always make much more of an impact on us than additional signs would have made on those who witnessed the miracles of Jesus or might have heard from the dead. If we refuse to follow basic Bible principles, we will very possibly also ignore any direct commands as well.

A look again at just a few of the basic fundamental principles in the Bible that are relative to Christian behavior should be helpful.

1 Thessalonians 5:21,22—*"Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."*

1 Corinthians 6:19,20—*"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."

Ephesians 5:11—*"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."*

Ephesians 4:27—*"...neither give place to the devil."*

Philippians 1:9,10—*"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ."*

1 Corinthians 10:31—*"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*

In any quest for a loophole in an effort to do anything that is not clearly approved by God, we should also give great consideration to the consequence of our example and influence as a Christian. Read carefully Matthew 5:16 and 18:6.

It would behoove us all to be more aware of and obedient to both the COMMANDS and PRINCIPLES contained in God's Word.

Always Be Ready to Give a Defence

TRAVIS L. QUERTERMOUS

Do you believe in God? Do you believe Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God? Do you believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God? Do you believe that life arose as a result of God's creation and not as a result of evolution? I think it is safe to say that most of us would answer all of these questions, "Yes."

However, suppose someone were to challenge you to explain why you believed these things. Could you show why you believe in a God you cannot see? Could you give a reason why you believe Jesus Christ arose from the dead? Are you familiar with the evidences that prove the Bible is a divine revelation, or that evolution is a false theory? Did you know God commands us to be ready to give answers to these questions? In 1 Peter 3:15, we read, *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."* The phrase "ready to give a defense" comes from the Greek *pros apologia* from which we get

our English word "apologetics". Apologetics is the study of Christian evidences. All of us need to equip ourselves with some basic knowledge in this area so that we might obey the command of 1 Peter 3:15.

There are many good books and resources that will acquaint us with the basics to Give a Defense of Christian evidences (Apologetics Press being one), but the Bible is still our best guide. For example, Paul gives us all the evidence we need to establish the Lord's resurrection beyond any reasonable doubt in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8: *"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, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."* Let us study that we might "always be ready to give a defense" of our faith in an increasingly skeptical world.

SINGING IN WORSHIP TO GOD

RON BRYANT

TTrue religion is the true worship and service of God, learned from the Word of God, and based upon that Word alone. No man or angel could know how God is to be worshipped and served, apart from Scripture. God has revealed His will for our lives in His Holy Book. We now look to the New Testament, the Gospel of God's Son, as our guide. That guide strictly states the necessity of abiding in the will of God, revealed in Christ, and of rejecting any addition to it or subtraction from it.

The first Christians were guided by the truth revealed to the apostles of Jesus. In worship, they praised God in song and did not use mechanical instruments of music. Christian music was vocal and verbal. The singing was "a cappella", a Latin term that literally means "as done in the church" —vocal and verbal—unaccompanied singing. Throughout church history, from the beginning, the practice was vocal music only. A cappella music has been a common ground—something everyone agrees is right

and scriptural. People who are serious about living by the Word of God, and following it faithfully in worship and service, readily abandon that which the New Testament does not authorize. No one has ever suggested that *a cappella* music was wrong, while the use of *mechanical instruments* has divided believers every time it is introduced.

The historical record, both sacred and secular, establishes the fact that Christianity is a singing faith! It is a historical fact that mechanical instruments of music were introduced into Christian worship, not by the apostles, but by uninspired men no earlier than the seventh century. In fact, many conservative scholars suggest that they were not introduced until the eleventh century.

Why sing? Why exclusively use a cappella music in praise of God? First, a cappella music is fully consistent with the nature of Christian worship. Worship is offered to God. The goal of worship is not personal fulfillment or aesthetics. The fundamental matter is to offer **praise to God**. Therefore, worship is ruled by what is spiritual, rational, and verbal as it is offered to God. God is praised. Praise, as worship, is rooted in our relationship with God, and is expressive of a holy relationship, therefore nothing artificial is offered to Him. In keeping with the Word of God, we simply and earnestly seek to *"offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name"* (Hebrews 13:15).

Secondly, Christian worship is **spiritual worship**. *"God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). God's people exist to *"offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 2:5). Worship is to come from the spirit of man. The spiritual is the opposite of the sensual. Worship is to be offered with the mind and the heart. Praise flows from the mind and the heart and through the voice to God. Therefore, we endeavor to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord (cf Colossians 3:16).

Thirdly, worship also serves to **edify**. Singing is not just praise, it is also teaching and admonishing. It must build up, improve, and teach. What goes on in worship must instruct, inform, and edify the church, the body of believers. Therefore, what is done must be intelligible and understandable. Paul wrote, *"What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also"*

(1 Corinthians 14:15). We sing and pray to God, communing and communicating not just feelings, but thoughts and desires. We teach and admonish one another; and therefore, edify one another.

Who is spiritually instructed by mere *sounds*? The *words* of spiritual songs build us up in faith as we speak forth—sing forth—praise to God. No one questions the propriety of doing that which God has authorized. Only those who have no allegiance to God readily seek to exalt their will and desire above His.

Quite simply, we sing in our worship, a cappella style, because that is what God commanded us to do in the New Testament. We sing praise to God because we are committed to following His will as our only authority. We reject the use of mechanical instruments of music because we do not want to be guilty of adding to the word of God. We reject unscriptural additions and consistently worship in song, singing praise to Him, offering unto Him the worship He desires. We seek to honor the words of the inspired penman, "*By Him [Christ] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name*" (Hebrews 13:15).

THE LORD'S SUPPER

JIMMY YOUNG

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the night He was betrayed (Matthew 26:26-29; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:17-34). The bread was unleavened, since this is what was always used for the Passover, and this took place at the time of the Passover Supper. The "fruit of the vine" was juice from grapes.

The bread reminds us of Christ's body, which suffered on the cross for us. The fruit of the vine reminds us of His blood, which was shed for the remission of sins. The bread and fruit of the vine remind us of His death.

Jesus said to partake "*in remembrance of me*" (Luke 22:19). This is basically the significance of the Lord's Supper. When we eat the bread and drink the juice, our minds should be on Christ's death and its meaning. First Corinthians 11:26 teaches us that the memorial is to continue to show His death "*till He come*".

Most professed Christians do not observe the Lord's Supper each week. People often ask why we, in churches of Christ, have

the weekly remembrance. Acts 20:7 tells of the practice of the New Testament church. This Scripture describes the Sunday (*"the first day of the week"*) service and shows that the 'New Testament practice was to break bread on that day. (See also Acts 2:42). Observing the Lord's Supper every week is a significant part of the Lord's plan for worship.

Since it is to be the practice of the church to have the Supper every Sunday, it must also be the practice of each Christian to be present every Sunday (Hebrews 10:25). This should be a very special day for Christians.

First Corinthians 11:27-30 warns against partaking *"unworthily"*. Notice this is an adverb and refers to the manner in which one partakes. We must not have a vain or worldly attitude when we participate. Neither should we have the wrong attitude toward others. First Corinthians 10:16,17 shows the unity of God's people as we all share together in the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

The Lord's Supper must not become a mere ritual. While partaking you should seek to concentrate on its significance. The apostle Paul said, *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep"* (1 Corinthians 11:28-30). It is destructive to our souls to neglect or trifle with the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper has meaning to us because His death has meaning, and the significance we will see in the supper in His memory will be in proportion to the degree that we love Him for how He died to save us. Some have argued that when we have Communion every week it becomes an empty gesture. This may be true to anyone who does not appreciate or understand the meaning of the memorial.

We should study to gain the ability to sense the real significance of Communion—that it is much more than a mere ritual. Pray to be able to reverently visualize the scene of the cross every time you partake. Christians should always remember that participating in the Lord's Supper is a duty (1 Corinthians 11:24-25), but it is also a privilege and a blessing.

DON'T HIDE FROM THE TRUTH

CLEM THURMAN

Like the proverbial ostrich, who hides his head in the sand when danger threatens, there are many good religious folk who hide from facts which they don't want to face. When a teaching is mentioned that they don't like, or which is different from that which they have long been taught, instead of looking at that teaching honestly, they "hide their heads in the sand."

When the apostle Paul came into Europe for the first time to preach the gospel of Christ, he found "ostrich people" there—for they are everywhere. But when Paul came to Berea, he found some who were willing to investigate: *"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11). We heartily commend that course of action for all our readers. Read carefully what we teach, then investigate by comparing that with the word of God. But don't just swallow what anyone teaches until you have compared it with the word of God. Don't ever hide from the facts, but face them.

SALVATION IS ONLY IN CHRIST

A fine lady said to me not long ago, "I think that the Lord will save all the good people, whether or not they go to church." This lady was expressing what many good religious people believe: that it is not religion which saves, but "goodness." The idea is, "If I just live good enough, the Lord will save me."

To anyone with faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, it should be obvious that just being good is not enough to save a person. If morality, man's goodness, were sufficient to save, there would be no need for Christ. For a person must live a good moral life *"in Christ"* in order to be saved. And if a good moral life were enough, then Christ would be unnecessary. The truth is, we are all sinners: *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). As John wrote, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ... If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us"* (1 John 1:8,10). And we cannot by **all** of our good works—no matter how many—atone for even **one sin**!

The apostles Peter and John pointed out to the Jews that salvation is only in Christ: *"In none other is there salvation; for*

neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Our works will not save us, but Christ can. And where all of our righteousness is *"as filthy rags"* (Isa. 64:6), the righteousness of Christ revealed in His gospel, shows that *"the righteous shall live by faith"* (Rom. 1:17). We must not be guilty of hiding our heads in the sand. We must live good moral lives, but we must live good moral lives in Christ.

THE LORD BUILT ONE CHURCH

Do you believe that "one church is as good as another"? Many people do. And when confronted with the teaching that there is only **one church**, these folk will "hide their heads in the sand." We need to open our eyes and hearts to what God says on this subject. We cannot hide from the facts, so let us search for them and accept them.

Jesus promised, *"I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18). He never built but one. That church is His body: *"He is the head of the body, the church"* (Col. 1:18), and, *"There is one body"* (Eph. 4:4). That church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23-33), and who would accuse the Lord of bigamy? The Lord Jesus prayed to the Father on behalf of the apostles, then said: *"Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them that believe on me through their word. That they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that the world may believe that thou didst send me"* (John 17:20-21). Through the inspired apostle Paul, the Lord said, *"Now 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. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them (that are of the household) of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos: and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?"* (1 Cor. 1:10-13). Now, in view of what God has said, how could anyone argue that one church is as good as another?

A lady wrote recently, berating me for saying that denominations are displeasing to God. And, of course, many people accept the idea that she is right and denominations are pleasing to God. After all, "there is good in all of them." But notice what God said, *"Let there be no divisions among you, all speak the same thing"* (1 Cor. 1:10). Again, face the question God asks, *"Is Christ divided?"* (v. 13). That is why I must insist that all denominations are wrong.

Christ cannot be divided, and to divide His followers and say that all denominations stand approved before God, is to *"divide Christ."* It will do neither you nor me any good to *"hide our heads in the sand."* It won't change what God has said.

IT MATTERS ABOUT YOUR FAITH

That we are saved by faith is one of the great themes of the gospel of Christ. But many *"hide their heads in the sand"* about what to believe. Some folk say, *"Your faith doesn't matter, as long as you believe in Jesus."* But listen to what the Lord said to the apostles, *"Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16). Note that what was to be preached was to be believed—that is, the gospel of Christ. Jesus also said, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* (Matt. 4:4). Yes, it matters what we believe, for saving faith *"cometh by hearing, and hearing the word of God"* (Rom. 10:17).

And the **kind** of faith matters, also. James says that *"faith without works is dead"* (James 2:26). A dead faith cannot give spiritual life. Faith that saves is faith that obeys. The apostle Paul wrote of *"faith which works by love"* (Gal. 5:6) as the only kind of faith that can save. Jesus asks, *"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things that I say?"* (Luke 6:46). We just *"hide our heads in the sand"* when we try to claim Him as our Lord and Savior while we fail to obey Him. Salvation by faith is predicated upon obedience, *"He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him"* (Heb. 5:9).

WE MUST SEEK AFTER SPIRITUAL THINGS

We see on every hand a pleasure-mad crowd that seemingly takes little or no thought for God and His will for their lives. But God sent His Son to die on the cross for us. And that Son showed the cost of following him: *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me . . . 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?"* (Matt. 16:24-26). Too many, though, think that God is going to save everybody, regardless of how they have lived in this life.

God promises to bring *"every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad"* (Eccl. 12:14). And the same God tells us that those who fail to obey the gospel of Christ

shall suffer eternal punishment (2 Thes. 1:7-9). It is imperative that we lift our eyes from this life to the glories of the life which God has reserved for us. Like Paul, we need to *"look not at the things seen, but at the things not seen"* (2 Cor. 4:18). When we try to convince ourselves that we can live as we please, savoring all the pleasures of this life, and not have to pay the consequences, we are just hiding our heads in the sand. God says plainly, *"God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life"* (Gal. 6:7-8).

THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM

A recent letter received here asked, "Why do you write so much about baptism? Baptism cannot save you." Well, maybe God was mistaken, when He wrote of the days of Noah, *"While the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness baptism doth now save you"* (1 Pet. 3:20-21). And doesn't that fit with what the Lord Jesus said? *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16).

The purpose of baptism was clearly stated on the day the gospel was first preached. When the hearers asked, *"What shall we do?"* God's answer by the mouth of Peter was: *"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"* (Acts 2:38). When the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, Saul asked, *"What shall I do, Lord?"* (Acts 22:10). Jesus answered, *"Go ye into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do"* (Acts 9:6). After three days, the Lord sent Ananias to Saul and he said to him, *"Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name"* (Acts 22:16). That seems pretty clear to me. So, that is what I preach and what I write.

Notice the way the apostle Paul speaks of baptism later. *"Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4). Salvation is *"in Christ"* (2 Tim. 2:10). Every spiritual blessing is *"in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3). And we are *"baptized into Christ"* (Rom. 6:3). In all of the Scriptures, there is not another action that is said to put us *"into Christ."* Only baptism does that. Thus, until one is baptized **into Christ**, he or she is not

"in Christ." (See Editorial)

The apostle Paul writes of the promise to Abraham: *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed . . . Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ . . . For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"* (Gal. 3:8,16,26-27). Note again v. 26, until a person is *"in Christ,"* he or she is not a child of God. And we are *"baptized into Christ."* All of that shows that baptism is the transition point from being an alien to citizenship in the kingdom of Christ, from a sinful state to a righteous state, from darkness to light (Col. 1:13), from sinfulness to forgiveness (Acts 2:38).

The pattern of those Bereans is commended for all of us: *"Examining the Scriptures daily whether these things be so."* We do not claim to be the "final authority" in religious matters. But we simply point all to the word of God as the authority. And we insist that each one study for himself. But, friend, don't "hide your head in the sand." Salvation is only *"in Christ"* for God says so (Acts 4:12). It is clear that Jesus built only one church, and He adds the saved to that church (Acts 2:47). Clearly, it matters about faith, *"which works through love"* (Gal. 5:6), and baptism *"into Christ"* (Rom. 6:3-4). Don't hide your head in the sand.

He Needed to Go Through Samaria

GARY C. HAMPTON

At the beginning of John 4, there is an interesting statement about our Lord. *"Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria"* (John 4:1-4 NKJV). Instead of *"needed"*, the Amplified Bible has, *"It was necessary."* The ASV has, *"And he must needs pass through Samaria."* Several other translations

have *"He had to " go through Samaria.*

Knowing that Jews during Jesus' day often crossed the Jordan River and traveled through Perea to avoid Samaria, this simple passage becomes intriguing. Why did the Lord *"need"* to *"pass through Samaria"*? Obviously, it was not because other routes for travel were unavailable. The inspired penman must have had something else in mind. -

Other passages might shed some light on John's meaning. For instance, Paul, as a partial defense of his apostleship, wrote, *"For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again "* (2 Corinthians 5:13-15).

Similarly, Peter and John, when commanded by the council not to preach or teach in Jesus' name, responded, *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:19,20). In both references, we can see the apostles felt compelled to act and speak as they did.

Our Lord felt compelled to go through Samaria. There were many souls in the region needing to hear the good news of the coming kingdom. So, while the disciples went to look for food, Jesus struck up a conversation with the woman at the well. He told her of living water that could spring up in a person and become a fountain of life. His knowledge of her life caused her to leave her water pot to go into the city and tell others to come and see. The returning disciples heard the Master say, *"I have food to eat of which you do not know."* They wondered if someone had given Him something to eat, but He explained, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work"* (John 4:34).

The Lord went on to ask, *"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"* (John 4:35). The message for them and for us should be plain. Those who follow Christ must have an overwhelming sense of urgency to tell the good news. There are souls lost in sin who can be saved only through obeying the truth. Like our Lord, we *"need"* to go where they are.

IT IS WITHIN OUR POWER!

DEMAR ELAM

The feeling of being in control of a situation can be an enormously satisfying experience. To have something to accomplish that you know is within your power is confidence building. Every Christian should be filled with a sense of confidence as he or she lives the Christian life from day to day. Why? *Because it is within our power to lift up Christ before the world.*

Christians are failing on many battle fronts today because they are not lifting up Christ to the world. In speaking of His death, Jesus said, *"And I, if I be lifted up from this earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32). There is, however, another sense by which Christ can be lifted up, and this lifting up is completely within our power. Christ needs to be exalted and lifted up in our present times. Jesus declared that He would draw all men unto Him and that His death would be the means of accomplishing this objective. Because Christ was lifted up upon the cross of Calvary and died for our sins we have the privilege of lifting Him up before the world today as the source of redemption from sin.

We also can be lifted up. How? James 4:10 says, *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."* Each person struggles with the problem of humility in this wealthy, self-centered, and pride-filled world of ours. Can't we see that much of our growth numerically and spiritually has been hindered by our failure to lift up the Christ? *Many of the ills that plague our great brotherhood would vanish overnight if we would begin lifting up Christ.*

The world is looking for Christ. Many may not be aware of their search, their yearning, their longing, but it is there within each one of us. What man will not tell you that he deserves more out of life than he has? Even faithful Christians have yearnings as we are restless souls from here to eternity. We shall not fully rest until we rest with Him!

We must not fail to see our opportunities and to use them fully. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Numbers 21:9) to save those who looked upon it, so also we must lift up Christ, that whosoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. No, we must never lift up Christ to crucify Him afresh,

but rather lift Him up as the crucified.

Christ is light, life, and liberty to those entrapped by the snare of Satan, and we Christians must not fail to lift Him up. It is within our power! We have control of the situation and need to act confidently in daily Christian living. Let each of us lift Him up in our speech, in our morals, in our attitudes, and in our actions. Let us live in such a way that all will know what Christ has meant to our lives. We can lift Him up so that others will not doubt our love.

Let us all lift up the Christ, for it is truly within our power.

Why Worship On Sunday?

KEN TYLER

Congregations worship on Sundays because some special events happened on that day.

■ **Jesus rose on the first day of the week** (Mark 16:9). This verse states, *"Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week"*

■ **The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on that day of the week.** *"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all together in one place ... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:1-4). The day of "Pentecost" literally means "fifty days." It was a special feast of the Jewish Law which was to be observed fifty days after their Passover Feast. It is to be *"on the morrow, after the sabbath"* (Leviticus 23:11,15). So, the day on which the apostles received the Holy Spirit and began their work in preaching the Gospel was Sunday.

■ **The church of the Lord Jesus Christ began on that day.** When the apostles began to preach salvation in the name of Christ, men repented and were baptized into Christ (Acts 2:37-42). They were added together in fellowship and began to evangelize the entire world. From this moment on in the New Testament, one can see a change, for the church of the Lord was now in existence.

■ **The church met on Sunday for the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper** (Acts 20:7).

■ **These congregations continued to meet on Sundays, and**

were given additional instructions about other things. They were told to *"lay by in store"* on this first day (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). They were also to use this time for *"exhorting one another"* (Hebrews 10:25).

It was right for the Jews to observe the Sabbath, but this law was not given to Christians. In fact, Christians are taught in specific terms not to follow the Law of Moses (Romans 7:1-6). That law was fulfilled and nailed to the cross (Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:14). Christians follow Jesus, and in doing so follow His new covenant (Hebrews 8:6-8). Under this new covenant, Jesus led the early Christians to worship on Sundays.

What is the Church of Christ?

BILL DILLON

The church of the Bible cannot be any part of a denomination. It is neither Catholic nor Protestant. It is the spiritual body of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Wherever Christ is preached and men believe in Him, repent, and are baptized into Christ, Christians are made (Acts 2:36-40). Wherever and whenever believers are obedient to the Gospel of Christ, they become members of the church of Christ.

Individuals then work with a local group of fellow Christians, and together they form a congregation of God's people. They are purely and simply Christians—**nothing more, less, or else!**

It is our task today to reproduce the New Testament order of things. We appeal for a restoration of the early church and the unity of all Christians.

The church of the Lord is the saved (Acts 2:47). The church (the body of Christ) is the **appointed place** for all the saved. In the days of the patriarch Noah, God put salvation in the ark (Genesis 6-9). When the floodwaters came, all human life not on the ark of safety was lost (1 Peter 3:20,21). Eight precious souls were delivered while the rest of the ungodly and disobedient multitudes were destroyed. In the time of the Great Deluge salvation was in the ark. And more, there was only one ark.

In the days of the lawgiver Moses, God placed salvation under the blood of the Passover Lamb. The Lord told the Israelites to put

the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. The Lord's assurance was, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you*" (Exodus 12:13). During the long night that followed in Egypt, the death of the first-born of each house took place where the blood was not found. God was clear in His meaning and true to His Word in putting salvation or deliverance under the blood of the Lamb.

In the New Testament age of Bible time God has, as He has in the past, specified salvation in a certain place. Today, salvation is in the church, as stated in Acts 2:47, "*The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*"

Truly, "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).

But I did Obey

JACK W. CARTER

These were the words of King Saul when he returned from his mission to destroy the Amalakites and Samuel asked him why he had not obeyed the voice of the Lord.

Saul was telling the truth up to a point. But the real point was that he had not obeyed the voice of God in everything.

In this particular instance, Saul and his men had kept some of the animals and the "choice things" spoil. This violated the specific instructions from God that clearly outlined how Saul and his army were to completely destroy every living creature of the Amalakites.

How is it that Saul came to reason in such a way? He seemed to conclude that obeying *the major thrust* of God's direction was the only really important requirement. Disobeying God in one or two trivial matters seemed to be nothing really important.

Saul lost his kingdom because he entertained such reasoning. I am convinced that in the day of judgment, many people will stand beside Saul to lose much more than a kingdom and for the same reason.

Partial obedience is really no obedience at all. For whatever reason—whether we feel that the little things get in the way of what we want for ourselves, or we did obey in ignorance—we will

eventually learn that God will no more accept disobedience from us than He did from King Saul. The problem is, we may learn it too late.

UNPROFITABLE OR UNHOLY

T. PIERCE BROWN

Jesus said in Matthew 25:30, *"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* So we might assume that if we are unprofitable, we are unholy and lost. However, it may be well for us to realize that the word "unprofitable" is used six times in the KJV and is translated from four different words. They are all related, but apparently have slightly different meanings.

Even when the same word is used, it may have a slightly different meaning in a different context, as is the case with many English words. For example, in Luke 17:10, we find, *"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."* Here is pictured a servant who has done all the things commanded, and is therefore presumed to be in a saved relationship with God. Yet, he is called unprofitable. The Greek word here is "achreios (akh-ri-os)" and apparently means, "without merit". He has done all he is supposed to do, but he did not thereby profit God, or give Him any more than His due.

In Romans 3:12 and Titus 3:9, the same root word is used in a verb form and refers to one whose character is such that he has become useless to God. A similar word is used in Philemon 1:11, where Paul is talking about Onesimus. He was at one time unprofitable to Philemon, for he had run away. It had nothing to do with his being in a lost or sinful state, but he was lost to Philemon.

My primary point in this article is to help us to understand that although we are all unprofitable servants in the sense that we do not give God any "profit" or gain by any or all of the obedient acts we perform, it does not mean that we are therefore lost. We simply do not *deserve* to be saved and cannot claim to be saved on the basis of *having done all we are supposed to do*, which none of us have.



OUR PLEA 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 the one church of the Bible 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 believe in Christ, repent of wrong, confess Christ the Son of God, and 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).
3. That all followers of Christ, everywhere, should be known as Christians, after His name alone, with no Prefixes or Suffixes, 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 which contain doctrines and commandments of 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).

Printed and Published by Sunny David for Church of Christ, B-350, Chitrangan Park, New Delhi and Printed at: Print India, A-38/2, Mayapuri Phase-I, New Delhi-110064. Editor: Sunny David (Cell: 09810896789, E-mail: sunny_davidin@yahoo.co.in).

Regd. No. 26921/71

Postal Regn. No.
DL(S)-17/3154/2009-2011
Licence to Post without Prepayment
No. U/SE/25/2009-2011
Posted at Lodi Road HO
on 10-11 July 2012

Total No. of pages 24+cover

**Welcome to the Services of
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**B-350 (L.G.F.)
Chitranjan Park
Near Market #1
New Delhi-110019**

SUNDAY

Bible Study	... 10.00 A.M.
Sunday School	... 10.00 A.M.
Worship	... 11.00 A.M.

English/Hindi

To:

From:

THE BIBLE TEACHER
P.O. Box 3815
New Delhi-110049