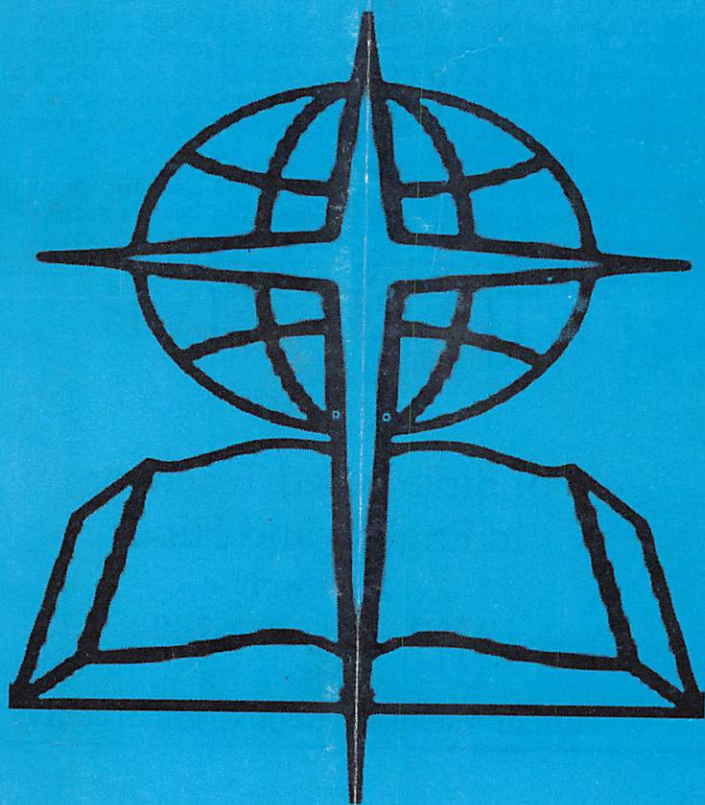


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BACK TO BASICS

Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). 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 church.

Of what denomination did those three thousand become members? Of 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).

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THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 43

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No. 7

Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

The Life Of The Flesh Is In The Blood

IT HAS been said that when America's first President, Mr. George Washington, had died due to excessive bleeding, in the year 1799, near his bed was lying a copy of the Bible which says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." (Leviticus 17:11). But his physicians, who were treating him, did not understand the important role of the blood in the body, thought bleeding a patient would rid his body of impurities and restore his health, so they kept on draining his blood, because they believed that that was the best way to treat the President. The physicians did not realize that they were, in fact, draining away his life into a bucket when they took blood from his veins.

As a matter of fact, men did not understand the important role of the blood and its circulatory system until only in recent times. Until over two hundred years ago physicians used to believe that bleeding a patient would rid his body of impurities and restore his health. Modern science, however, in the last two hundred years through researches has learned that it used to be a foolish treatment, for it weakens the body by draining away its life-giving fluid, which is blood.

Modern science has learned that it is the blood that carries on all the life process of the body. That it is the blood that absorbs the oxygen from the air in the lungs and carries this oxygen throughout the body. That it is the blood that collects the carbon dioxide and other wastes which are then discharged by the blood into the lungs

and breathed out of the body. That it is the blood that collects digested food and distributes it to the various parts of the body.

But the point is, how did Moses, who wrote in the Bible almost three thousand five hundred years ago, before the development of the modern science, know, as he wrote in the Bible, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood ... for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life." (Leviticus 17: 11, 14). Neither Moses nor any other person of the ancient time had any personal knowledge that could have led to such a statement. If God didn't tell Moses to write it in the Bible, then who did? Only by the inspiration of God Moses could have written this fact in the Bible. "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21).

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Putting off the Old Man of Sin

Lesson 3

ADULTERY

J.C. CHOATE

FOR our study at this time I would like for us to think about what the Bible has to say about Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, and Adultery. It is important that we study these matters since the world has become so liberal in its thinking and attitudes toward marriage. Even in this part of the world there are more and more divorces or the breaking up of marriages. This means that homes or families are broken for whatever reason, and in many cases there is the second marriage. The results of all of this is that children are tossed about, left without security, and permanently damaged emotionally. As this continues on into the years to come, can you imagine the kind of world we are going to find ourselves in?

During recent years there have been many enemies unleashed on the home and family life. There are those who openly encourage men and women, and especially young people, to live together and to have children without bothering to be lawfully married.

that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). But many will not discipline themselves, and insist on *"having pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thes. 2:12).

Why is there so much chaos and immorality in the world? The answer is simple: *"Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one"* (James 5:5-6). And, as the apostle Peter wrote of some, *"Men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you"* (2 Pet. 2:13). When people live by the motto of, "If it feels good, do it!" immorality will run rampant. And it is. That is the broad way.

SOME DON'T KNOW THEY ARE LOST

The most difficult job of any preacher of the gospel is to convince folk they are lost. When one who is walking the broad way realizes that he is in a lost condition, he is usually willing to do anything to have salvation. But as long as one is "satisfied" with his condition, he will do nothing to change it. A man lost in the woods may be firmly convinced he is heading in the right direction; but when he crosses his own trail and thus realizes he is lost, then he begins putting into practice the woods lore that will bring him back to safety. As long as he is convinced that he is not lost, he will wander aimlessly and get farther from safety with each step. And the same thing is true in the spiritual realm.

God tells us plainly, *"Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:1-2). This is really the picture of everyone who is walking the broad way. *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, it should be easy to show anyone his need for salvation. But such is not the case.

In the "Great Commission," Jesus said, *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16). Isn't that simple? Anyone hearing that promise, and realizing he is lost, is going to do immediately what the Lord said. But when he is convinced he is not lost, or is convinced that he is already saved, he will find all kinds of reasons for not doing what the Lord said.

zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). But the fact remains that the many (as compared with the few) will walk the broad way. Why? We must look to man to find the reason, for there is where the fault lies. When one is not saved, it is **HIS** fault, not God's. But why do men reject God's way and rebelliously walk that broad way? A search through the Scriptures reveals several reasons.

SOME LIVE FOR IMMEDIATE PLEASURE

The tiny child often will not accept the idea that he must wait for gratification, he insists on having it **NOW**. And there are many such tiny tots in the "adult" world today! We read about Abraham, *"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb. 11:8-10). He was not looking for "instant gratification." He was willing to "serve now, enjoy later." His son and grandson followed the same narrow path: *"And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city"* (Heb. 11:15-16).

This is the same kind of faith, and life, that Moses had: *"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward"* (Heb. 11:24-26). When people insist on a life of "enjoy now, pay later," they walk *"the broad way."* And they will pay.

God wants us to be happy, and offers to us the eternal pleasures of heaven. But some insist on whatever pleasure they can find in the "here and now," As the prophet wrote, *"The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23). The molding of our character by our self-control and the chastening of God, is unacceptable to the many who walk the broad way. Yet, *"All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them*

be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." (Romans 7:2, 3). Paul later spoke of a widow, and that if she should be married again that she should marry only in the Lord, that is, is a Christian she should marry only a Christian. He said, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39). Although the wife is free to marry again, once her husband dies, the same would be true of the husband, if the wife died.

So what is the conclusion in all of this? The conclusion is that God has a law concerning marriage and man and woman must abide by that law. To ignore it, and to disobey God's law in marriage, is but to sin against God and oneself. It is only when we respect God's will in marriage, and comply with it, that we can have a good marriage and a good family life.

Why Some Walk The "Broad Way"

CLEM THURMAN

ENTER ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

It is a sad fact, as the Lord Jesus pointed out in those verses above, that many people are going to be lost for walking *"the broad way."* The Bible tells us: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). Again, the Bible says, *"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:3-4). God loves us and wants us to be saved. Yet, many travel that broad way, *"which leadeth to destruction."* But why do men travel that broad way?

If people walk the broad way, it is surely not God's fault. Neither is it the fault of Jesus, who loved us enough to die on the cross for us: *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession,*

divorced. Then Christ backed that up by saying, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marryeth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matthew 19:9) Let us make some observations from this statement:

1. It has always been God's will, from the beginning to the present day, that there should be but one man and one woman in marriage, and that should be for a life time. Marriage is a serious thing. It should not be entered into lightly. It should be a permanent bond.

2. There is only one thing that can break a marriage, as long as both the husband and wife are still living, and that is unfaithfulness or fornication on the part of the husband or the wife. When one or the other is immoral with some other man or woman, then the marriage contract is broken. Even then the guilty party may ask for forgiveness, and the innocent party may forgive their companion, and in that case the marriage can be saved. But if circumstances are such that the guilty party refuses to make things right, then the innocent party may put the guilty party away or may ask for a divorce.

3. Only the innocent party is free to marry again, provided that the innocent party marries someone who has not been married before, or marries an innocent party of a similar situation. But the guilty party cannot marry again. If the guilty party marries then he or she commits adultery and the one that marries the guilty party commits adultery. Adultery is a term that refers to an unlawful or unscriptural marriage relationship. Now it might seem harsh to say that the guilty party cannot marry again, but that is the penalty for sin. Also, once one commits adultery then the only way that individual can be forgiven for adultery is to repent or cease to live in an adulterous union. But someone may ask, "What if there are children involved?" It should be pointed out that having children does not justify an adulterous relationship. It is true that sometimes innocent people must suffer the consequences for the sins of others, but God will not forgive sin until it is repented of and that person obeys God.

The Apostle Paul tells us that a man and woman are bound together in lawful marriage until one or the other dies. Then he says, "But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband

a number of reasons, but this is not advised. To try to live with one's parents, then the parents want to continue to look on the newly marrieds as their children, to tell them what to do and not to do, and so on. This might work out all right in the beginning, but the longer it goes on the more difficult it becomes, especially on the wife. Therefore it is better for a new married couple to depart from their parents and go out on their own to have their own place, to work and to provide for their own needs. Remember that the Lord created man and woman, and he knows what is best for them. Paul, in talking about the church, in its relationship with Christ, or the church as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom, goes on to quote from the Genesis record when he says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31).

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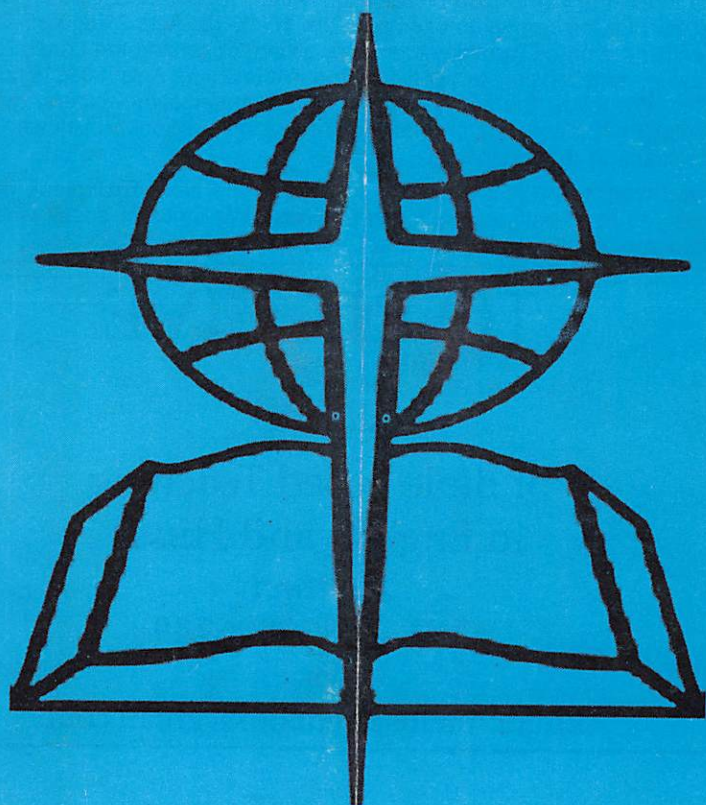
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Please notice too that man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife that they might be one flesh. It is possible for a new married couple to make their home with their parents for

a number of reasons, but this is not advised. To try to live with one's parents, then the parents want to continue to look on the newly marrieds as their children, to tell them what to do and not to do, and so on. This might work out all right in the beginning, but the longer it goes on the more difficult it becomes, especially on the wife. Therefore it is better for a new married couple to depart from their parents and go out on their own to have their own place, to work and to provide for their own needs. Remember that the Lord created man and woman, and he knows what is best for them. Paul, in talking about the church, in its relationship with Christ, or the church as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom, goes on to quote from the Genesis record when he says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31).

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2. There is only one thing that can break a marriage, as long as both the husband and wife are still living, and that is unfaithfulness or fornication on the part of the husband or the wife. When one or the other is immoral with some other man or woman, then the marriage contract is broken. Even then the guilty party may ask for forgiveness, and the innocent party may forgive their companion, and in that case the marriage can be saved. But if circumstances are such that the guilty party refuses to make things right, then the innocent party may put the guilty party away or may ask for a divorce.

3. Only the innocent party is free to marry again, provided that the innocent party marries someone who has not been married before, or marries an innocent party of a similar situation. But the guilty party cannot marry again. If the guilty party marries then he or she commits adultery and the one that marries the guilty party commits adultery. Adultery is a term that refers to an unlawful or unscriptural marriage relationship. Now it might seem harsh to say that the guilty party cannot marry again, but that is the penalty for sin. Also, once one commits adultery then the only way that individual can be forgiven for adultery is to repent or cease to live in an adulterous union. But someone may ask, "What if there are children involved?" It should be pointed out that having children does not justify an adulterous relationship. It is true that sometimes innocent people must suffer the consequences for the sins of others, but God will not forgive sin until it is repented of and that person obeys God.

The Apostle Paul tells us that a man and woman are bound together in lawful marriage until one or the other dies. Then he says, "But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband

be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." (Romans 7:2, 3). Paul later spoke of a widow, and that if she should be married again that she should marry only in the Lord, that is, is a Christian she should marry only a Christian. He said, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39). Although the wife is free to marry again, once her husband dies, the same would be true of the husband, if the wife died.

So what is the conclusion in all of this? The conclusion is that God has a law concerning marriage and man and woman must abide by that law. To ignore it, and to disobey God's law in marriage, is but to sin against God and oneself. It is only when we respect God's will in marriage, and comply with it, that we can have a good marriage and a good family life.

Why Some Walk The "Broad Way"

CLEM THURMAN

ENTER ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

It is a sad fact, as the Lord Jesus pointed out in those verses above, that many people are going to be lost for walking "*the broad way*." The Bible tells us: "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life*" (John 3:16). Again, the Bible says, "*This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*" (1 Tim. 2:3-4). God loves us and wants us to be saved. Yet, many travel that broad way, "*which leadeth to destruction*." But why do men travel that broad way?

If people walk the broad way, it is surely not God's fault. Neither is it the fault of Jesus, who loved us enough to die on the cross for us: "*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession,*"

zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). But the fact remains that the many (as compared with the few) will walk the broad way. Why? We must look to man to find the reason, for there is where the fault lies. When one is not saved, it is **HIS** fault, not God's. But why do men reject God's way and rebelliously walk that broad way? A search through the Scriptures reveals several reasons.

SOME LIVE FOR IMMEDIATE PLEASURE

The tiny child often will not accept the idea that he must wait for gratification, he insists on having it **NOW**. And there are many such tiny tots in the "adult" world today! We read about Abraham, *"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb. 11:8-10). He was not looking for "instant gratification." He was willing to "serve now, enjoy later." His son and grandson followed the same narrow path: *"And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city"* (Heb. 11:15-16).

This is the same kind of faith, and life, that Moses had: *"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward"* (Heb. 11:24-26). When people insist on a life of "enjoy now, pay later," they walk *"the broad way."* And they will pay.

God wants us to be happy, and offers to us the eternal pleasures of heaven. But some insist on whatever pleasure they can find in the "here and now," As the prophet wrote, *"The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23). The molding of our character by our self-control and the chastening of God, is unacceptable to the many who walk the broad way. Yet, *"All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them*

that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). But many will not discipline themselves, and insist on *"having pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thes. 2:12).

Why is there so much chaos and immorality in the world? The answer is simple: *"Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one"* (James 5:5-6). And, as the apostle Peter wrote of some, *"Men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you"* (2 Pet. 2:13). When people live by the motto of, "If it feels good, do it!" immorality will run rampant. And it is. That is the broad way.

SOME DON'T KNOW THEY ARE LOST

The most difficult job of any preacher of the gospel is to convince folk they are lost. When one who is walking the broad way realizes that he is in a lost condition, he is usually willing to do anything to have salvation. But as long as one is "satisfied" with his condition, he will do nothing to change it. A man lost in the woods may be firmly convinced he is heading in the right direction; but when he crosses his own trail and thus realizes he is lost, then he begins putting into practice the woods lore that will bring him back to safety. As long as he is convinced that he is not lost, he will wander aimlessly and get farther from safety with each step. And the same thing is true in the spiritual realm.

God tells us plainly, *"Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:1-2). This is really the picture of everyone who is walking the broad way. *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, it should be easy to show anyone his need for salvation. But such is not the case.

In the "Great Commission," Jesus said, *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16). Isn't that simple? Anyone hearing that promise, and realizing he is lost, is going to do immediately what the Lord said. But when he is convinced he is not lost, or is convinced that he is already saved, he will find all kinds of reasons for not doing what the Lord said.

The problem is that he doesn't know he is lost. If he realized that he was lost, he would do as the Lord directed in order to be saved.

SOME DO NOT REALLY BELIEVE

In spite of their protests, when people claim they believe in Jesus, and still refuse to do what He says, they don't really believe. That we are saved by faith is the dominant theme of the gospel of Christ: *"It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"* (Rom. 1:16). The power of God to save is utilized through our faith. That is why the Bible says, *"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him"* (Heb. 11:6). There follows in this chapter a list of "heroes of faith" who, by faith, did what God told them to do.

But many are not satisfied with God's way. They want to follow their feelings, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Prov. 14:12). Some follow their own reasonings, deciding on the basis of their own experience and wisdom what is right. But we cannot reject the guidance of God without rejecting His salvation. When Jesus sent the apostles out to preach, He told them, *"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me"* (Luke 10:16). Many walk the broad way because they don't believe the word of the Lord. While giving "lip service," they ignore his requirements for them.

SOME TRUST IN THEIR OWN GOODNESS

No one can save himself. And no one can do enough, nor obey perfectly enough, to earn his salvation. Yet many folk still trust in their own goodness to save them. "I'm living just as good as those who claim to be Christians!" But this argument ignores the Savior! We don't save ourselves by our goodness: *"Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us"* (Titus 3:5). And this is echoed in Eph. 2:8-9, *"For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory."* If any man could be saved by his own goodness (or good works), he would have reason to boast. But we are saved by grace.

The central theme of the Roman letter is this *"salvation by grace through faith."* Note this theme in Rom. 3:23-25; 5:1; 5:8-10 and 6:3-4. *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ*

Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood . . . Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners.

Christ died for us . . . For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. . . 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 unto 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." That is salvation by grace through faith.

SOME REFUSE TO CHANGE

Jesus Christ demands that we change. Contrary to what many think, He did not come to save people **IN** their sins! He came to save people **FROM** their sins. And there is an eternity of difference in those two concepts. Jesus said, *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish"* (Luke 13:3). Unless a person is willing to turn from his sins, he cannot be saved. He can insist on his "right" to walk the "broad way," but he will pay the price for it! As Peter told the Jews of his day, *"Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out"* (Acts 3:19). Many folk, walking the broad way, just don't want to change directions.

Many refuse to "change religions." But the Lord said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me"* (John 14:6). There is no other access to God—He is it! Many insist on "the church of my choice," as though that idea is found in the Bible. But it is not! The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and Paul wrote, *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all"* (Eph. 4:4-6). That "narrow way" which Jesus described does not give us a choice of churches, any more than He offers us a choice of gods!

Many refuse to change, saying, "My parents brought me up in this faith, and I will not change now." But, consider this: Every person who became a Christian in the times of the apostles had to change religions! That's right. Those who were Jews had to leave the old law to accept Christ (Col. 2:14; Gal. 5:4). Those Gentiles who became Christians had to leave their idols and vain worship. And even those who were "nothing" religiously had to change to become dedicated followers of the Lord.

Many enter the wide gate and walk the broad way. Don't be part of that group. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, believe His word and do what He says. In eternity, you will know the cost of walking that narrow way was small compared with the joys of heaven.

THE GREATEST TREASURE

O.P. BAIRD

MANY people want to be rich in worldly wealth. Most of their time, thoughts, and energy are given to gaining material wealth. They think they will find meaning and fulfillment in life if they can gain enough of that kind of wealth. But such riches are deceitful and do not bring the satisfaction and happiness that is expected. In the parable of the sower Jesus spoke of *"the deceitfulness of riches"* as something that chokes out the Word of God from the heart (Matthew 13:22). Jesus also said, *"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses"* (Luke 12:15).

Paul warned against loving money and wanting to be rich. In a letter to Timothy he said, *"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil..."* (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

There is another kind of wealth that is far greater than material wealth. It is the wealth that God gives. It is the treasure of the kingdom of heaven. Paul wrote, *"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ"* (Ephesians 3:8). The riches of Christ were preached. Therefore those who received the preaching by faith and obedience received the riches which are so great the human mind cannot search them out and fully understand how great they are.

Jesus used parables to describe the nature of the kingdom of heaven. He said, *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field"* (Matthew 13:44). The kingdom of heaven with all its blessings is the greatest treasure.

If a person could possess all the wealth of the world it would be nothing compared to the value of the kingdom of heaven.

This great treasure is the gift of God by His grace. Jesus came to give us that treasure. Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9). Can we imagine how rich Jesus was when He was in heaven and *"was with God and was God"* (John 1:1)? He gave up the riches of heaven temporarily to come and die as the atoning sacrifice for our sins so He could take us to be with Him and share the riches of heaven with Him. He made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16,17). See Philippians 2:5-11.

Not only will God's redeemed children enjoy the riches of heaven in eternity, but by His grace He enriches us now. *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace"* (Ephesians 1:7). God is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4), and His mercy extended to us enriches us. *"Now hope does not disappoint us, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us"* (Romans 5:5). Any one who has God's love in his heart has the greatest treasure, the treasure that enriches him now and forever.

In Christ we have God's forgiveness of our sins and all the eternal spiritual riches. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ"* (Ephesians 1:3). This gives greater joy and satisfaction than the world could ever give. It gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

The Battle that Has CHANGED The World

PATRICK BOYNES

IT HAS been thousands of years since the war between God and Satan started—the war between the Truth and the lie. This war may come to its end any time, but questions concerning its origin and who the winner is arise. I think the Bible is able to give answers to these questions. Let us consider the origin of the conflict between God and Satan.

Before the earth was created, God created heavens and angels (Genesis 1:1; Job 38:3-7). The angels included seraphs, cherubs, and archangels, the heavenly host of God. It is thought that among this huge host one angel was endowed with great strength and power. He began to challenge God, and he won many of the angels over to his side (Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 25:41). He led them out to battle God. Some of these angels have been reserved in outer darkness (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), where they are awaiting the judgment.

But the great fallen angel, Satan himself, was cast out of heaven and goes about the earth as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The net of delusion and sin which he has so skillfully thrown over mankind still entangles people so that they die in their sins (1 John 3:8; Romans 6:23).

Many times God sent prophets and angels to the earth, but people continued to listen to the Evil One. Two thousand years ago God Himself came to the earth in the person of the man Jesus Christ, to give salvation and deliverance from Satan's trap. Christ devoted His entire earthly life to man and his salvation. He taught people, healed them, and finally He died for them.

On Calvary the second battle between God and Satan took place. This battle changed everything. The stake was indescribably great—man's eternal life with God in heaven. The victory was gained at a high price—the life of Jesus Christ! In order that we might overcome Satan through Him, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. "It is accomplished," He said before He died. He finished the work! He paid the price! He is victorious!

Satan has lost the battle. He has lost everything. Today, anyone who accepts Christ's sacrifice on the cross gains eternal life and becomes a child of God (John 3:14-18; 1:12). This battle has changed the world. It will change your life if you let the Winner come in and live with you (Revelation 3:20,21). *"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved..."* (John 10:9).

ONE IS SAVED BY FAITH AT BAPTISM

JERRY JENKINS

ACCORDING to Paul's statement to the Ephesians, there is only one baptism. *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even*

as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:4-7).

This one baptism is **water** baptism, based on the following facts:

- Holy Spirit baptism was never **commanded**; water baptism was. "*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*" (Acts 10:47). "*And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days*" (Acts 10:48).
- The baptism of the Great Commission is that which can be **administered by man**. "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*" (Matthew 28:19). Holy Spirit baptism could be administered **only** by Christ. "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*" (Matthew 3:11). Therefore, the **one baptism** authorized for those lost in sin was **baptism in water**.

Some in the church at Rome accepted the philosophy that since one is saved by God's grace, the more sin in which they indulged, the more that grace would abound, so why not keep on sinning so that grace might abound even more?

Paul's response—"God forbid," or "may it never be so." He shows that in physical death a person no longer lives the life which he formerly lived. In other words, the sinner dies to the life of sin. Paul affirms this, not only in the lives of others, but in his own as well. "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*" (Galatians 2:20).

Since these brethren had **died** to the desire to sin, it was natural that they should be **buried**. No other act would so fittingly represent the complete *ending of a life of sin*. Bible baptism is by *immersion*. Thayer, the great lexicographer, defines **baptism**: "immersion, submersion." Mosheim, the historian, asserts, "In this century (the first), baptism was administered in convenient places, without the public assemblies; and by immersing the candidate wholly in water."

To the lexicographic evidence and the historical evidence could

incentive of future reward. Nevertheless, our loving God offers highly alluring awards for our faithful service. These help us to endure hardships, avoid distractions, and to stick with the Lord until the end. Otherwise, we might be tempted to drop out of the race before reaching our goal.

GOD HAS ALWAYS OFFERED REWARDS

Bible history confirms that, since ancient times, God has always extended promises of reward to those who follow Him. Noah was promised escape from the flood for his family, and *"moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ..."* (Hebrews 11:7). Abraham looked for the reward of receiving the land of Canaan for himself and his family. As a result, *"he went out, not knowing whither he went,"* in order to obtain it (Hebrews 11:8). He had also been given an even greater promise of a future Heavenly city. *"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (verse 10). Moses gave up the riches of Pharaoh's palace for greater riches promised by God, motivating him to face the wrath of the Egyptian king in order to become the leader of God's people in the exodus to the promised land. In the wilderness, he endured the Israelites' stubborn unbelief and bad manners for 40 years. He did it all because *"he had respect unto the recompense of the reward"* (Hebrews 11:26).

REWARDS GOD HAS PROMISED TODAY

To those who give themselves to follow Christ today, God once again offers great inducements for faithfulness. Among these are forgiveness of sins, peace of mind, the presence of the Spirit of God in us, life after death, the resurrection from the dead and the accompanying glorious body, escape from eternal punishment, a home in Heaven, and eternal life. What more could we ask for? These promises are to those who *"diligently seek Him"* and are worth any amount of sacrifice in order to attain. Friends, let us reach out for the prize God has graciously set before us!

What Was The Purpose Of Miracles?

GUY V. CASKEY

In many churches of Christendom, the claim is made that many powers—such as healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, speaking in tongues, and other manifestations of the

The Bible Teacher

be added the evidence from the circumstances, i.e., John baptized people in the river (Mark 1:9) and chose a place near Aenon, because there was "much water" there (John 3:23). Philip and the nobleman both *went into the water and both came up from the water* (Acts 8:36-39). If we knew nothing of the Greek language, the historians, the commentators, nor the critics, Paul's statement that we are *buried in baptism*, should suffice.

Next, Paul states that we are raised from the dead by the power of God to "*walk in newness of life.*" It is of note that this new life begins *after* baptism, and not *before* it. It was this new life that brought thanksgiving to Paul's heart. "*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*" (Romans 6:17-18).

These verses clearly show *when* one is saved: when he/she has in sincerity obeyed that form of doctrine. The doctrine was the death, burial, and resurrection. The form (tupo), signifies a mould into which melted metals were poured to receive the form of the mould. The gospel doctrine is a mould, into which the Romans were put by their baptism in order to make their fashions anew. It is then that one is made free from sin and begins his/her new Christian life.

The Recompense of The Reward

JOHN THIESEN

IN HEBREWS 11:6 we read these words: "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must have that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that dilige Him.*"

From this we learn that faith in God includes his rewards for service. Reward is a powerful motivator for jobs because of the reward of pay. Businessmen, businesses in hope of profits. Athletes at the Olympics. Aspiring singers and actors for years, hoping to make the big time. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts work eagerly for years, hoping to make the big time in the earth for gold and silver.

Likewise, God has many rewards for those who serve him.

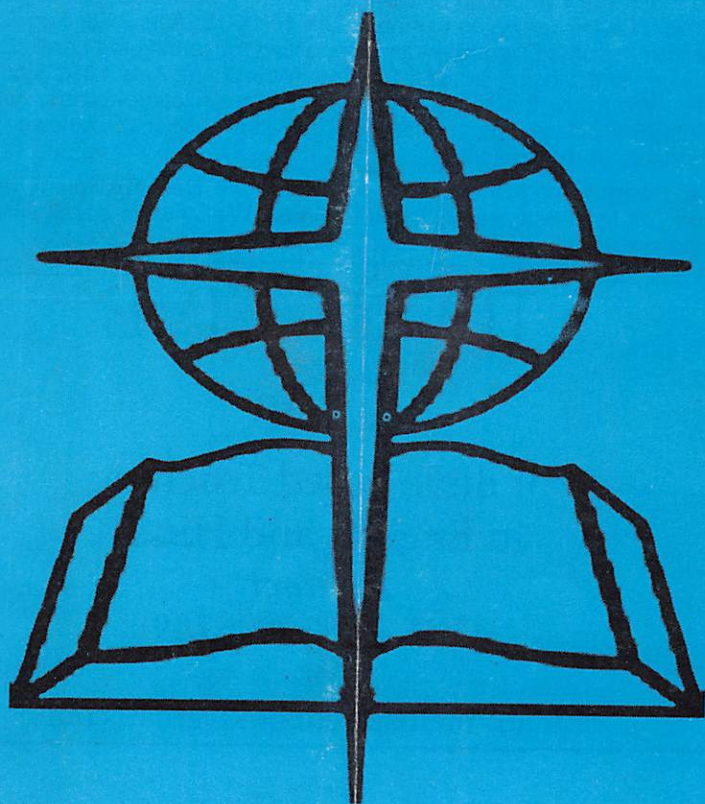
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BACK TO BASICS

Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). 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? Of no denomination. Indeed, denominationalism as we know it today did not even exist then. They had simply obeyed the Gospel and were added by the Lord to His church. They had 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. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 8:35-39). 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, and 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 I urge you to investigate churches of Christ. We strive to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where the Bible is silent.

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Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

The Life Of The Flesh Is In The Blood

IT HAS been said that when America's first President, Mr. George Washington, had died due to excessive bleeding, in the year 1799, near his bed was lying a copy of the Bible which says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." (Leviticus 17:11). But his physicians, who were treating him, did not understand the important role of the blood in the body, thought bleeding a patient would rid his body of impurities and restore his health, so they kept on draining his blood, because they believed that that was the best way to treat the President. The physicians did not realize that they were, in fact, draining away his life into a bucket when they took blood from his veins.

As a matter of fact, men did not understand the important role of the blood and its circulatory system until only in recent times. Until over two hundred years ago physicians used to believe that bleeding a patient would rid his body of impurities and restore his health. Modern science, however, in the last two hundred years through researches has learned that it used to be a foolish treatment, for it weakens the body by draining away its life-giving fluid, which is blood.

Modern science has learned that it is the blood that carries on all the life process of the body. That it is the blood that absorbs the oxygen from the air in the lungs and carries this oxygen throughout the body. That it is the blood that collects the carbon dioxide and other wastes which are then discharged by the blood into the lungs

and breathed out of the body. That it is the blood that collects digested food and distributes it to the various parts of the body.

But the point is, how did Moses, who wrote in the Bible almost three thousand five hundred years ago, before the development of the modern science, know, as he wrote in the Bible, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood ... for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life." (Leviticus 17: 11, 14). Neither Moses nor any other person of the ancient time had any personal knowledge that could have led to such a statement. If God didn't tell Moses to write it in the Bible, then who did? Only by the inspiration of God Moses could have written this fact in the Bible. "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21).

Note: I encourage you to obtain and listen to the Audio C.D. "All About The Bible."

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Putting off the Old Man of Sin

Lesson 3

ADULTERY

J.C. CHOATE

FOR our study at this time I would like for us to think about what the Bible has to say about Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, and Adultery. It is important that we study these matters since the world has become so liberal in its thinking and attitudes toward marriage. Even in this part of the world there are more and more divorces or the breaking up of marriages. This means that homes or families are broken for whatever reason, and in many cases there is the second marriage. The results of all of this is that children are tossed about, left without security, and permanently damaged emotionally. As this continues on into the years to come, can you imagine the kind of world we are going to find ourselves in?

During recent years there have been many enemies unleashed on the home and family life. There are those who openly encourage men and women, and especially young people, to live together and to have children without bothering to be lawfully married.

Marriage and family life are ridiculed and it is said that they are old fashioned and out of date, that there is a need for a new order. Homosexuality is held up as being an alternative life style. Among the unmarried, as well as the married, abortion is openly practised. Things are being done today out in the open, and with the acceptance of the world, that just a few years ago would have been frowned on and considered a disgrace to those who engaged in such. It shows how far man has gone, but it is in the wrong direction.

I am here to tell you that God has spoken on these matters, and it is time that we take note of that, as set forth in the Bible, show respect for it, and obey the Lord. To fail to do that is asking for trouble. The Bible says that whatever we sow that we shall also reap, that if we sow to the flesh that we will reap corruption. (Galatians 6:7, 8).

You will remember that in the beginning God created man, but then he saw that it was not good for man to be alone. Then he proclaimed, "I will make an help-meet for him." (Genesis 2:18). We read on, where it says, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:21-24).

You will note that it is clearly stated that there was a man and then there was a woman. It also says that it was not good for man to be alone. It is of course possible for man to be alone, or to go through life without a wife, or for a woman to go through life without a husband. But they are not complete alone, that is, alone they cannot reproduce. Man and woman become complete, or one flesh, when they are united. They can have children without being married, but to have God's approval and blessings, and to be able to abide together lawfully with all of the privileges that go with a legal union, they must commit themselves to one another and obey the law of God and man. This is called marriage.

Please notice too that man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife that they might be one flesh. It is possible for a new married couple to make their home with their parents for

a number of reasons, but this is not advised. To try to live with one's parents, then the parents want to continue to look on the newly marrieds as their children, to tell them what to do and not to do, and so on. This might work out all right in the beginning, but the longer it goes on the more difficult it becomes, especially on the wife. Therefore it is better for a new married couple to depart from their parents and go out on their own to have their own place, to work and to provide for their own needs. Remember that the Lord created man and woman, and he knows what is best for them. Paul, in talking about the church, in its relationship with Christ, or the church as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom, goes on to quote from the Genesis record when he says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31).

When we turn to Matthew 19 we have the Pharisees, a religious sect of that day, coming to Jesus to tempt him by asking him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Matthew 19:3). Reading on, Jesus responded by saying, "Have, ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matthew 19:4-6). Please notice that Jesus goes all the way back to the beginning of God's dealing with man, and man's relationship with woman. He was saying by that, that what was true in the beginning was still true. He also made it clear that when man and woman come together in marriage, meaning that they have been joined together, then God has joined them or recognized them to be one, and therefore whatever God has joined together then let not man put asunder, separate, and destroy.

The Pharisees then came back and wanted to know, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" (Matthew 19:7). With this, they thought that they had trapped Jesus in a contradiction. Jesus was teaching that whatever God had joined that no man should put asunder, but Moses had allowed a writing of divorcement. Then Jesus explained, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." (Matthew 19:8). He was saying then that Moses or God had tolerated this but that from the beginning it was not God's will for man and woman to be

divorced. Then Christ backed that up by saying, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and who so marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matthew 19:9). Now let us make some observations from this statement:

1. It has always been God's will, from the beginning to the present day, that there should be but one man and one woman in marriage, and that should be for a life time. Marriage is a serious thing. It should not be entered into lightly. It should be a permanent bond.

2. There is only one thing that can break a marriage, as long as both the husband and wife are still living, and that is unfaithfulness or fornication on the part of the husband or the wife. When one or the other is immoral with some other man or woman, then the marriage contract is broken. Even then the guilty party may ask for forgiveness, and the innocent party may forgive their companion, and in that case the marriage can be saved. But if circumstances are such that the guilty party refuses to make things right, then the innocent party may put the guilty party away or may ask for a divorce.

3. Only the innocent party is free to marry again, provided that the innocent party marries someone who has not been married before, or marries an innocent party of a similar situation. But the guilty party cannot marry again. If the guilty party marries then he or she commits adultery and the one that marries the guilty party commits adultery. Adultery is a term that refers to an unlawful or unscriptural marriage relationship. Now it might seem harsh to say that the guilty party cannot marry again, but that is the penalty for sin. Also, once one commits adultery then the only way that individual can be forgiven for adultery is to repent or cease to live in an adulterous union. But someone may ask, "What if there are children involved?" It should be pointed out that having children does not justify an adulterous relationship. It is true that sometimes innocent people must suffer the consequences for the sins of others, but God will not forgive sin until it is repented of and that person obeys God.

The Apostle Paul tells us that a man and woman are bound together in lawful marriage until one or the other dies. Then he says, "But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband

be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." (Romans 7:2, 3). Paul later spoke of a widow, and that if she should be married again that she should marry only in the Lord, that is, is a Christian she should marry only a Christian. He said, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39). Although the wife is free to marry again, once her husband dies, the same would be true of the husband, if the wife died.

So what is the conclusion in all of this? The conclusion is that God has a law concerning marriage and man and woman must abide by that law. To ignore it, and to disobey God's law in marriage, is but to sin against God and oneself. It is only when we respect God's will in marriage, and comply with it, that we can have a good marriage and a good family life.

Why Some Walk The "Broad Way"

CLEM THURMAN

"ENTER ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

It is a sad fact, as the Lord Jesus pointed out in those verses above, that many people are going to be lost for walking *"the broad way."* The Bible tells us: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). Again, the Bible says, *"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim. 2:3-4). God loves us and wants us to be saved. Yet, many travel that broad way, *"which leadeth to destruction."* But why do men travel that broad way?

If people walk the broad way, it is surely not God's fault. Neither is it the fault of Jesus, who loved us enough to die on the cross for us: *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession,*

zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). But the fact remains that the many (as compared with the few) will walk the broad way. Why? We must look to man to find the reason, for there is where the fault lies. When one is not saved, it is **HIS** fault, not God's. But why do men reject God's way and rebelliously walk that broad way? A search through the Scriptures reveals several reasons.

SOME LIVE FOR IMMEDIATE PLEASURE

The tiny child often will not accept the idea that he must wait for gratification, he insists on having it **NOW**. And there are many such tiny tots in the "adult" world today! We read about Abraham, *"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb. 11:8-10). He was not looking for "instant gratification." He was willing to "serve now, enjoy later." His son and grandson followed the same narrow path: *"And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city"* (Heb. 11:15-16).

This is the same kind of faith, and life, that Moses had: *"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward"* (Heb. 11:24-26). When people insist on a life of "enjoy now, pay later," they walk *"the broad way."* And they will pay.

God wants us to be happy, and offers to us the eternal pleasures of heaven. But some insist on whatever pleasure they can find in the "here and now." As the prophet wrote, *"The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23). The molding of our character by our self-control and the chastening of God, is unacceptable to the many who walk the broad way. Yet, *"All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them*

that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). But many will not discipline themselves, and insist on *"having pleasure in unrighteousness"* (2 Thes. 2:12).

Why is there so much chaos and immorality in the world? The answer is simple: *"Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one"* (James 5:5-6). And, as the apostle Peter wrote of some, *"Men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you"* (2 Pet. 2:13). When people live by the motto of, "If it feels good, do it!" immorality will run rampant. And it is. That is the broad way.

SOME DON'T KNOW THEY ARE LOST

The most difficult job of any preacher of the gospel is to convince folk they are lost. When one who is walking the broad way realizes that he is in a lost condition, he is usually willing to do anything to have salvation. But as long as one is "satisfied" with his condition, he will do nothing to change it. A man lost in the woods may be firmly convinced he is heading in the right direction; but when he crosses his own trail and thus realizes he is lost, then he begins putting into practice the woods lore that will bring him back to safety. As long as he is convinced that he is not lost, he will wander aimlessly and get farther from safety with each step. And the same thing is true in the spiritual realm.

God tells us plainly, *"Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:1-2). This is really the picture of everyone who is walking the broad way. *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, it should be easy to show anyone his need for salvation. But such is not the case.

In the "Great Commission," Jesus said, *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned"* (Mark 16:15-16). Isn't that simple? Anyone hearing that promise, and realizing he is lost, is going to do immediately what the Lord said. But when he is convinced he is not lost, or is convinced that he is already saved, he will find all kinds of reasons for not doing what the Lord said.

The problem is that he doesn't know he is lost. If he realized that he was lost, he would do as the Lord directed in order to be saved.

SOME DO NOT REALLY BELIEVE

In spite of their protests, when people claim they believe in Jesus, and still refuse to do what He says, they don't really believe. That we are saved by faith is the dominant theme of the gospel of Christ: *"It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"* (Rom. 1:16). The power of God to save is utilized through our faith. That is why the Bible says, *"Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him"* (Heb. 11:6). There follows in this chapter a list of "heroes of faith" who, by faith, did what God told them to do.

But many are not satisfied with God's way. They want to follow their feelings, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Prov. 14:12). Some follow their own reasonings, deciding on the basis of their own experience and wisdom what is right. But we cannot reject the guidance of God without rejecting His salvation. When Jesus sent the apostles out to preach, He told them, *"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me"* (Luke 10:16). Many walk the broad way because they don't believe the word of the Lord. While giving "lip service," they ignore his requirements for them.

SOME TRUST IN THEIR OWN GOODNESS

No one can save himself. And no one can do enough, nor obey perfectly enough, to earn his salvation. Yet many folk still trust in their own goodness to save them. "I'm living just as good as those who claim to be Christians!" But this argument ignores the Savior! We don't save ourselves by our goodness: *"Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us"* (Titus 3:5). And this is echoed in Eph. 2:8-9, *"For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory."* If any man could be saved by his own goodness (or good works), he would have reason to boast. But we are saved by grace.

The central theme of the Roman letter is this *"salvation by grace through faith."* Note this theme in Rom. 3:23-25; 5:1; 5:8-10 and 6:3-4. *"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ*

Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood . . . Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners.

Christ died for us . . . For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. . . 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 unto 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." That is salvation by grace through faith.

SOME REFUSE TO CHANGE

Jesus Christ demands that we change. Contrary to what many think, He did not come to save people **IN** their sins! He came to save people **FROM** their sins. And there is an eternity of difference in those two concepts. Jesus said, *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish"* (Luke 13:3). Unless a person is willing to turn from his sins, he cannot be saved. He can insist on his "right" to walk the "broad way," but he will pay the price for it! As Peter told the Jews of his day, *"Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out"* (Acts 3:19). Many folk, walking the broad way, just don't want to change directions.

Many refuse to "change religions." But the Lord said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me"* (John 14:6). There is no other access to God—He is it! Many insist on "the church of my choice," as though that idea is found in the Bible. But it is not! The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and Paul wrote, *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord; one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all"* (Eph. 4:4-6). That "narrow way" which Jesus described does not give us a choice of churches, any more than He offers us a choice of gods!

Many refuse to change, saying, "My parents brought me up in this faith, and I will not change now." But, consider this: Every person who became a Christian in the times of the apostles had to change religions! That's right. Those who were Jews had to leave the old law to accept Christ (Col. 2:14; Gal. 5:4). Those Gentiles who became Christians had to leave their idols and vain worship. And even those who were "nothing" religiously had to change to become dedicated followers of the Lord.

Many enter the wide gate and walk the broad way. Don't be part of that group. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, believe His word and do what He says. In eternity, you will know the cost of walking that narrow way was small compared with the joys of heaven.

THE GREATEST TREASURE

O.P. BAIRD

MANY people want to be rich in worldly wealth. Most of their time, thoughts, and energy are given to gaining material wealth. They think they will find meaning and fulfillment in life if they can gain enough of that kind of wealth. But such riches are deceitful and do not bring the satisfaction and happiness that is expected. In the parable of the sower Jesus spoke of *"the deceitfulness of riches"* as something that chokes out the Word of God from the heart (Matthew 13:22). Jesus also said, *"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses"* (Luke 12:15).

Paul warned against loving money and wanting to be rich. In a letter to Timothy he said, *"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil..."* (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

There is another kind of wealth that is far greater than material wealth. It is the wealth that God gives. It is the treasure of the kingdom of heaven. Paul wrote, *"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ"* (Ephesians 3:8). The riches of Christ were preached. Therefore those who received the preaching by faith and obedience received the riches which are so great the human mind cannot search them out and fully understand how great they are.

Jesus used parables to describe the nature of the kingdom of heaven. He said, *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field"* (Matthew 13:44). The kingdom of heaven with all its blessings is the greatest treasure.

If a person could possess all the wealth of the world it would be nothing compared to the value of the kingdom of heaven.

This great treasure is the gift of God by His grace. Jesus came to give us that treasure. Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich"* (2 Corinthians 8:9). Can we imagine how rich Jesus was when He was in heaven and *"was with God and was God"* (John 1:1)? He gave up the riches of heaven temporarily to come and die as the atoning sacrifice for our sins so He could take us to be with Him and share the riches of heaven with Him. He made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16,17). See Philippians 2:5-11.

Not only will God's redeemed children enjoy the riches of heaven in eternity, but by His grace He enriches us now. *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace"* (Ephesians 1:7). God is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4), and His mercy extended to us enriches us. *"Now hope does not disappoint us, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us"* (Romans 5:5). Any one who has God's love in his heart has the greatest treasure, the treasure that enriches him now and forever.

In Christ we have God's forgiveness of our sins and all the eternal spiritual riches. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ"* (Ephesians 1:3). This gives greater joy and satisfaction than the world could ever give. It gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

The Battle that Has CHANGED The World

PATRICK BOYNES

IT HAS been thousands of years since the war between God and Satan started—the war between the Truth and the lie. This war may come to its end any time, but questions concerning its origin and who the winner is arise. I think the Bible is able to give answers to these questions. Let us consider the origin of the conflict between God and Satan.

Before the earth was created, God created heavens and angels (Genesis 1:1; Job 38:3-7). The angels included seraphs, cherubs, and archangels, the heavenly host of God. It is thought that among this huge host one angel was endowed with great strength and power. He began to challenge God, and he won many of the angels over to his side (Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 25:41). He led them out to battle God. Some of these angels have been reserved in outer darkness (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), where they are awaiting the judgment.

But the great fallen angel, Satan himself, was cast out of heaven and goes about the earth as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The net of delusion and sin which he has so skillfully thrown over mankind still entangles people so that they die in their sins (1 John 3:8; Romans 6:23).

Many times God sent prophets and angels to the earth, but people continued to listen to the Evil One. Two thousand years ago God Himself came to the earth in the person of the man Jesus Christ, to give salvation and deliverance from Satan's trap. Christ devoted His entire earthly life to man and his salvation. He taught people, healed them, and finally He died for them.

On Calvary the second battle between God and Satan took place. This battle changed everything. The stake was indescribably great—man's eternal life with God in heaven. The victory was gained at a high price—the life of Jesus Christ! In order that we might overcome Satan through Him, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. "It is accomplished," He said before He died. He finished the work! He paid the price! He is victorious!

Satan has lost the battle. He has lost everything. Today, anyone who accepts Christ's sacrifice on the cross gains eternal life and becomes a child of God (John 3:14-18; 1:12). This battle has changed the world. It will change your life if you let the Winner come in and live with you (Revelation 3:20,21). *"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved..."* (John 10:9).

ONE IS SAVED BY FAITH AT BAPTISM

JERRY JENKINS

ACCORDING to Paul's statement to the Ephesians, there is **only one baptism**. *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even*

as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:4-7).

This one baptism is **water baptism**, based on the following facts:

- Holy Spirit baptism was never **commanded**; water baptism was. *"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" (Acts 10:48).*
- The baptism of the Great Commission is that which can be **administered by man**. *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son; and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).* Holy Spirit baptism could be administered **only** by Christ. *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).* Therefore, the **one baptism** authorized for those lost in sin was **baptism in water**.

Some in the church at Rome accepted the philosophy that since one is saved by God's grace, the more sin in which they indulged, the more that grace would abound, so why not keep on sinning so that grace might abound even more?

Paul's response—"God forbid," or "*may it never be so.*" He shows that in physical death a person no longer lives the life which he formerly lived. In other words, the sinner dies to the life of sin. Paul affirms this, not only in the lives of others, but in his own as well. *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).*

Since these brethren had **died** to the desire to sin, it was natural that they should be **buried**. No other act would so fittingly represent the complete *ending of a life of sin*. Bible baptism is by *immersion*. Thayer, the great lexicographer, defines **baptism**: "immersion, submersion." Mosheim, the historian, asserts, "In this century (the first), baptism was administered in convenient places, without the public assemblies; and by immersing the candidate wholly in water."

To the lexicographic evidence and the historical evidence could

be added the evidence from the circumstances, i.e., John baptized people in the river (Mark 1:9) and chose a place near Aenon, because there was "*much water*" there (John 3:23). Philip and the nobleman both *went into the water and both came up from the water* (Acts 8:36-39). If we knew nothing of the Greek language, the historians, the commentators, nor the critics, Paul's statement that we are *buried in baptism*, should suffice.

Next, Paul states that we are raised from the dead by the power of God to "*walk in newness of life*." It is of note that this new life begins *after* baptism, and not *before* it. It was this new life that brought thanksgiving to Paul's heart. "*But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness*" (Romans 6:17-18).

These verses clearly show *when* one is saved: when he/she has in sincerity obeyed that form of doctrine. The doctrine was the death, burial, and resurrection. The form (tupo), signifies a mould into which melted metals were poured to receive the form of the mould. The gospel doctrine is a mould, into which the Romans were put by their baptism in order to make their fashions anew. It is then that one is made free from sin and begins his/her new Christian life.

The Recompense of The Reward

JOHN THIESEN

IN HEBREWS 11:6 we read these words: "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*"

From this we learn that faith in God includes believing in God's rewards for service. Reward is a powerful motivator. We go to our jobs because of the reward of pay. Business men start new businesses in hope of profits. Athletes "run for the gold" at the Olympics. Aspiring singers and actors sometimes toil in poverty for years, hoping to make the "big time" and become a star. Boy and Girl Scouts work eagerly for patches. Prospectors dig tirelessly in the earth for gold and minerals.

Likewise, God holds out rewards for serving Him. Of course, there are many benefits in just knowing God, without the extra

incentive of future reward. Nevertheless, our loving God offers highly alluring awards for our faithful service. These help us to endure hardships, avoid distractions, and to stick with the Lord until the end. Otherwise, we might be tempted to drop out of the race before reaching our goal.

GOD HAS ALWAYS OFFERED REWARDS

Bible history confirms that, since ancient times, God has always extended promises of reward to those who follow Him. Noah was promised escape from the flood for his family, and *"moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ..."* (Hebrews 11:7). Abraham looked for the reward of receiving the land of Canaan for himself and his family. As a result, *"he went out, not knowing whither he went,"* in order to obtain it (Hebrews 11:8). He had also been given an even greater promise of a future Heavenly city. *"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (verse 10). Moses gave up the riches of Pharaoh's palace for greater riches promised by God, motivating him to face the wrath of the Egyptian king in order to become the leader of God's people in the exodus to the promised land. In the wilderness, he endured the Israelites' stubborn unbelief and bad manners for 40 years. He did it all because *"he had respect unto the recompense of the reward"* (Hebrews 11:26).

REWARDS GOD HAS PROMISED TODAY

To those who give themselves to follow Christ today, God once again offers great inducements for faithfulness. Among these are forgiveness of sins, peace of mind, the presence of the Spirit of God in us, life after death, the resurrection from the dead and the accompanying glorious body, escape from eternal punishment, a home in Heaven, and eternal life. What more could we ask for? These promises are to those who *"diligently seek Him"* and are worth any amount of sacrifice in order to attain. Friends, let us reach out for the prize God has graciously set before us!

What Was The Purpose Of Miracles?

GUY V. CASKEY

AMONG many churches of Christendom, the claim is made that miraculous powers—such as healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, speaking in tongues, and other manifestations of the

Holy Spirit—continue with God's people today. Each denomination insists that it receives this power directly from God and bases its claim for genuineness upon examples and cases of miracles; which, it is contended, still occur and serve to confirm their assertion.

But each religious group preaches a different doctrine, which conflicts with that taught by another group that makes the same claim to work miracles. They are in strong opposition to and irreconcilable disagreement with one another, and, yet, each claims to work miracles by God's power and that such manifestations are irrefutable proof of their true and divine character. Surely, it can be seen that God does not confirm with signs the preaching of one sect, while, at the same time, he is confirming with the same miracles the opposite and contradictory doctrines proclaimed by another sect. This would make God inconsistent and the author of confusion. We know that He is not.

WHO HAD POWER TO WORK MIRACLES?

1. Jesus. During the Lord's ministry upon the earth, He performed many miracles. "For this Man works many signs" (John 11:47). "This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee" (John 2:11). He opened the eyes of the blind (Matthew 9:27-30), unstopped the ears of the deaf, loosed the tongue of the mute (Mark 7:32-35), caused the lame man to leap as a deer (Isaiah 35:6) and raised the dead (Matthew 11:5; John 11:43-44). While He had compassion on men who were diseased and unfortunate, His primary reason for performing these miracles was to prove that He was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

2. The Apostles. The Lord promised His apostles the power to work miracles. "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, ~~cast out~~ demons" (Matthew 10:7-8). He assured them of additional power. "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which' He said, 'you have heard from Me for John truly

baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:4-8).

On the first Pentecost, after the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and gave them this power to work miracles and speak in languages which they had not learned (Acts 2:1-11).

One has but to read with some observation the Acts of the Apostles to learn that these men, selected by Jesus to be His witnesses, His personal representatives, received power to work many and various miracles. Paul said to the Corinthians, "Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds" (II Corinthians 12:12). "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people" (Acts 5:12).

3. Those on whom the apostles laid their hands. Certain ones in the church of the first century received miraculous gifts by the "laying on of the apostles hands." Seven godly men, of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, were selected by the church and appointed by the apostles to do a special work in the church at Jerusalem—to distribute food and clothing to some widows who had been overlooked. These men were "... set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them" (Acts 6:1-6).

One of these men, Philip, later worked miracles as he preached the gospel in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:5). "And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:6). But Philip did not have the power to impart these miraculous gifts to others.

This belonged exclusively to the apostles. Not until Peter and John, apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ came to Samaria did any of the Christians there receive miraculous gifts, or the power to work miracles. "Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given" (Acts 8:17-18).

In many places in the New Testament, we are reminded that

that the Holy Spirit would: (1) Teach the apostles all things. (2) Bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had spoken to them. (3) Guide them into all truth.

Paul later spoke to the Corinthian church upon this same topic, in these words: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory" (I Corinthians 2:7). In verse 10, he continues with this thought, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." This is what Jesus promised to do.

The gospel was revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit and they preached all that Jesus commanded. They did it without error. To the Ephesian Christians he said that the unsearchable riches of Christ had not been revealed to the Gentiles in the past, but, "... it has now been revealed by the Spirit... that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" (Ephesians 3:5-6).

The apostles, in turn, preached the word, which they had received, from the Lord. "For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Note one other passage which states that the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to the apostles, "To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into" (I Peter 1:12).

2. Miracles served to confirm and verify the truth. When Jesus sent the apostles out on the Great Commission, it is said, "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20).

It should be well understood that the New Testament was not written at this time, and so miracles attended them to establish and corroborate the gospel message they preached. The miracles served to support with evidence the divine authority by which they proclaimed Christ.

The Hebrew writer said, "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great

the transmission of this miraculous power to others belonged solely to the apostles. When Paul came to Ephesus, he found there certain ones who had been baptized unto John's baptism. He taught them the truth about Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and they were immediately baptized into Christ. "... And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues [languages] and prophesied" (Acts 19:1-6).

To the church in Rome, he wrote these words, "For I long to see you, that I [an apostle] may impart to you some spiritual gift" (Romans 1:11). "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:6). Not all Christians in the early church received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul discussed this very lesson with the Corinthian church. "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? (I Corinthians 12:29-30). The obvious answer is that all in the church did not exercise these miraculous gifts—only those on whom the apostles had laid their hands.

PURPOSE OF THESE MIRACLES

1. Miracles served the purpose of revealing the truth. "But the Helper, [one who stands by the side of] the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26).

Jesus was getting ready to return to the Father, but He realized that the apostles would need some help in remembering and teaching the gospel to the ends of the earth. So, He promised them a miraculous measure of the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. He assured them that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things; and He would enable them to recall all that He taught them while He was with them. Without miraculous help, they would have been unable to do this. Jesus gave them the fullest assurance that they would be divinely assisted in what they should speak. "... do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (Luke 12:11-12).

In further discussing with them the help they would receive from the Holy Spirit after He had gone back to heaven, Jesus said, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth ..." (John 16:13). From these verses, we are shown

a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will" (Hebrews 2:2-4)?

These were supernatural proofs by which the truth was established—shown to be genuine and authentic. The inspired truth was written down, committed to record, by those providentially prepared men whom the Lord selected. Now you and I have access to the truth that was revealed and confirmed (John 20:30-31; II Timothy 3:16-17).

Once the truth had been revealed and established by miraculous power, there is no further need for the exercise or use of that power. Jesus said all of the truth would be revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit. Further revelation of truth is impossible. The truth, which the apostles preached, was completely verified, and no man can further prove it. It can be preached, but it was proved almost two thousand years ago.

WERE MIRACLES TO CONTINUE?

Listen to Paul as he discusses this subject with the Corinthians: "Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away" (I Corinthians 13:8-10).

God's will was revealed by the Holy Spirit only a part at a time, "bit by bit." A full and complete revelation was not made known to the apostles at once. Miraculous powers such as prophecies, foreign languages, supernatural knowledge, were some of the means by which the gospel was revealed and confirmed. But when the gospel system was completely revealed, miracles had served their purpose and came to an end.

But it is objected that the "perfect" to which Paul refers does not mean the will of God, but the coming of Jesus Christ, who is the "Perfect One." But this is not the case. When Paul said, "When the perfect—to *teleion* is come," he used the neuter gender. Jesus Christ is not neuter gender. He is masculine. In speaking of the will of God in Hebrews 10:9-10, the inspired writer employs the neuter gender. "... He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

The word for perfect means "brought to completion; fully

accomplished, fully developed, complete, entire, as opposed to what is partial and limited" (I Corinthians 13:10, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*). So, when God's revelation to man was completed, "fully developed, entire," there was no further need for miracles. They had served their purpose and come to an end, they were "done away." We now have the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).

"When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." These miraculous gifts, bestowed for the purpose of revealing and confirming the will of God, were distributed to apostles, and through them to evangelists, pastors and teachers. The reason for their bestowal was "for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith" (Ephesians 4:8-13). "The faith" is the entire gospel system.

Jude speaks of it as "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The miraculous gifts were to last until "the faith" was completed, until it became one unit. Once it was made whole, finished, fully developed, the miracles, which had been responsible for its revelation and confirmation passed away. That revelation was completed in about A.D. 96, when the apostle John finished his last letter. Since that day, there has been no need for miracles. We have the word of God, all of the truth into which the apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit, and it is to govern us in all of our beliefs and practices.

NO NEW TRUTH

One must not change, alter or corrupt the gospel as it was preached by the apostles (Galatians 1:6-9). If anyone goes on and does not abide in the teaching, which is from Christ, he does not have God (II John 9). We are warned that if we speak, we must speak as the words of God (I Peter 4:11). Jesus Christ has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3).

The Scriptures are able to furnish us to every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). It is not only dangerous but damning to add to or subtract from the word of God (Revelation 22:18-19). There have been no new revelations through these past two thousand years since the close of the New Testament. There is no such thing as an additional revelation, or a progressional revelation. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth, and we have that truth revealed and confirmed today in the New Testament, the perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2).

THE CASE FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP

DALTÓN KEY

THE New Testament forbids the forsaking of *"the assembling of ourselves together"* (Hebrews 10:25). The early church in Corinth, though in error on many points, still knew enough of God's will to come together each week for worship services. Paul reports they *"came together"* for the purpose of worship (1 Corinthians 11:18). This same apostle tarried seven days in Troas, until the Lord's Day, when he met with the saints of that city in worship (Acts 20:7).

These regular, first-day-of-the-week services were important to the early disciples. In their worship, in accordance with heaven's authority, the first century saints prayed (Acts 2:42; 6:4-6; 13:3), shared in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29), gave freely of their means as they had been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7), were instructed in the Lord's will (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7), and sang (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). These expressions of Christian worship were not optional, neither were they left open to substitution or alteration; they were divinely approved and authorized.

Moreover, early writers and historians of the first few centuries A. D. serve to corroborate the inspired record of early Christian worship. Pliny the Younger, the proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus during the latter part of the first century, wrote a revealing letter concerning the Christians and their worship and sent it to Emperor Trajan. A portion of the letter reads, "They were in the habit of meeting on a fixed day ... when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god." Justin Martyr, in his "First Apology," written near the beginning of the second century, wrote, "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages ... they rise together and send up prayers." He continued by describing their observance of the Lord's Supper, accompanied by prayer. Tertullian, an oft-hailed "church father" of the second century, reported, "We meet together in an assembly and congregation so that praying to God we may win him over by the strength of our prayers ... We meet together in order to read the sacred texts ... with the holy words we feed our faith ... We have a kind of money-chest ... every individual puts in a contribution."

Our worship services each first day of the week are not the

result of human design; they are not the product of mere modern tradition. Our assembling together may be traced back to the authority of Christ and to the time of the apostles and early disciples.

My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?

HOLLIS MILLER

THE words of our Lord which serve as the title for this article bring forth the tenderest of emotions from the Christian heart. The cry of the Son of God is so filled with pain and anguish that only the hardest of hearts can fail to be deeply moved by it.

The cry of Jesus was not a plea for information, for He had taught His disciples that death awaited Him, and why it awaited: *"From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day"* (Matthew 16:21). Elsewhere He said: *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to give His life a ransom for many"* (Matthew 20:28). Even though Jesus knew why He was on the cross, His knowledge did not deliver Him from the indescribable agony the cross brought to His **tortured body**.

It was on the cross that Jesus was made sin for all men. *"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God through Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). To the Galatians Paul wrote: *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us..."* (Galatians 3:13). The words of the apostle clearly teach that the penalty due sin was laid on Jesus. *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5; cf. 1 Peter 2:24). No mortal can comprehend the love of God, but all reasonable men can understand enough about the cross of Christ to know that sin is a dark and terrible enemy of the human race.

"God commendeth His love for us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).



OUR PLEA LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL

That there should be only one church today, as it was in the beginning—Church of Christ—Which Christ Himself built, about which we all can read in the Bible (Matthew 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)).

That there should be only one plan or guideline of salvation, as revealed and taught in the Bible, followed everywhere. That all must believe in Christ, repent of wrong, confess Christ as 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).

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.

That all man-made creed books must be put aside, with all 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).

That we accept the authority of Christ in all religious matters (Matthew 28:18), and strive to abide in the New Testament doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

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