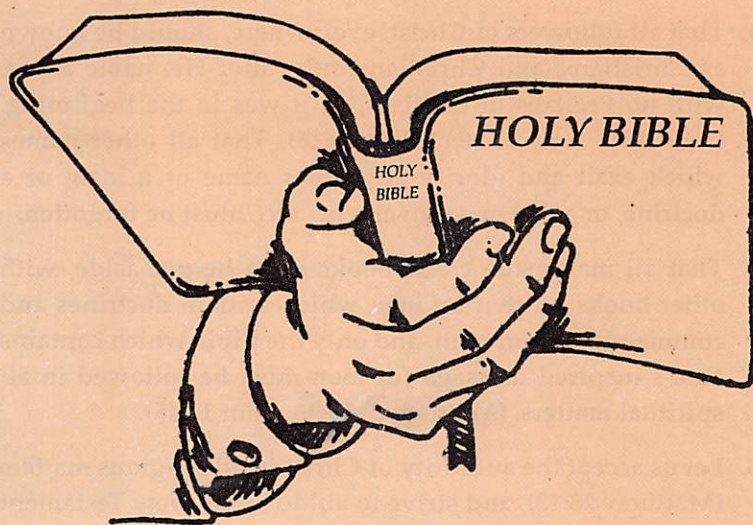


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THE BIBLE TEACHER



OUR PLEA LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL

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

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

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Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

"That They All May Be One"

HAVE YOU ever wondered how differently it would have impacted the world religiously today if all those who claim to be followers of Christ throughout the world were one in Christ? I mean if all of them were Christians only, as they were in the beginning (Acts 11:26), no Catholics, no Protestant, no denominations. In His prayer to the Father in heaven, Christ, just a few hours before His death, had asked, "I do not pray for these alone (*those who were with Him at that time*), but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one**, as you, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, *that the world may believe that You sent Me.*" (John 17:20, 21). Did you notice, what Christ said? The unity of all His followers, He said, would cause the world to believe the fact that He was sent from God.

Did Christ pray for something that was impossible? Is there a possibility that all those who believe in Christ may become one in Him, even today, that is, one in doctrine, one in faith, one in name, one in worship, speaking the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, but that they all may be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and in the same judgment? (1 Corinthians 1:10). It sure is possible, if we just let God has His way in everything in our lives.

In the fourth chapter of the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul, through the inspiration of God, revealed a perfect formula for the

unity in Christ, and, if followed sincerely, it will not only help all believers in Christ to come together on one platform of unity in Christ, but will also help to stay together as one people of God—all Christians, in one body or the church.

The apostle, in Ephesians 4:4-6 mentioned seven things, as necessary ingredients for unity, and said, every one of them is only one. He began by saying, that there is **one body**. What body is he referring to? The body, he is talking about, is the church. In Ephesians 1:22, 23, he wrote about Christ, and said, God has "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to **the church, which is His body...**" Colossians 1:18 says, Christ is the head of *the body, the church*. Christ had promised to build only one church. (Matthew 16:18). And since the church is the body of Christ, and there is one body, hence there is only one church, according to the Bible. We also read that Christ, the Savior, adds all the saved ones to the church (Acts 2:47), that means to the church that is His. So according to the Bible, there is one body, the church.

Then he said, secondly, there is **one Spirit**, or the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration or guidance the Scriptures or the sixty-six books of the Bible were written (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20,21). The one Spirit revealed the whole truth of God to all people alike. He does not teach differently to different people, since God is not the author of confusion, but of peace and harmony. (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Thirdly, he says, there is **one hope**. In Christ, His all followers have one hope, the hope of eternal life in heaven with Him, if they will be faithful to Him until death. (Revelation 2:10; 20:1-4). Christ assured His followers that when He will come back He will receive unto Himself His faithful followers and they will live with Him where He will be. This is the blessed hope of every Christian. But how can Christians hope to live in heaven together if they are not endeavoring to be together in Him on earth?

Fourthly, he said, there is **one Lord**. Christ is the one Lord. (Acts 2: 36). The Lord means the master or the owner to whom His subjects must submit. This is certainly not the will of the Lord Jesus Christ that His followers divide themselves into different bodies or sects or churches, believe and teach different gospels, and wear different sectarian names. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Fifthly, the apostle mentioned that there is **one faith**. The faith he was referring to is the faith that comes by hearing the word of God, (Romans 10:17), not the teachings and the commandments and testimonies of men. (Matthew 15:8, 9). God's word, Christ taught, is like seed. (Luke 8:11). Each seed produces only after its own kind. **We will have not even one denominational church on earth today, if only God's word had been preached everywhere.** God's word will simply not produce one. The pure seed of the word of God, if sown in the hearts of men and women, will produce only Christians and Christians only, and members of the one church that Christ had established. (Acts 26:28; Acts 2:47).

Sixthly, the apostle taught that there is **one baptism**. The baptism Christ had commanded, after His death, burial and resurrection. In Mark 16:16 Christ had commanded, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." So the baptism, Christ had authorized is for salvation or to be saved. The baptism of Christ is for the remission or forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). As many as have been baptized into Christ, reads Galatians 3:27, "have put on Christ." One should be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), in water (Acts 8:35-39), for washing away of sins (Acts 22:16). Baptism of a believer symbolizes the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as declares one's own death of the old man and burial of the old self and resurrection of a new man in Christ. (Romans 6:3-5).

Seventhly, and finally, he wrote, "**one God** and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." That is to say, the seventh of these great ingredients of unity is God Himself. He is the ultimate source of unity of all His people in Him. He is also the source of the life of the new creation, the church. The great commandment, according to Matthew 22: 37, 38 is to love God with all heart and soul and mind. If one truly loves God, he will honor and do what He says. No one can claim to love God and at the same time rejects to accept and do what He says.

Why is it that the prayer of Christ for the unity of all His followers on earth remains unanswered, even after two thousand years? Who is responsible? Are not the very people who claim to be His followers??

Putting Off The Old Man Of Sin

Lesson 16

DRUGS

J. C. CHOATE

AT THE outset, let me remind you again that we are considering lessons that will encourage us to put off the old man of sin and put on the new man of righteousness in Christ Jesus.

Our lesson is on the subject of *DRUGS*. Let me hasten to say, however, that I will not be talking about all drugs. There are many good drugs, drugs that we rely on to help during sickness, to kill the pain during an operation, to treat for certain diseases, etc. As a matter of fact, what would we do without them? But the drugs that I am speaking of have to do with those that are taken to get thrills, to take one to another world, and to put one out of his mind or senses. Those who use drugs in this way misuse them, abuse their bodies and minds with them, and instead of being life saving they become very destructive.

We are told that millions and millions of people around the world are hooked on drugs now. Many of these are young people who are completely wiping themselves out. Generations are being lost in this way. It is a great loss, a terrible tragedy of our time.

No doubt there have always been people in every generation who have been on drugs, but perhaps no time in history have there been more on them than right now. And even though much is being done to stop the flow of drugs, still they continue to go through, and as sure as they reach the market then it is that sure that more and more are going to be getting them, and many of those will end up enslaved to them.

Drugs are taken in a number of ways. They are taken in the form of tablets, through injections into the blood stream, and by smoking what is referred to as pot, grass, and joints in the form of hashish and marijuana. Many children are introduced to them in their schools. It is a big thing for a kid to try some drug, a kind of challenge to join the gang, to first with the unknown, to prove that it can be done, and to see what it is like. Some do it as a means of rebelling against their parents, against the law, authority, society, and the establishment. But once they get into it, then it becomes very difficult to get out of it. There are some things that you just

do not experiment with if you do not want to have trouble.

The ones who are really responsible for all of the drug traffic of our time are the ones who are in it for the money they can make out of it. They smuggle it in, use local people to peddle it, and once they get the young introduced to it then they can continue to sell it to them. Those who are selling it are getting rich off of it and those who are buying it soon find that it is a very expensive habit. But once they become addicted to it then they must have it, someway, somehow. They will spend all they have, all that they can get from their parents, all they can borrow in order to have money enough to go and buy more. They will even rob and kill to get the money to buy it. With all of these young people coming along, with these terrible habits, then we can see why there is a rise in crime. But in spite of all of that, there will be those who will be able to afford it and so they will go on taking their drugs and go on out into life to do supposedly responsible jobs. They might be pilots, working in hospitals, teaching, and thousands of other jobs where that might very well endanger the lives of many as a result of the drugs they take, and their inability to always be alert, to think clearly, to make good decisions, etc. So it is frightening to think about the kind of people that we may be associating ourselves with almost on a daily basis. Just think, for example, of all of those who are out there in the streets or on the highways who may be on drugs. In that case you can never know what they will do and that can be very dangerous. Yes, it is a frightening thought, but something that we must live with because it is there.

There are many lesser or lighter forms of drugs, such as the use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and so on, and these are bad enough, but hard drugs, and their effects on the ones who use them, are beyond description. But why should I be so concerned about people who have chosen to destroy their bodies and minds with drugs? To begin with, I am a Christian, and I have a responsibility to these people. My Lord has commanded me to take the gospel to them and all people of the world. (Mark 16:15, 16). I am concerned about them because they have souls, spirits that have been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27), and they are lost, and will be eternally lost if they continue to go on as they are going. Paul says that the Lord is coming back one day to take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). I am concerned about them

because they are not making the world any better, but only further polluting the world. They are setting a bad example for the young, and even leading many of them astray. I am concerned about them because they are destroying good minds when they could be using their minds to make a contribution to the world's betterment. Instead of helping society, they are becoming dependents on society. Instead of being people that we can be proud of, we must bow our heads because we are ashamed of them.

God made us to honour and glorify him. He made us in such a way that we might use our minds and bodies for good. If we take drugs, because we are afraid to face life and its problems and challenges, because we do not want to accept our rightful responsibilities in this world, then what are we worth to God, to our fellowman, and to ourselves?

The Apostle Paul tells us that our bodies are the temple of God. Hear him, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17). Now note that the inspired man of God says that we are the temple of God, the place where the Holy Spirit dwells, and that we are not to defile it. What will happen if we defile it? We will be destroyed. Now, what if we committed suicide, or filled our bodies and minds full of dope, drugs, etc., that render us helpless and worthless to the Lord? Would that not be defiling our bodies? Would the Lord be pleased with us in that case? I think you already know the answer. My friends, there is simply no way that we can justify the use of drugs that are taken out of habit, not to heal us, but to escape into a world of hallucinations.

Again, Paul said, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with the price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20) In this context, Paul was showing how wrong it was to commit fornication and thus to sin against one's own body, since the body was the temple or the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. But if that be true with fornication, what about that of taking hard drugs into one's body, drugs that are not meant to benefit one but that will end up in harming a person? Surely then this would be a strike against these drugs for kicks.

The scriptures also lists the works of the flesh, which includes drunkenness, and shows that those who indulge in such cannot be saved as long as they continue in those sins. (1 Corinthians 6:2, 10; Galatians 5:19, 21). If drunkenness is included in the works of the flesh, which would be mild in comparison to the hard drugs that are used today, then surely drugs would be included too.

Then there are many other scriptural statements made that would also condemn the use of drugs for pleasure, escape or other vain uses. We are told that we are to abstain from every appearance of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Peter says that we are to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (2 Peter 2:11). To the Christians at Rome, Paul exhorted, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1, 2).

My friends, I do not know who I am speaking to. I may be talking to some who are on drugs. If so, I hope your mind is clear enough to understand that Christ died for you to set you free from drugs and all other bad things. You just need to believe in him, turn from your sins, confess Christ as God's Son, and be buried in the waters of baptism that all of your sins might be washed away. But you might think that it is too late for you. Listen, it is never too late as long as you are alive. If you'll only obey the Lord, he will help you to kick that habit. Your brothers and sisters in Christ will also help you. But you must want to, and you must try. The Lord will not force himself on you. You must do your part, and if you will, then I can assure you that the Lord will do his part, far more than his part.

If you are a young person who is thinking about experimenting with some drugs, then be smart and stay away from such. Do you want to stick your foot in the fire to see if it will burn you or to have your friends to tie your hands and feet and throw you in a river of water to see if you can survive without drowning? Then why do you want to try drugs, when it has been proven again and again that they only destroy? Walk away and prove that you are a man or a woman. I dare you to.

As parents, watch your children's friends. Guard them against drugs. Don't think that your kids would never do it. Precaution is better than sorrow.

Where GOD Put Water

ROY J. HEARN

IF ONE IS a professed believer and follower of Christ, he is obligated to obey the Lord's every command without question, for Christ has all authority (Matthew 28:18) and to reject His word is to disrespect and reject Him (John 12:48). We too often try to please ourselves instead of God. Though God has given an unalterable plan of salvation (Revelation 22:18,19) we are inclined to change or set aside His laws and expect Him to save us anyway. The Bible teaches that only the obedient have any promise of salvation. Therefore, it is imperative we obey God's laws implicitly.

There is much opposition to water in the plan of salvation. Why say so much about water? It is a most important item. Without it physical life could not exist. In the Bible God connects it with all kinds of purification. Peoples' minds have been disturbed and perverted about it, thus need to be taught the truth concerning water in God's plan. The New Testament teaches there is no salvation without it. Study the Bible to learn what God says about it. In this study the reader will note that God placed water *between* man and certain blessings, and the blessings were not received until the water was crossed. We agree that one is saved by God's power; but how does God exercise this power? God exercises His power through His will, His word, His law or covenant. Consider the following examples, note *where God put water* and when the blessing was received.

1. *Between Noah and the purified world, or salvation.* It is true Noah was saved by faith (Hebrews 11:7), an active faith that led him to obey God's commands (Genesis 6:9, 20). If Noah had not obeyed and built the ark he would have also been destroyed. He was also saved by water (1 Peter 3:20). The flood stood between him and the purified state. He was lifted by the water, which destroyed the sinful people, and by it was transported to the purified world. Thus the sinner is now saved by baptism, in which his sins are destroyed by the blood of Christ, and he is transported by baptism into Christ, or the purified state (1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:27).

2. *Between Israel and deliverance from bondage.* The Israelites were in Egypt, typical of sin. They were pursued by Pharaoh, typical

of the devil. They came to the Red Sea, but salvation from Egyptian bondage was beyond the sea. The Red Sea is typical of baptism (1 Corinthians 10:1, 2). The people were not delivered from bondage until they crossed the sea. Just so now, the sinner is not purified of sin until he crosses the water of baptism, which brings him into Christ where salvation is (Romans 6:3, 4; Ephesians 1:7).

3. *Water placed between Naaman and cleansing* (2 Kings 5). Naaman had leprosy. God placed water between him and healing of this dread disease. Naaman didn't like it. He is typical of those who now reject God's remedy (Isaiah 55:8, 9). Naaman wanted to do it his way, instead of God's; but the Lord did not change His word to please Naaman; he had to obey whether or not it suited him. Leprosy is typical of sin. Just as Naaman had to dip in obedience to God's command to be healed, so the sinner must "dip," or be baptized as God commands to be saved from sin. Was the power of cleansing in the water? No, but with God, who cleanses and forgives when we obey His command to be baptized.

4. *Christ put water between the blind man and sight* (John 9). Could not Christ have given this man sight without having him wash his eyes in Siloam? Certainly, but He tested the man's faith by the command to go wash his eyes in the pool. The man obeyed and sight came after the washing. So God today tests our faith by the command to be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

5. *Water was between Saul of Tarsus and sins washed away*. Christ appeared to Saul to qualify him as an apostle, not to save him. He was told to go into Damascus and there he would be told what to do. Ananias was sent to him and told Saul to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

6. *Water is placed between the sinner and righteousness*. Christ is our example (1 Peter 2:21). He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:14). In order to be acceptable to God we also must work righteousness (Acts 10:34, 35). This includes all of God's commands (Psalm 119:172). Baptism is a command of God, therefore, baptism stands between the sinner and righteousness.

7. *Water stands between the sinner and forgiveness* (Acts 2:38). "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Can one be saved without repentance? No? Well, in this passage baptism is coordinate with, equal to, repentance.

Therefore, God put water baptism between the sinner and remission of sins.

8. *God put water between the sinner and Christ.* In order to be saved one must be in Christ. To get into Christ one must be baptized. "For as many of you as have been baptized **INTO** Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

9. *Water stands between the sinner and the blood of Christ.* Christ shed His blood in His death, and water came with it (John 19:34). These two elements are inseparable (1 John 5:8). None can be saved without the blood, but how contact it? Since Christ shed His blood in His death we must be baptized into His death to contact the blood (Romans 6:3, 4). Thus we see the importance of baptism here: it is the medium by which we are brought into contact with the blood, which cleanses our sins. This being true, one does not have salvation until he is baptized to reach the blood.

10. *Water is between the sinner and new life.* Life comes after birth. The new birth includes baptism (John 3:3-5). One is a new creature when he enters Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). One has new life after baptism (Romans 6:4) and gets into Christ by baptism (Galatians 3:27).

11. *GOD PUT WATER BETWEEN THE SINNER AND SALVATION!* "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Christ here put baptism between faith and salvation. This is the Lord's doings, not mine. It is too clear for any to misunderstand. Though baptism may seem foolish to us, remember that God chose the foolish things to put to shame the worldly-wise (1 Corinthians 1:18-27). Let us follow the Lord's ways and be blessed, for, as in the examples above, we see that the blessings received depend upon our compliance with the conditions imposed by Jehovah.

False Accusations Against Jesus

CLEM THURMAN

DURING HIS ministry on earth, there were times when thousands followed after Jesus to hear His teaching and observe the signs He did. During this same time, many accusations were made against him. He was accused of "*eating with publicans and sinners*" (Matt. 9:11), of being from the wrong city (Jno. 1:46), of being

guilty of blasphemy (Matt. 26:65), of being a servant of Satan (Matt. 12:24), of choosing *"ignorant and unlearned men"* to be His apostles (Acts 4:13), of being a threat to Caesar (Jno. 19:12), and many other things. Some of the accusations may seem frivolous to us, but they were deadly serious to those who made them.

Jesus lived such a life that it was later said of Him, *"He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin"* (Heb. 4:15). The Father said of Him, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matt. 17:5). Even those who put Him to death were constrained to say, *"Truly, this man was the Son of God"* (Matt. 27:54). In spite of His perfect life, He was constantly being accused of all manner of things. If He, living a perfect life, was so accused, how can we expect to escape false accusation as we strive to live for Him? The truth is, in every generation, false accusations have been made against those seeking to serve the Lord. It is not different with us in this generation.

Jesus warned, *"If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but ye are not of the world, for I chose you out of the world: therefore the world hateth you"* (Jno. 15:19). People of the world, who refuse to live as Jesus directs, can hardly be expected to approve those who do! Too often we are overly concerned with what the world thinks, and strive to gain approval of the world. But Jesus said, *"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you"* (Lk. 6:26). Such approval comes at too high a price! The apostle Paul wrote later, *"If I yet pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ"* (Gal. 1:10). False accusations will be made, in every generation, in every land. Such are being made today, against the Christ and His church.

"YOU TEACH PEOPLE TO VIOLATE THE LAW"

Because most people in the first century considered Christianity as a new religion among the Jews (Acts 25:19; 28:22), the early church had to be extremely careful about the laws and the customs of both the Jews and Gentiles. Usually, though, when they preached the gospel of Christ, opposition quickly arose. When Paul preached in Philippi, the charge was made, *"These men teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, being Romans"* (Acts 16:21). The charge was false, for Paul was a Roman citizen (v. 37), and there was nothing in the gospel of Christ that would cause one to rebel against established law. Yet in the next city where Paul preached, the same charge is made again: *"They that have turned the world*

upside down have come hither, also" (Acts 17:6). In both Philippi and Thessalonica, because the community leaders could not refute the apostle's teaching, they levelled false accusations against them in order to stir up the people against them.

Some make the accusation today that "the Church of Christ does not believe you have to obey the law." Friend, that is just not true! The Lord said, *"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's"* (Matt. 22:21). There is no reason for a conflict between obeying Christ and obey the law of the land, unless man makes laws that would prevent our obeying Christ (Acts 5:29). Jesus obeyed the Roman law, and He taught His disciples to obey, also. That included paying taxes, even to the corrupt Roman government (Matt. 22:21).

The apostle Paul wrote to Christians, *"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God"* (Rom. 13:1-2). To resist the law is to resist the will of God! Peter simplified it slightly, *"Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake"* (1 Pet. 2:13). The child of God, because he is Christian, sets the example for all society by obeying the laws of the land.

"YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT"

One of the most serious charges the Jews made against Jesus was His failure to *"keep the traditions of the fathers"* (Matt. 15:2). At least to the Jews that was a serious charge. When Paul preached in Ephesus, the Jews made accusation, *"This fellow persuadest men to worship contrary to the law"* (Acts 18:13). Gallio, the Roman proconsul, refused to "hear" the case because it dealt only with the Jewish law. We often hear the charge today, "You don't believe the Old Testament." It was a false charge 1900 years ago, it is false today.

When Jesus was tempted (Matt. 4:1-11), He answered every temptation with a Scripture — Old Testament Scripture. Paul wrote later, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (2 Tim. 3:16). That includes Old Testament writing, too. Those Scriptures are just as true as they ever were. The lessons found there are valuable for us as we strive to live for Christ now: *"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope"* (Rom. 15:4). Yes, we believe the Old Testament is true, that it is from

God. But the real question should be, "Do you believe that the commands of the Old Testament apply to Christians today?"

Many pick out a commandment, or practice, in the Old Testament and say, "You folk don't believe in doing that." Quite often they are right! Shall we build an ark (Gen. 6), offer a son as a sacrifice (Gen. 22), have 1,000 wives (1 Kgs. 11:3), marry an adulteress (Hosea 1:2)? Now, I don't know anyone who believes that all of these are commanded for us today. But then which of the commandments of the Old Testament are for us? Read Heb. 9:15 and 10:9-10, *"For this cause he [Christ] is the mediator of the new testament. . . He taketh away the first, that he might establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."* It is plainly stated that Jesus removed the first (old) testament in order that the New Testament would be in force.

The apostle Paul wrote of the effect of the death of Christ, *"Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances. . . He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross"* (Col. 2:14). When Christ died, the Old Testament, as a governing body of law, also died (Heb. 8:8-13; Eph. 2:14-16). We live today under *"the perfect law of liberty"* (Jas. 1:25) which is the gospel of Christ, the New Testament (Heb. 9:15-17). For any who try to go back to the Old Testament for rule or authority, we would simply point out what God said 1900 years ago: *"Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law, ye are fallen away from grace"* (Gal. 5:4).

"YOU WON'T FELLOWSHIP OTHER GROUPS"

Peter and John were arrested for preaching in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 3). Brought before the Jewish leaders, they boldly preached what they certainly knew would make them very unpopular with those leaders: *"In none other is there salvation, neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, wherein we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Imagine that — the very idea of such a narrow, dogmatic doctrine! The idea that "their way" was the "only way" would not be tolerated by other religious leaders. The apostles preached it, not because it would make them popular, but because it was true. It still is. The Gentiles reacted much as did the Jews. Paul preached Jesus Christ in Athens, and got the opportunity to preach to the religious leaders of the city. His message began, *"Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye*

are very religious" (Acts 17:22). But then he went on to show that their religion was wrong (Acts 17:16,22,30-32). He was more concerned with truth than in trying to get along with people in other religious groups.

Many question today, "Why don't those in the Church of Christ join with other denominations in various works and worship?" The answer to that is two-fold. First, the church of Christ is not a denomination; it never has been. Jesus built it (Matt. 16:18), bought it (Acts 20:28), it is His bride (Eph. 5:22-32), His body (Col. 1:18) and He is the Savior of it (Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). Second, the first-century Christians were told very clearly what to do when confronted with the problem of dealing with people of "other faiths." Paul gave the admonition, *"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? and what agreement hath a temple of God with idols?.. Wherefore, Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord"* (2 Cor. 6:14-17). Notice carefully the five questions asked in this passage. Each one contrasts the "one faith" (Eph. 4:5) with a different faith. How we shall deal with those in a different faith is clearly stated; *"Come ye out. . ."*

Christ refused to conform to the pattern of what other religious leaders wanted, so those leaders made various accusations against Him to discredit and condemn Him. Peter, Paul and the other apostles preached Christ as the only Savior, and false and prejudicial charges were made against them. When people today seek to do the will of the Lord, in His church, wearing His name, following His teaching, and rejecting all human creeds and denominations, there are similar accusations made against them. Let us have the courage of Joshua, who boldly said, *"We will serve the Lord"* (Josh. 24:15), regardless of what anyone else may think. It is the only course to follow, if we would please Him who died on the cross for us.

Is He The Reason For The Season?

BILL BRANDSTATTER

MANY IN THE religious world will be celebrating the 25th day of December as the birthday of Jesus Christ. Manger scene: will

abound around many church buildings. Songs about Jesus in the manger, the shepherds and the wise men will be heard during the Christmas season. Signs outside some church buildings may be seen stating such things as "Let's Keep Christ in Christmas" or "He's The Reason For The Season". Christ, however is not "the reason for the season". Man is. The Bible is void of references to any annual celebration of the birth of Christ, or the "season" in which he was born. Man, not God, invented the holiday known as "Christmas".

The term "Christmas" is not found in Holy Writ. There is not even a mention of the principle found therein. There is no indication of the date of his birth, and to attempt to provide such amounts to the same thing as attempting to set a date for his second coming. Although man is fond of celebrating birthdays, such does not justify doing so with the birth of Christ. In the long ago, Isaiah penned these words of God, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55:8). Any such date set by man is pure speculation. The term "Christmas", according to history, was coined from the 12th century practice of Christes Masse (Mass of Christ). The earliest evidence for a celebration of Christ's birth comes from the time of the Roman emperor Commodus, around A.D. 188.

The feast of Christ's birth was first found in Rome at the time of "bishop" Liberius. It was made official by his decree in A.D. 354. So, for many years the world had not heard of such a celebration. For over 200 years such was unknown to the church. Now, however, it is commonplace among the religious world.

The scriptures provide mankind with "ALL THINGS that pertain unto LIFE and GODLINESS" (II Pet. 1:3). Thus, if the celebration of the birth of Christ pertained to either "life" or "godliness", God would have included it in his revealed word. Therefore, to add a religious significance to the birth of Christ with a religious celebration of the same is to be guilty of adding to God's word, which is sinful (Rev. 22:18). Since all things pertaining to life and godliness have been provided, man's additions are neither needful nor acceptable. Paul wrote, "WHATSOEVER ye do in word OR DEED, DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS" (Col. 3:17). Doing things "in the name of the Lord" means doing things (all things) by his authority. Since his authority (his word) is void of directives for celebrating his birth in a religious setting, to do so is to practice

that which is an addition and, thus, a violation of that word. When one does such, he rests under the condemnation of God. Is the New Testament your authority in matters religious?

ARE WE SPECTATORS?

ALLEN WEBSTER

A SPECTATOR is "one who looks on or watches" (Webster's. 1132). We are all spectators in some ways as we enjoy watching sporting events or fashion shows. But one place where we are not to be mere onlookers is our Christianity. Elijah, facing Jews who were nothing more than religious spectators, said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. *And the people answered him not a word*" (1 Kgs. 18:21). We must be careful that we are always "participants" and not "spectators".

ARE YOU A SPECTATOR IN WORSHIP? Worship, as a part of speech, is usually a verb and each act requires mental energy. Jesus commanded His followers to worship "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). When songs are led, do you listen or sing? When the lesson is preached, do you study or daydream? When the Lord's Supper is passed, do you participate or spectate? For worship to be worthy of God's good pleasure, it demands our best (Mal. 1:13).

ARE YOU A SPECTATOR IN SERVICE? Each Christian is to be active in serving others (Gal. 5:13). When the sick and bereaved are announced, do you pray for them, send cards, offer encouraging words and/or make visits? These things show who we are. (Jn. 13:34-35).

ARE YOU A SPECTATOR IN SOUL WINNING? Is teaching the lost something "they" are supposed to be doing rather than something in which "I" am interested? The command to "teach all nations" was not just given to preachers and elders, but all men (Mt. 28:19).

There is much work to be done. Find your place in the Lord's church, roll up your sleeves and help fight the Lord's battles till He calls His army home!!

The True Joy Of Living

RICHARD H. HOLLERMAN

HAVE YOU ever wondered why so many people seem to be caught in an endless tide of conflict, distress and unhappiness? Do YOU also experience an emptiness of heart and a lack of meaning in life? Actually, you are not alone if you have not found the *true joy of living*. Very, very *few* have found the real answer or cure to a life of unhappiness. The reason for this is that almost everyone has sought fulfillment in the *wrong places*.

Some of the avenues that man has taken to find happiness are materialism, education, sex, philosophy, and social reform. But these have failed. For instance, someone ably described philosophy as "a route of many roads leading from *nowhere* to *nothing*." Bertrand Russell reflected: "Philosophy proved a washout to me." Schopenhauer lamented: "Life is a curse of endless craving and endless unhappiness." Voltaire, the infidel, wrote: "I wish I had never been born." Jay Gould, the millionaire, said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man in the world."

Yet the broad stream of mankind has continued on its downward plunge to destruction. Probably most of you readers are also engulfed in dissatisfaction and unhappiness. But why is this so? Friend, please let me tell you this vital and *important* fact:

Life is ruined by SIN.

Let me explain. When Almighty God created man, he was given freedom of will and choice. God made man holy and sinless in His own image, but he chose to *disobey* God and *sinned*. Since God is pure and holy, sin cannot be in His presence. For this reason, man lost the fellowship that he had with God in the beginning. (Read Genesis 2 and 3.) Man, separated from his Creator and God, is naturally unhappy and cannot find real meaning and contentment in life. Man is incomplete without God.

But what is SIN?

SIN is all unrighteousness (1 John 5:7).

SIN is disobedience to God's will (1 John 3:4).

SIN is failure to live as God would have us live.

SIN is basically *rebellion against God*.

From this we can see that all thoughts, motives, desires and deeds that are contrary to the will of God are SIN. Can any of us say that he is not guilty of sin? No! We have all sinned against

God—and this is the reason that we do not have lives of joy and happiness. The Bible declares:

“There is *none* righteous, not even one . . . for *all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:10, 23).

“But the Scripture has shut up *all* men under *sin*” (Gal. 3:22).

Now please take some time and candidly search your mind and conscience. Think over your words, your way of life, your conduct, your habits and your relationship with others—and think deeply. Then you will agree with God’s Word which says: “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).

As we mentioned before, “your iniquities have separated between you and your God” (Isaiah 59:2 AV). Sin breaks the fellowship between man and God. This is called DEATH. When man sins, he spiritually *dies* and is in bondage to sin (John 8: 34). Therefore, man is “*dead* in trespasses and sins” since “the wages of sin is *death*” (Eph. 2:1 AV; Rom. 6:23).

Finally, since God is *just* and hates sin, He demands that those who sin be condemned to HELL or “the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). Until you personally come to the awareness that you are a *lost sinner* and that you deserve *eternal punishment*, you will not find the answer to a life of un-happiness.

Man is powerless to save himself from the penalty of everlasting death and to be reconciled to God. Therefore, lost man needs a SAVIOR! Our loving God realized this and “the Father has sent the Son to be the *Savior* of the world” (1 John 4:13). “Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*” (1 Tim. 1:15).

This is the *gospel* or “god news” of God’s wonderful grace and mercy extended to man who’s lost in sin. Christ died in the sinner’s place! He was our Substitute. God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that He might become the righteousness of God in Him” (11 Cor. 5:21). God’s *love* moved Him to provide the perfect sacrifice for our sins for He “demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Why is Christ the only Savior? Because:

Christ is the *Son of God* (Matt. 16:16). Christ became flesh or *man* (Phil. 2:5-8). Christ was *sinless* (1 Pet. 2:21-24). Christ conquered *sin* and *death* (Heb. 2:14-17). Christ is the *Source of life* (John 11:25-26).

God’s Son, the eternal Word, was made flesh and was born of

a virgin named Mary. Jesus went about doing good, performing countless miracles, and preaching the gospel. Then Christ was nailed to a cross and died, not for His own sins, but for ours! On the third day, He arose victoriously from the dead by the power of God. He was given "all authority" and went to Heaven where He now pleads for man upon the basis of His shed blood. Yes, the LIVING SAVIOR desires to save YOU from your sins and give you a life of abundant joy.

The Lord Jesus declared: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6). Salvation from sin is *only* in Christ! Your *good works* cannot save you. Your *denomination* cannot save you. Your *family* cannot save you. Since you cannot save yourself, YOU need a SAVIOR!

But Christ cannot save you while you yet love *sin* since SIN separates you from God. You must come to hate, despise, and turn from all sin of which you are aware. This is called REPENTANCE. Christ warned: "Unless you *repent*, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Peter proclaimed: "*Repent* ye therefore, and be converted, that your *sins* may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19 AV). Repentance is likened to a "crucifixion" of the old sinful self when we "die" to sin in our lives (Rom. 6). Dear friend, you must leave sin and turn to God for salvation!

Since Christ is Savior, look to Him for *deliverance* from the *bondage* of *sin*. BELIEVE and TRUST in Him to save you. *Rely* upon Him as Savior and *commit* yourself to Him as Lord. Christ stated: "This is the will of My Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and *believes* in Him, may have eternal life" (John 6:40). "Therefore having been justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read: "For by *grace* you have been saved through *faith*; and that not of yourselves, it is the *gift* of God; not as a result of *works*, that no one should boast." We are not saved by our own works, but by God's undeserved grace and mercy that He gives to us through Christ. Faith (with love, Gal. 5:6) is the natural response of a sinner to the crucified Christ.

Through faith, you must CONFESS Christ. This could be considered "spoken faith." Paul wrote: "If you *confess* with your mouth Jesus as Lord . . . you shall be saved" (Rom. 10:9). Jesus proclaimed: "Every one therefore who shall *confess* Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32).

"Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) are expressed when one is buried with Christ in baptism and comes forth a "new creature." A glorious picture of the *gospel* (the atoning death, burial and resurrection of Christ, I Cor. 15:1-4) and of our *change of heart* is presented in Romans 6:1-11 and Colossians 2:11-13:

1. We *die* to the love, power, and practice of *sin* in our lives, as Christ died *for sin*.
2. We are *buried* in baptism as an expression of our *death* to sin. Through *faith* we are *buried with Him* and *united with Him*, realizing that He died and shed His *blood* for our sins.
3. We *arise* from baptism through *faith* with our sins *forgiven* since we were "crucified" and died with Christ. Christ's blood thus washes our sins away. Even as *Christ arose* from the grave "never to die again," *we also arise* from the grave of baptism "through faith in the working of God" and "walk in newness of life."

Since baptism has this *meaning* of faith and *embodies* repentance, we can understand how Paul could write: "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). We can also see that baptism is a "burial" or *immersion* in water. (Greek scholars agree that the meaning of the Greek word *baptizo* is "to dip, to immerse, to plunge.")

God's instructions to you are: "*Repent*, and let each of you be *baptized* in the name of *Jesus Christ* for the *forgiveness* of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the *Holy Spirit*.... Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Have YOU been immersed in the name of our Lord Jesus?

When Christ becomes your own Savior and Lord, the sins that place you in condemnation will be *forgiven* (Acts 10:43). You will be *justified* or made righteous through Christ (Rom. 3:21-25). You will no longer be separated from God, but will be *reconciled* or united with Him. We read: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (II Cor. 5:19). The *Holy Spirit* will guide, lead and comfort you as a believer. Henceforth your life will take on new meaning and purpose. "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a *new creature*; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (II Cor. 5:17).

The *true joy of living* can come only through Christ Jesus. Joy and peace are fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Happiness is the natural

response of a soul that has been set free from the bondage and consequences of sin. "And the disciples were continually filled with JOY and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:52). In the Christian, happiness comes from *fellowship* with God, *gratefulness* for God's grace, and *expectation* of Christ's return for His followers.

Now that you realize that SIN brings death, eternal separation from God, and unhappiness— and that CHRIST brings life, reconciliation with God, and abiding happiness, please thoughtfully consider *your own* relationship with God. NOW is the time to decide what YOU will do with the Lord Jesus!

Christ said: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). He declared: "I came that they might have *life*, and might have it *abundantly*" (John 10:10). Death is sure and life is uncertain. "It is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment" (Heb.'9:27). Will you come to Christ with love and find eternal life or reject Him and have eternal death?

With Christ in your heart you will find radiant happiness. What will you do with Him? *Jesus Christ is the true joy of living!*

The Fifth Sparrow

HOWELL FERGUSON

A YOUNG Spanish boy in Vigo who became a devout Christian was asked by an Englishman what had been the influence under which he acted. "It was all because of the odd sparrow," the boy replied.

"I do not understand," said the Englishman in surprise. "What odd sparrow?" "Well, Senor, it is this way," the boy said, "A gentleman gave me a Testament, and I read in one Gospel that two sparrows were sold for a farthing. And again in Luke, I saw, 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings ... ?' And I said to myself that Nuestro Senor Jesus Christ knew well our custom of selling birds. As you know, sir, we trap birds, and get one chico for two but for two chicos we throw in an extra sparrow. That extra sparrow is only a make-weight, and of no account at all.

"Now, I think to myself that I am so insignificant, so poor, and so small that no one would think of counting me. I'm like the fifth sparrow. And yet, oh marvelous, Nuestro Senor says, 'Not one of them is forgotten before God.' I have never heard anything like it,

sir. No one but He could ever have thought of not forgetting me." Everybody matters to God. The psalmist said concerning himself, "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top" (Psalm 102:7). When a sparrow has lost its mate—an everyday occurrence—he will sit on the housetop alone, and lament over his bereavement. In addition, these birds are also snared and caught in great numbers, but since they are small and not much use for food, five sparrows may still be sold for two farthings (Luke 12:6), which was a better deal than two sparrows for one farthing (Matthew 10:29). And when you see their countless numbers, and how eager people are to destroy them as worthless nuisances, we can better appreciate Jesus' statement.

Surely, God will take care of us even if we are the fifth sparrow.

LOVE YOUR CHILDREN

VANCE HUTTON

PARENTS ARE like sculptors creating a masterpiece. They carve and chisel little hearts into some type of adults. Young mothers are to be taught, among other things, to love their children (Titus 2:4-5). Fathers share the responsibility of loving their boys and girls.

Parenting is a wonderful privilege but an awesome responsibility. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:3-5).

Love children enough to be good examples before them. Parental behavior ought always to be worthy of imitation. Many parents fall into the category of "do as I say and not as I do" which Jesus strongly denounced (Matthew 23:3). Abraham commanded his children after him (Genesis 18:19). Joshua lived for the Lord and led his family in that direction (Joshua 24:15). God chose a godly couple as earthly parents of Jesus (Matthew 1; Luke 2).

Love children enough to teach them. Deuteronomy 6:7 speaks of teaching the Lord's words diligently to children in the course of everyday events. Ephesians 6:4 commands that children be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Don't hope someone else will teach them. Teach them yourself about the Lord, His church, moral purity, marriage, salvation, and heaven.

Love children enough to discipline them. "He that spareth the rod hateth his son" (Proverbs 13:24). He who loves will chasten (Revelation 3:19). Discipline brings about the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11). Parents should strive to be united and consistent in discipline.

Love children enough to allow them to leave the nest when it is time. The Bible often speaks of leaving father and mother and cleaving to mates (Genesis 2; Matthew 19; Ephesians 5).

To fail to allow children to form that loyalty to a new family is to cause many problems. Children must always honor parents but more allegiance must be given to mates than to parents.

Love your children. Time rushes by.

WHAT IS MAN?

BOB PRICHARD

AN ASTRONOMER once remarked to Fulton J. Sheen, "To an astronomer, man is nothing but an infinitesimal dot in an infinite universe."

"An interesting point of view," Sheen responded, "but you seem to forget that your infinitesimal dot of a man is still the astronomer."

David reminds us of what man the astronomer sees when he looks into the skies. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Psalm 19:1-4).

In view of God's majesty, David marveled that the Creator of the universe would have so much concern for man. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:3-6).

Isn't it mind-boggling to realize that God has not only entrusted man with a world to care for, but also sacrificed His Son for the sins of mankind? "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners,

Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:6-10).

A SENIOR MOMENT

Two elderly couples were enjoying friendly conversation when one of the men asked the other, "Fred, how was the memory clinic you went to last month?"

"Outstanding," Fred replied. "They taught us all the latest psychological techniques: visualization, association, focus, and repeat. It was great."

"That's great! And what was the name of the clinic?"

Fred went blank. He thought and thought, but he couldn't remember. Then a smile broke across his face and he asked, "What do you call that flower with the long stem and thorns?"

"You mean a rose?"

"Yes, that's it!"

He turned to his wife: "Rose, what was the name of that memory clinic?"

"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them."—PSALM 126:2

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