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Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

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What Does the Bible Teach?

*If People Obey The Gospel Only, They Will Be
Christians Only*

CHRIST TAUGHT IN LUKE 8:11, "The seed is the word of God." When God, in the beginning, had created all kinds of plants and trees He had created them to yield seeds according to their kinds, "whose seed is in itself according to its kinds." (Genesis 1:11-12). Thus when we sow seeds of tomatoes, no matter where they are sown, we know we will get tomatoes only from them. The same principle applies to the seed of the word of God. No matter where it is preached or sown in the hearts of men and women it will produce Christians only as it did in the first century. (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28). Have you ever wondered as to why we do not read in the Bible words like, Catholic, Protestant, denominations, etc.? The fact of the matter is none such existed then. Those in the first century, who had obeyed the gospel, became Christians only everywhere. (1 Peter 4:16). Jesus had commanded His disciples to preach the gospel to all people. (Mark 16:15). Not gospels! The gospel of Christ consists of three facts: "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3, 4). Those on the day of Pentecost, about whom we read in the second chapter of the Book of Acts, upon hearing the gospel had obeyed the same gospel to become Christians. (Acts 2:37-41). The men and women in the city of Samaria were baptized into Christ after hearing the gospel preached to them. (Acts 8:12). The Ethiopian eunuch, after

hearing the gospel, didn't want to wait another hour to obey the gospel, as we hear him say to Phillip, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:35-39). The Jailer and the members of his household (Acts:16:30-33), all had done the same thing to become Christians. All of them, after hearing the gospel of Christ, had believed in Christ, repented of their sins, confessed Christ to be the Son of God, and were baptized as Christ had commanded for the forgiveness of their sins. (Matt. 28:19; Romans 10:9,10). According to Acts 2:47, all who were being saved Christ was adding them to His church daily, as He is doing even today. They were Christians only and members of the church Christ had built (Matt. 16:18), and had purchased with His blood. (Acts 20:28).

The nature of the seed, the word of God, has not changed. It will produce the same thing today that it produced in the first century. If people obey the gospel only they will be Christians only even today. The same seed will produce the same crop even today. **When people reject denominationalism and obey the gospel of Christ to become true Christians, they are respecting the prayer of Christ for the unity of all His believers in Him. (John 17:20-21).** But when they join different denominations, they stand condemned by the word of God. Read: 1 Cor.1:10-13.

Is it possible today to simply be Christians and members of the church of Christ, as they were in the beginning, without being part of any denomination? To the ears of many that may sound strange, but this is exactly what the church of Christ is all about. Remember, the word of God, as we have available to us in the Bible, is the seed of the kingdom of God. The word of God is the incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. (1 Peter 1:23). The same seed will produce the same crop anywhere.

Throughout the world hundreds and thousands of congregations of the church of Christ exist today. They are called churches of Christ (Romans 16:16). They are all members of the same one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22,23), and Christ is the only head of His one church. (Colossians 1:18). Members of the church of Christ everywhere come together on every first day of the week (Sunday) to break bread or to take part in the Lord's Supper to commemorate the supreme sacrifice of Christ. (Matt. 26:26-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-29). They sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15); Pray (1 Timothy 2:8); give their offerings (1 Cor. 16:1,2); and study or hear God's message from the Bible (Acts 20:7; 2:42). The Bible

is their only creed they follow; and endeavor to abide in the doctrine of Christ alone. (2 John 9-11). They are Christians only. Through the pages of this Journal we are pleading and imploring to one and all who believe in the name of Christ to leave and come out of every man-made religious body and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, and let Him add you to His Church, where you will be Christian only with no prefixes or suffixes.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

J.C. CHOATE

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE? Who can live it? What is the purpose of it? How long does it last? Does it have anything to offer? These are some questions that are often asked by those who are not familiar with Christianity. In this brief study we will attempt to answer these questions and others that may likewise be on your mind.

Briefly, the Christian life is based on belief in, and obedience to, Christ. It is the giving of one's life to Christ, in order to follow him. It is patterning one's life after Christ, imitating him. It is putting Christ first in one's life.

Enlarging on the meaning of the Christian life, we should keep several things in mind:

1. The Christian life Involves belief. One must believe that God is and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him. (Hebrews 11:6). Christ said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1). Again he said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye should die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). One must therefore believe in Christ to become his follower, to obey him, and to live for him.

2. The Christian life necessitates obedience. Actually this is a prerequisite to becoming a Christian. Christ commanded the Apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Then he said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Peter told the people on the day of Pentecost, when they wanted to know what they should do: "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." (Acts 2:38). Those who

obeyed became Christians. Obedience doesn't stop here, though. Christians are exhorted to be doers of the word. (James 1:22). They are taught to be obedient children. (1 Peter 1:14).

3. The Christian life is a state in which one lives. Those who obey Christ are baptized into him. Paul declares, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). Again, he says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:26, 27). The same act that puts one into Christ also puts one into the body of Christ which is the church of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22,23). In Christ, or in his body, one is a Christian. (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). As a Christian, one has fellowship with all other faithful Christians. (Acts 2:42; Romans 16: 17, 18).

4. The Christian life means purity. The Christian is in the world but he is not of the world. (John 17:14). He is to be peculiar, different, unlike those that are around him. (1 Peter 2:9). He is to be pure, abstaining from the appearance of all evil. (Titus 2:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:25). With emphasis on godliness, Paul writes, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:11,12).

5. The Christian life means service. The Christian is to follow Christ daily (Luke 9:23), presenting his physical body as a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1,2). He is to practice pure religion (James 1:27), and to be a worker for the Lord. Paul declares, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," (1 Corinthians 15:58). Among other things, this command includes the work of taking the gospel to the world. (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19,20).

6. The Christian life means blessings. The follower of Christ has the privilege of worship (John 4:24), knowing that the Lord will be with him (Matthew 28:20), and that in Christ he has the promise of all spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 1:3). Above all, he has the hope of eternal life. Christ himself, said, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10).

The Christian life then is more demanding, more rewarding, and more wonderful than any other way of life. It enables one to rid himself of all that is bad, and not only to hold to that which is good,

but to add many other beneficial things to his life. It gives one something to live for, to work for, and to die for. You are invited to try it and see for yourself.

Do Not Be Like Your Fathers And Your Brethren

ROBERT BALL

IF WE NOTICE ANY PATTERN in the history of the Israelites during the period of the divided kingdom it is that they have their spiritual ups and downs. We may also observe that they were inclined to follow the reigning king's lead in this regard. This resulted in their frequent refusal to heed the word of God that was proclaimed to them by His prophets. (Amos 7:12-13; Ezekiel 3:4-9; Jeremiah 5:30-31; 6:16-17; Isaiah 30:8-11.)

The kings of Israel (the northern kingdom) were more consistent than the kings of Judah (the southern kingdom) in that all of the kings of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord God of Israel. Judah had many kings who did evil in the sight of the Lord as well, but it also had some good kings who did right in God's sight. Two examples of kings who did right in God's sight are Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-20; 21) and Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-23; 30.)

Hezekiah restored temple worship in Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 29:20-36.) He also sent runners throughout Judah and Israel with letters from him urging the people to return to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. He sent letters saying they should come to the temple in Jerusalem and keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel. (2 Chronicles 30:1-20.)

It was in these letters that Hezekiah says something that I believe is important for God's people to remember. There is a lesson that Christians today may learn from Hezekiah's words and it is an encouraging lesson. He said, "And do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, so that He gave them up to desolation, as you see." (2 Chronicles 30:7.)

As I read this verse of scripture I thought about the Lord's church. The church is a great brotherhood and we are to love it. (1 Peter 2:17.) Many of us who love the Lord and His church are concerned about the direction in which some congregations are being led. It

is evident to anyone who can read the Bible with an honest, unbiased heart that error is being taught and accepted by many in our brotherhood. There are indeed false teachers among us. (2 Peter 2:1.)

Surely each of us will agree that it would be wonderful if false teachers were never among God's people. But the Bible clearly teaches that they will enter in among us. The false teachers among God's people today are not the first to occupy this place. Neither is it the first time some of God's people have chosen to hear and believe the message of such teachers.

Hezekiah asked the Israelites not to be like their fathers and brethren who had listened to false prophets and turned from God's law. In his plea Hezekiah also mentioned some of the forefathers who had lived faithful to God. He mentioned Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. (2 Chronicles 30:6.) We too can find strength and encouragement from those in the past who chose to remain faithful to Christ even in the face of great trials brought about by false doctrine.

As much as we regret anyone's decision to leave "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), we may find encouragement in the fact that there are also those who choose to abide in it. Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed." (John 8:31.)

As much as it pains us to see brothers and sisters in Christ depart from the faith it should not surprise us that some do. According to Paul the Holy Spirit said it would happen. "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." (1 Timothy 4:1-2.) Paul was informing Timothy of what would happen later in his lifetime. It happened in the days of Timothy just as Paul prophesied (Hebrews 6:4-6), and it continues to happen in the church today.

My point is simply this, let us pray for the church everywhere making request of the heavenly Father that our brothers and sisters in Christ will choose to abide in the faith. But let us also find comfort and encouragement that even if some choose to depart from the faith, all will not. Let us not be like our fathers (Christians of the past) and brethren (Christians today) who choose to depart from the faith. Let us rather be like our fathers and brethren who choose to abide faithful to the Lord's way.

An Analogy Of The Godhead

CHARLES WHITE

IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, the words of *shetna* were recited twice daily; "The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4.) And so Israel thought of God as one, although they certainly knew about the plural uses of Elohim in Genesis and other places in the Bible. In Genesis 1:1,2, the Bible starts out by declaring the plural nature of our God with the words, "In the beginning God..." The Hebrew word translated "God" is Elohim, and is plural. Then in verse 2, Moses continues the record of the creative activity of God with the words, "...and the Spirit of God..." In the first two verses of the Bible we have God telling us a profound truth about Himself, yet this truth has totally perplexed Bible students and scholars alike for centuries. In these verses God declares Himself to be multiple in form and then introduces us to one of those forms, "...the Spirit...." The multiple form of God is again implied in Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image....'" The two personal pronouns refer to multiple persons, thus God is referring to multiple forms in the Godhead.

What form God is really in we have no way of knowing, nor is it important; it is totally moot. What is important is how God has chosen to reveal Himself, and that is in a plural form. Maybe He did this to facilitate man's understanding Him, since man is the limiting entity and not God. We know God by the self-revelation that He has given us. Idle speculations as to what His real form might be only invite men to postulate various forms and images of God that may be, and probably are, quite foreign to His real Self. One thing for sure; we are not capable in this earthly tabernacle to comprehend His Majesty, so let us be content with comprehending His revelation of Himself to us as best we can.

But when questioned about God's plural form, and especially by those who claim Christians are polytheistic, we find it difficult to explain that although God is one, which we totally accept, that He still is multiple in persons, beings, entities, whatever the form of the Godhead. Others and Christians say God is one. But the difference is in the definitions of the "one." They mean by it, uno, single, one, a unit. We mean by it, "a unity."

To answer these questions, I use a very simple illustration that comes out of my many years as an engineer and structural analyst

using computers to analyze structures for the loads imposed on them during their service life. I have used this illustration in my own teaching, both in the U.S. and in foreign schools where I have taught and it is usually well understood even by the poorly educated. These computer analysis, using the finite element method, have been performed on space structures, jet aircraft engine and commercial turbine engine components and other equipment used in the mostly military arena. The analogy comes from the computer resources that I have used over the years.

In many large companies, an area, or even a separate building, is reserved for just the large mainframe computers. There are usually several of them hooked together to form a "cluster" of computers, all performing different functions, but called by users, "The computer." For our analogy, let us assume that our computer is composed of three large mainframes that are hooked together in a cluster. In the center of these computers, assuming they are arranged in a triangular arrangement, sits a printer. Lets assign to computer A the task of doing the I/O, that is, the input/output. This computer takes input from users, translates it into machine language and assigns it to the other computers as needed to complete the task. This computer also serves to digest the output from the other two computers, translates it back into a user readable language and formats it so that it can be output to the user in a form he can understand.

Let us then say that computer B handles all the logical operations; that is, the If-Then's, Go To's, And's, Nan's, Or's, Nor's etc. Then let us say that computer C handles all the mathematical operations, that is, add, subtract, multiply, divide, exponentials, roots, etc. After the task is completed, the printer in the center of the cluster will print out the results.

Now, what one would not see in our cluster of computers we call "The computer," is the hundreds of miles of wire under the floor that connect the three computers together. This is why computer rooms are specially designed; so they can accommodate all the wiring with a space under the floor. This space can be as deep as required, but in my experience were generally about two feet deep. For the faster, more powerful supercomputers, the actual processor chips and wiring interconnecting them may be submerged in a supercooled environment, such as liquid nitrogen, so as to reduce the electrical resistance in the copper wires. The closer the temperature of the wires approach absolute zero, -459.6 degrees

F, the closer the resistance gets to zero, greatly enhancing computer speed and reducing power consumption. This labyrinth of wires under the floor connects the three computers together so that they operate as one, in complete unity and harmony, as long as the wires are properly connected. That is done when the computer installation is done. The maze of wires under the floor that link the three computers allows them to work as a seamless entity. This is how I think of the Godhead; the three being so intimately connected together that they work as a seamless entity. We might think of this wiring under the floor as that part of the Godhead that has not been revealed because mortal man could not understand it.

If then a user inputs data to "The computer," the I/O computer receives it, translates it, and assigns it proper locations and identifying codes, and sends the data to computers B and C, depending upon the task at hand. All three computers work together on the same input, performing operations as necessary and relaying data back and forth between all three mainframes at the speed of light. The speeds involved in handling the huge amounts of input and output data are dizzying. But the computers handle their respective pieces of it in total unity. Once the task is completed, the results are sent to the printer, or an electronic output file, for the user to access.

So it is with our God. We won't attempt to define which person of the Godhead a particular computer might represent, that would be pushing the illustration beyond its intended limits. We don't want to "allegorize" it. But the point is to show that the three persons of the Godhead act in such close "association," or "cluster," that they indeed are one, and truly Moses could say of our God, that "...our Lord is one Lord," for He is. But the key to really understanding this analogy is the printer. There are not three printers giving three different outputs, nor is there one printer giving three outputs. There is one printer and it only gives one output, and that output is God's will for man.

THE GREATEST TEST

KENNETH DAVIS

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT we read of those who had "great faith" and some with "little faith." Faith is of great importance and yet it is

not the greatest test of spirituality. There is found in John 8:31-59 an incident in the life of Jesus that tells us about the “greatest test.” Jesus was at the Feast of Tabernacles as this event occurred. Jesus was addressing those who “believed on him.” From what Jesus said, we know that more than just belief is necessary. He tells them “...if ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed.” While they had believed on him more was necessary in order for them to be “disciples indeed.”

Jesus continued by saying that certain benefits arise from continuing in his word. They would know the truth and the truth would make them free. When Jesus mentioned freedom, the Jews said they had never been in bondage. This was false. They had been in bondage many times beginning with Egypt. Moses led them out, but they had been in bondage many times after that. Even as they spoke they were under Roman domination.

They missed the point. Jesus was speaking of the bondage of sin. Jesus mentioned Abraham as their father but said they were trying to kill him (Jesus) because his work had no place in them. He told them that if they were Abraham’s seed they would do the works of Abraham. God had promised Abraham that his “seed” (Jesus) would be a blessing to the whole world. But the Jews were seeking to kill the “seed” (Jesus.)

Later, the Jews said that God was their Father. Jesus reminded them that if God were their Father, they would love him, that is Jesus, because he came from the Father. In John 14:15 Jesus states the greatest test of spirituality—“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” The greatest test of our spirituality is love for Christ. These people were already believers, they had faith. But there is need for more. That faith must also be coupled with love and that love will cause us to obey him. When Paul wrote the great chapter on love he stressed that love was greater than faith. He said, “And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.” (Corinthians 13:13.)

If you and I would be truly spiritual, we must not only have faith, but that faith must bring about love in our hearts for Christ and love will cause us to keep his commandments. Truly this is the greatest test of spirituality.

The Origin And Sanctity Of The Marriage Relationship

PAUL SOUTHERN

SINCE THE HISTORY OF mankind is inseparably linked with the marriage relationship, the importance of this subject cannot be stressed too much. The evils which grow from a perverted conception of wedlock constitute one of the chief legal problems today.

Society's view on marriage will determine the permanence and unity of the home, and the destiny of the nation. Upon the proper reaction to this subject depends the salvation of man; for no person can trifle with the holy state of matrimony and hope to be saved, regardless of how good he is otherwise. Violation of the inspired laws governing this sacred institution is going to keep multitudes out of the city which lieth four-square.

THE ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a divine and time-honored institution which began in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:18-24.) It was instituted by Jehovah in Paradise in the very morning of time. (Genesis 1:27.) From the beginning, heaven's benedictions have rested upon the marriage relationship. (Genesis 1:28.) Sociologists claim that "we have no conclusive evidence of the origin of the family," and "that the family arose as a sequel to the possession of private property." (Kinneman) Furthermore they attempt to prove "that marriage has its source in the family, rather than the family in marriage." (Goodsell) These views fail to harmonize with the Bible. And since Christians "walk by faith, not by sight," (2 Corinthians 5:7), we believe in the divine origin of marriage as set forth in the Bible.

THE DIVINE SANCTION OF MARRIAGE

In every dispensation of religion, Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian, God has sanctioned wedlock as an honorable estate. By the decree of heaven, Adam and Eve became one flesh. (Genesis 4:1.) Moses, commissioned by Jehovah to deliver Israel and write the Jewish covenant, was a married man. (Exodus 2:21.) Jesus adorned and beautified the marriage relationship by attending the feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11) where he preformed His first miracle by changing the water into wine. The writer of Hebrews

commanded that “marriage be had in honor among all men, and let the bed be undefiled.” (Hebrews 13:4.) Peter, to whom Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, was a married man. (Matthew 8:14; 1 Corinthians 9:5.)

THE SACREDNESS OF MARRIAGE

Jehovah has placed a halo of beauty and sanctity around holy wedlock which people can ill afford to molest. In the Old Testament many typical allusions to marriage show the spiritual relationship between God and his people. (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14; Hosea 2:19.) In the New Testament, Jesus becomes the bride-groom (Matthew 9:15; John 3:29) and the church is the bride. (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7; 21:2,9.) Thus Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven unto a marriage feast, to which many were invited but who spurned the invitation. (Matthew 22:2-14.) In giving us a picture of the church, Paul compares it to the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:22-23) and shows the tender love which should permeate this intimate union of man and woman.

The future of society depends upon the sanctity of the home. Only by strict adherence to the marriage vows can this sanctity be maintained. By degrading the institution of matrimony, Satan knows that he can bring about the destruction of both society and souls. When marriage becomes unsacred, the home, which is built on marriage will fall. The home is the oldest divine institution. It is the center around which all other institutions have been built, and with which they stand or fall. Therefore, the holy estate of matrimony should be considered reverently, and entered prayerfully in fear of God.

God's Power: It's Whisper And It's Thunder (Job 26)

JAMES RICKARD

THE POWER OF GOD SEEN in His created universe is truly awesome. Even the power that modern man has been able to harness is marvelous. Just in the last few decades man has harnessed the power of the atom to the extent that atomic generators produce vast amounts of electricity with which to light homes and cities, power great industrial machines, and benefit our lives in

hundreds of ways. Unfortunately, this same power has been and can yet be used as horrible weapons of mass destruction which threaten to destroy our civilization. However it is not “a drop in the bucket” compared to the power of God we see in His universe.

In Job 26 the writer expressed amazement at God’s power seen in the creation. He raised his eyes to the sky and saw the thick, heavy clouds filled with water, yet they did not burst. (8.) He looked into the starry heavens and saw the beauty of the night skies. (13.) (The beauty and grandeur of which no artist could ever copy.) Then his eyes beheld the vast expanse of the heavens and the earth and he saw the great horizon that separates darkness from light. (10.) Then he noted how God stirred up the angry sea by His great power. (12.) In another instance he observed that, “The waters wears away the stones.” (14:19.) Job was so impressed and amazed by this display of God’s power that he could scarcely take it in. Yet, he recognized that this amazing display of power was only the “outskirts of his ways,” and only a “whisper.” (14.)

Job then asked this profound question, “But the thunder of his power who can understand?” (14.) He realized that God had power so much greater than what was displayed in His created universe that it was like the mighty roar of thunder compared to a whisper! If all the marvels of the universe are but the outskirts of His ways, and only a whisper of his power, what then is the thunder of His power?? It seems that Job may have sensed this thunderous power when he asked this question, “If a man die, shall he live again?” (14:14), and later answering it by making this profound observation, “But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at last he will stand up upon this earth: and after my skin, even this body is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God.” (19:25,26.)

This strongly suggests that the roaring thunder of God’s power was revealed when He brought forth His Son and our Savior from the grave.

Paul recognized this thunderous power when he wrote to the saints in Rome that Christ “was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 1:4.) Again, Paul recognized God’s thunderous power when he wrote to the Ephesian Christians about the exceeding greatness of “the strength of his might which he wrote in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 1:19,20.)

Could all the mighty power existing in the created universe bring one forth from the grave? No! Could all the schemes ever devised by the fertile minds of the world's greatest intellects bring one up from the grave? No! Could all the combined knowledge and expertise of the world's greatest medical experts bring one forth from the grave? No! When Adam, the first man, sinned and was driven out of the Garden and away from the tree of life, he was doomed to death and destruction. (Genesis 2:16,17; 3:22-24.) However, God in His great mercy, before He drove man from the Garden, promised him a Redeemer. (Genesis 3:15.) This hints of His thunderous power! Moreover, as a consequence of this sin, the human race was doomed to die. Thus, without the power of the resurrection of Christ no one can escape the ultimate penalty of sin. (Romans 3:23; 6:23.)

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul with great eloquence and logic makes the case for the resurrection of Christ and the subsequent blessings it brings to a hopeless world. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (21,22.) Thanks be to God that our corruptible bodies will put on incorruption, and our morality shall be changed to immortality by the power of our Lord's resurrection, and thus death will be swallowed up in victory. (53,54.) However, this can only occur "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11.) But, God's Spirit dwells only in His children, that is, those who are in Christ. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. (Galatians 3:26,27.) And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, so that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God." (Galatians 4:6,7.)

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15.)

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

CALEB CAMPBELL

SHORTLY AFTER THE ARRIVAL of Israel at Mount Sinai, Moses was called up to receive the "tablets of stone, and a law, and

commandments” of the Lord (Exodus 24:12). The privilege of personally communing with God and receiving divine revelation was enjoyed by Moses for forty days and nights (v.18). Joy turned to sorrow and encouragement to discouragement when Moses descended from the mount and found the people of God, led by his own brother, dancing naked in worship before a calf of gold (32:1-25). The response of Moses to the nonsense was both swift and clear: “Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me” (v.26). The children of Levi answered the challenge by separating themselves from the congregation and executing about 3000 men (v.27-29).

Much like Moses, the faithful of this generation are surrounded by a sea of spiritual chaos and iniquity. Ignoring the principle that “righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people,” (Proverbs 14:34) this nation is becoming a prime example of the “nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17). The language once used to describe Israel prior to its fall sadly has become appropriate today: “There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood” (Hosea 4:1-2). Abortion is common, divorce rampant and homosexuality acceptable. Selfishness, dishonesty and greed are “just a part of the job.” Profanity, recreational drug use, and sexual promiscuity are “just a part of growing up.” In general, the Godward reverence and scriptural principles which once characterized God’s people have been replaced by Biblical ignorance and spiritual apathy. Sin abounds.

That said, there remains a remnant devoted to the Almighty. Just as Moses and the Levites stood apart at the bottom of Sinai, there are spiritual lights shining bright in this world of darkness (Ephesians 5:6-11). There are Christians still determined to flee iniquity and pursue righteousness (I Timothy 6:11), homes still marked by their service to God (Joshua 24:15) and congregations still devoted to abounding in Jesus’ work (I Corinthians 15:58). There continue to be elders who faithfully tend the flock of God (Acts 20:28), preachers who consistently speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and young people who readily stand strong for their Creator (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Yes, those devoted to God, truth, and right are in the minority (Matthew 7:13-14). Consequently, their lives will be marked by both sacrifices and hardships (John 17:14; II Timothy 3:12). Ultimately, however, theirs will be a life of success (Psalm

1:1-2), reward (Matthew 5:11-12), and victory (I Corinthians 15:57). Their labor for God will not go unnoticed (Galatians 6:9), and their courage for Christ will not be ignored (Matthew 10:32-33).

Thirty five hundred years have come and gone since Moses drew the line in the sand. Several generations have risen and fallen. Still, the conflict goes on. Good versus evil. Right versus wrong. Truth versus error. The battle is raging, and the question remains: Who is on the Lord's side?

The All-Inspired Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:16

MARVIN L. JOHNSON

DOES THIS PASSAGE SAY that every statement found in the Bible is true? Some would say emphatically, "Yes!" But a little study will reveal otherwise. The serpent said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die." His statement was not inspired. Moses wrote by inspiration that the serpent said it, but the statement was a lie. When Eve said that God had told them not to touch the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it was God-inspired that she said it, but the statement was a lie. Compare Genesis 2:17 with Genesis 3:3.

This principle is illustrated throughout the Bible. Lies and contradictions, but this does not say that the Bible lies, or contradicts itself. The Book of Job records the conversations between Job and his friends. But neither his statements or theirs are God-inspired truth. These conversations are a revelation of human philosophy of that time. Many today share the same thinking: Suffering must be the result of some sin in one's life.

This same is reflected in the Gospel. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus said the blindness wasn't caused by sin (John 9:31).

In reading the Bible, one must note who is speaking, to whom he is speaking, and under which covenant, the Old or the New. Everything before the cross was Old Testament. The New Testament did not go into effect until after the death of Christ (Heb. 9:17).

When Jacob was shown his son's cloak with the bloodstains, he said, "It is my son's coat. An evil beast hath devoured him."

Moses recorded this by inspiration, but Jacob voiced his own conclusion, not Divinely inspired truth. One must read carefully, and compare Scripture with Scripture to know just what the Bible says. There is a vast difference between, "It says in the Bible," and "The Bible says."

WHEN DOES GRACE SAVE?

WALTER SWAIN

"BY FAITH THE WALLS of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days" (Heb. 11:30).

The eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews relates how the faith of certain individuals and groups of people led them to do what God wanted them to do, thus making them acceptable to God. The statement of verse six shows that faith involves belief in God, and earnestly seeking after God's rewards through obedience.

Verse 30 declares that the walls of Jericho fell by faith, but only after they had been circled seven days. The Jews believed in God, and believed what He said would happen if they did what He told them to do. His command was to circle the city once each day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day. They were also told to blow the horns and shout, and the walls would fall. When they did what God said, God did what He said He would do. This was all done "by faith," we are told.

We should note that what God said He would do was done by His power, and was a miracle. But, it was not accomplished until the Jews did all that He commanded them to do. Not until they had made that seventh trip around Jericho, blown the horns, and shouted, did the walls come down "by faith."

Several great truths are seen here:

- 1) Faith involves hearing what God says, and understanding all that He wants us to do (Rom. 10:17).
- 2) Those who hear God's Word and understand it, are obligated to do all he says to do before God acts to do His promised part (Heb. 11:6).
- 3) Unless we do all God says, He will not act, for we must do all exactly as He says (Matt. 7:21).
- 4) When we obey God and do all He says, then God through His power, does what He has promised to do (Mark 16:15,16).
- 5) It is God's power that crumbled the walls of Jericho, not what

the Jews did physically; and it is God's power that saves us today, not our own works (Eph. 2:8,9).

Our salvation today is, indeed, "by grace through faith." Just as God told the Jews what to do to bring down the walls of Jericho, He has told us what to do to be saved. One must hear the gospel and come to understand God's grace, and how it is manifested to us in Jesus Christ. One must learn and understand what to do to be saved. Then, one must by faith obey God's commands to believe in Christ as the Son of God, repent of sin, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 8:37; Rom. 10:9, 10).

When we do all that God commands us to do to be saved, then, and only then, does God save us. What we do does not merit salvation, but allows God to save us through the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace saves us only after we have by faith obeyed all the will of God.

Man's faith and obedience do not contradict the grace of God, or make it void. Rather it allows God by His grace to do what He has promised to do for all who obey His will. It is God Himself who has given us the conditions we must meet to be saved.

BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

GENE OVERTON

SALVATION IS BY GRACE on God's part, and through faith on our part. This makes salvation conditional, because it is dependent on our faith. A mere belief that Christ is the Son of God will not save one. This is the kind of faith the chief rulers had, mentioned in John 12:42. Their faith was not saving faith, because they would not confess Christ. They were afraid of being put out of the synagogue, and what people would think. The latter may be the reason why so many will not really confess Christ today, in words and deeds.

Faith that saves is faith that will lead one to obey God through Christ. He is the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him. (Hebrews 5:9.) Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21.) Faith that avails something, is faith that works by love. (Galatians 5:6.)

Abraham of old believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. His faith was combined with his works, and by works

his faith was made perfect or complete. (James 2:21-23.) James says a man is justified by works, “and not by faith only.” (James 2:24.) Faith that does not include works is as dead as a body is after the spirit has left it. (James 2:26.)

This does not mean that one merits, in any way, eternal life. Salvation is the gift of God, but if we accept that gift we must manifest an obedient faith.

Will Your Children Go To Heaven?

CECIL CORKREN

ELDERS AND CHURCH LEADERS everywhere are deeply concerned about the great decline of spiritual interest on the part of our youth! The drop-out rate is staggering. It is a colossal tragedy to lose a great number of our youth to the world. The home suffers as well as the church. The souls of precious boys and girls who were once thrilled with Bible study as little people, grow cold and uninterested in the Lord's work and worship as they get older.

There have been some in-depth studies of the underlying causes and factors concerning our youth, and with an eye to learning what might be done to help solve the problems. What do we do? Should we have more youth programs? More rallies? Special youth ministers and teachers? Granting all of these, if properly conducted and attended, we can see some good from these activities; however, these are not a panacea for the spiritual delinquency we are witnessing among our youth today.

From the available information published in these studies, it seems to me that one great central truth has begun to surface. Faithfulness of the young person to Jesus is not dependent on special programs or teachers or preachers. It is not dependent on whether they are members of a large or small congregation. The single and most important factor is their own immediate family!

The studies found that when both parents were faithful to the Lord, and that included active interest in the local congregation's programs of work, 93% of the youth remained faithful. On the other hand, if only one parent was faithful that figure dropped to 73%. Where the parents were only, reasonably active in the Lord's work, only 53% of the young people maintained their faith. So, as parents and grandparents, we would do well to read again Proverbs 22:6.

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Now, here comes the most shocking report of all. In those homes where both parents attend Bible Study and worship services only occasionally, the percentage of their children who remain faithful to the Lord dropped to 6%. If we want our children to be in heaven and we want to be with them, parents will need to face the facts and place the blame where it belongs. The home is where we are to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The Best Way Is God's Way

CECIL MAY, JR.

SOME SPEAK OF THE commandments of the Bible, the laws of God, as if they were arbitrary or capricious. They are perceived as hindrances to man's freedom and happiness. In reality, the opposite is true.

God's original intent regarding man, woman, marriage and sex is set forth in the words, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Jesus said those were God's words and that in marriage it is God himself who makes the two one (Matthew 19:3-6). The Bible also shows that the expression “one flesh” involves sexual union (1 Corinthians 6:16). God forbids fornication, adultery (Galatians 5:19-20), and turning from one wife or husband to another as putting asunder what God has joined together (Matthew 19:6-9).

God's purpose is not to limit his creatures' happiness, but to help them find fulfillment. God made mankind to find its highest happiness, not in promiscuity like animals, but in a loving permanent relationship built on trust and commitment.

Interestingly, some modern songs acknowledge the validity of God's way. In “A Modern-day Romance,” sung by The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, a pick-up driving cowboy is picked up by a beautiful woman for a one-night (or, maybe, weekend) stand. The intent is to have fun, with no strings attached, but when the trysting is over and the girl has left, the cowboy reflects on the unhappiness of it all. The refrain goes,

"It's a modern-day romance, a new kind of game;
No time to slow dance—in the fast lane!
I tried to love her without any strings,
But a modern-day romance has left me with old-fashioned pain."

One of the real travesties of modern slang is the use of the expression, "going all the way," to describe illicit sexual union. What is experienced in an atmosphere of guilt, fear of discovery, and anxiety about unwed pregnancy or social disease is not only not all the way, it is not even one-tenth of the way to the bliss of union intended by God between a man and a woman who know they belong to each other alone, and who blend their hearts and their mutual trust as well as their bodies in their relationship.

God wants what is best for us. That is why he gave his law.

She "Danced Before Them"

DALTON KEY

"BUT WHEN HEROD'S BIRTHDAY was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod" (Matthew 14:6). Students of the New Testament will recall the direct and shameful consequences of this dance—John the Baptist lost his head (vs. 7-12).

According to Barclay, Herodias' daughter, Salome, was sixteen or seventeen years of age at this time and "acted as a dancing girl." He further observes, "The dances which these girls danced were suggestive and immoral." According to McGarvey and Pendleton, "The dancing of the East was then, as now, voluptuous and indecent."

No doubt this type of cavorting and gesticulating was at least a part of what the inspired apostle Paul had in mind when he listed "lasciviousness" as one of the damning "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19). The Greek word Paul used, *aselgeia*, is defined as, "sensuality ... wanton acts or manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females." That which Salome performed, considered aside from the murderous outcome, was still both wrong and sinful in view of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

But what does all this have to do with us? Just this. We realize that Salome was dancing "before them," as a lecherous, drunken

mob ogled her every move. But what if Herod and the others had danced with her? Would her dancing have been any less wrong?

And just what is the difference in then and now?

“Lord, to Whom Shall We Go?”

CLEM THURMAN

Jesus had just fed the five thousand. His popularity was at an all-time high. Thousands followed Him, watching what He did and listening to every word. Then Jesus began to teach them about the difficulties of following Him. As He explained some of the difficult things they would be asked to believe and do, they said, *“This is a hard saying; who can hear it?”* And, *“Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him”* (John 6:60,66). This was a crucial time for the disciples. Would they believe the hard things, do the hard things—or would they turn back? When most of them had left, Jesus asked the twelve apostles, *“Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life”* (John 6:67-68).

The question today is still, *“To whom shall we go?”* God has not left us without answers to our spiritual needs. For those who would seek guidance from some other source than Jesus, we need to answer the question, *“To whom shall we go?”* Let us apply this principle as we look at our spiritual needs.

SHALL WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER CHRIST?

John the Baptist had announced the coming of the Christ, then said of Jesus, *“Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world”* (John 1:29). Imprisoned for preaching, John sent disciples to Jesus, *“Are thou he that cometh, or look we for another?”* (Matt. 11:3). Jesus merely pointed to His works and told John’s disciples, *“Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see.”* Jesus knew He was the object of Old Testament prophecies, for He told the Jews, *“The Scriptures... bear witness of me ...If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me”* (John 5:39,46). Not just a few, but literally hundreds of prophecies are fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth, proving Him to be the Christ. John had only to compare what Jesus did with what the prophecies had foretold to know Jesus was the promised Messiah.

The apostles were just as definite in proving His claims. Peter said, *“But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled”* (Acts 3:18). He later said, *“To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins”* (Acts 10:43). Paul preached the same, *“And when they had fulfilled all things that were written*

of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in the tomb. . . Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (Acts 13:29; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). John asked, *"Do we look for another?"* The answer is clear: there is no other, just Jesus.

SHALL WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER PROPHET?

The Scriptures had declared that God would send forth a prophet far greater than any previously known. God said to Moses, *"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth . . . , whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he will speak in my name, I will require it of him"* (Deut. 18:18-19). Has the prophet come, or do we look for another? This is clearly answered in the Scriptures. Peter used this prophecy as he spoke of Jesus, *"Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from your brethren, like unto me. . . Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days"* (Acts 3:22-24). Jesus is that prophet of whom Moses wrote.

The opening sentence of Hebrews states, *"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets. . . hath in these last days spoken unto us in his Son"* (Heb. 1:1-2). Jesus took with him Peter, James and John up on a mountain and was "transfigured" before them. They saw Him speaking with Moses and Elijah, and suggested building a tabernacle to honor each. But God spoke from heaven about Jesus, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom, I am well-pleased; hear ye him"* (Matt. 17:5). He is God's spokesman, now and for all time: *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"* (Matt. 24:35). God never promised any revelation through others—not Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith nor David Koresh. If we reject Jesus, we have rejected God's only spokesman.

SHALL WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER GOSPEL?

Since the time of the apostles, men have been seeking another gospel. Paul wrote, *"I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be accursed"* (Gal. 1:6-8). As noted in Heb. 1:1-2, that word was not delivered in parts and sections, but God spoke through Christ. Christ chose apostles, and told them, *"Whoever hears you, hears me. He that rejecteth you, rejecteth me, and he that rejecteth me, rejecteth him that sent me"* (Luke 10:16). Those apostles preached and wrote the word of God (1 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). *"Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3).

There are still those who seek some kind of "latter day revelation." But the gospel was completely delivered by the apostles nearly 2,000 years

ago: *"His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* (2 Pet. 1:3). The inspired Scriptures were given, *"That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:17). Please read those again. God has given us, in the Scriptures, everything we need in the spiritual realm. The apostle warns, *"Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son"* (2 John 9). We must not *"go beyond the things that are written"* (1 Cor. 4:6). We do not need another gospel. That word was *"confirmed unto us by them that heard him"* by signs and miracles (Heb. 2:3-4), including the miracles that Jesus did (John 20:30-31). That gospel was preached by men inspired of God, and is *"the power of God unto salvation"* (Rom. 1:16).

SHALL WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER CHURCH?

Much has been preached about "the church of your choice." As a result, many people question whether or not the true church even exists on earth today. Jesus promised, *"I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18). He died for that church, *"Gave himself up for it"* (Eph. 5:25) and purchased that church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). That church is the body of Christ: *"He is the head of the body, the church... There is one body"* (Col. 1:18; Eph. 4:4). That church is composed of those who are saved, *"The Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved"* (Acts 2:47). Jesus never built "churches." He built one church. He never built denominations, so people could have a choice. Jesus loves His church, and gave Himself for that church (Eph. 5:25). Should we "look for another?"

Some may argue their "right" to the church of their choice. But does the Lord give them that right? He built His church, He purchased that church with His own blood, those whom He saves He adds to His church, and He is the Savior of His church (Eph. 5:23). Then why would anyone want to look for another? *"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). On Pentecost, people believed in the Lord and were told, *"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"* (Acts 2:38). Their response? *"As many as received his word were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls... The Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved"* (Acts 2:41,47).

Today, when people obey the same *"form of teaching"* (Rom. 6:17) those folk did, the Lord adds them to the same church. That is the church Jesus built, of which He is head and which He purchased with His blood. We don't need another Christ. We don't need another prophet. We don't need another gospel. And we don't need another church. Let us learn to accept Christ, to accept what He does for us, and to accept His plan for us, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."*

