

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 47

November 2016

No. 7



Editorial

What Does the Bible Teach?

***“He Made Him Who Knew No Sin To Be Sin For Us, That We Might Become The Righteousness Of God In Him”
(2 Corinthians 5:21)***

God would not be just if He did not punish sin, before offering salvation to man. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23), showed that justice was done for the sins of humanity. The sacrificial death of the Son of God on the cross was the public vindication of the righteousness of God, “whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3: 25, 26). When Christ suffered on the cross for our sins, He paid for us the penalty for our sins. God was just while justifying sinners who are now in Christ Jesus. He showed Himself to be “Just”, because he exacted the penalty for the sins committed. The life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11). The penalty for sin is death (Romans 3:23). Jesus, the one who was without sin (Hebrews 4:15), paid that penalty. He died for all, so that all might live spiritually and eternally with Him. The blood of Christ has the power to redeem all—not that all will be redeemed, but all might be. The blood of Christ takes effect when one believes in Him and obeys His command to be saved (Mark 16:16).

Those who believe in Christ are freely justified. It is bestowed

on them as a gift. It is not earned by man, but it is given as the favor of God to all who are in Christ. He does not owe man, nor can any man claim it as a right, but we accept it as a gift graciously given. We receive the justification—the right to be just before God—because of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. He paid for us—He paid His life for us to release us from sin and its consequences. The atonement made for our sins was the life of the Son of God. In being slain, He shed His blood, and His blood contains His life.

God had made Jesus, His only begotten Son, who had committed no sin, to suffer as though He had sinned. The sinlessness of Jesus is affirmed throughout the New Testament in the Bible. 1 Peter 2:22 says, “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.” According to Hebrews 4:15, He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (See Matthew 4:1-13). God had placed on the sinless Jesus the sins of whole humanity, as Isaiah the Prophet had said, **“Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”** (Isaiah 53:4-6). He was the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29).

Man was under the curse, but Christ took the curse upon Himself (Galatians 3:13). At the cross He participated in our sin. God did in truth make Him a curse for us. He paid the penalty, as though He had committed the crime. **He was made sin, not sinner**, that is, a sin offering, or a sacrifice for our sins, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. As Christ, who knew no sin of His own was made sin for us, so we who have no righteousness of our own, are made the righteousness of God in Him, when we believe in Him that the Son of God is the propitiation for our sins and are baptized for the remission of our sins. (Acts 2:28).

TRUTH AND UNDERSTANDING

J.C. CHOATE

When Jesus stood before Pilate, He said, *“My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now*

is my kingdom not from hence.

“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?

“Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

“Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all” (John 18:36-38).

Pilate asked the age old question, **What is truth?** Man has forever been searching for the answer but it seems hard to come by. Watch the evening TV news, read the daily newspaper, as well as the weekly magazines, and you will discover that in the secular world it is difficult to get the truth on anything. Spiritually, listen to the preachers of our day and read their writings, and you will find them to be contradictory on almost every subject.

What is the truth then? How may we know what it is?

First of all, we must go to the right source—to the Bible, to the Scriptures, to the word of God—and to that authority alone. We read that **God hath spoken** (Hebrews 1:1,2) and that **all the scripture is inspired of God** (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Finally, the Lord Himself says that we will be judged by **His word** (John 12:48). We therefore cannot add to it, subtract from it, or substitute for it. (Revelation 22:18,19). We must leave it alone, accepting it as it is. The Lord has told us in His word what He wanted us to know, and we cannot improve on that.

Christ said, *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32). Again, He said, *“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”* (John 17:17). Then the Lord declared, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (**John 14:6**).

But how can we know the truth? By hearing it proclaimed and by reading the Scriptures. Christ said, *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations...”* (Matthew 28:19). *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15). Paul said, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17). Again, he said, *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). Then he said, *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine”* (2 Timothy 4:2).

Why is it so necessary to read and study the word of God and to hear it faithfully proclaimed? So that we might know God's will and understand it. We need to know and understand who our Creator is, who died for us, what the gospel is, the importance of the church, what the Lord requires in worship, and how to live the Christian life, what is involved in repentance, baptism, the saved being added to the church, the kind of music God wants in worship, the role of the woman in the church, and on and on with many other important matters.

Read through the book of Acts and *observe the role that preaching played*. For example, read of Philip asking the man of Ethiopia if he understood what he was reading in Isaiah 53, and read of this man's response as he asked, "*How can I except some man should guide me?*" Philip proceeded to **teach** him and only then did he obey the Lord (Acts 8:26-39). Paul said to the Ephesians, "*Wherefore be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is*" (Ephesians 5:17).

How can one obey the Lord, be scripturally baptized, become a member of the Lord's church, and abide by the many other truths, if he doesn't know and understand what the Lord requires? One doesn't haphazardly obey God. Salvation is not granted to one who doesn't know the truth well enough to comply with God's will. If it were, why would the Scripture even talk about the need for *hearing the word of the Lord, studying the scripture, being taught God's will*? Salvation is not based on *ignorance* but on **teaching, understanding, faith, and compliance with what the Lord requires**.

Once one comes to know God's will, understands it, and obeys His teaching, God saves that person and adds him to His family, the church. It is only then that he is saved, is a child of God, and has the hope of eternal life.

But even after one has been saved from his past sins, he must continue to read, study and learn how to worship, how to serve the Lord, and how to live the Christian life. One must *practice truth*.

Can We Really Live for Jesus?

JOHNNY RAMSEY

There are those who teach that it is not possible for human beings to live up to the standard of godliness that Christianity

demands. The devil would like for us to accept that heresy so as to discourage us from even trying to live for God. Do we have certain propensities within us that prohibit a closer walk with God? Did our Creator make us with an inbuilt spiritual deficiency that makes it certain that we shall fail in our pursuit of holiness? Or, are there helps along the way that enable us to glorify the Savior? In the language of Rom. 4:3 we sincerely ask: *"What saith the Scriptures?"*

In the beauty of Psa. 119:76-80, we find some wonderful sources of consolation and joy: *"Let, I pray thee, thy lovingkindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live; for thy law is my delight. Let the proud be put to shame; for they have overthrown me wrongfully: but I will meditate on thy precepts. Let those that fear thee turn unto me; and they shall know thy testimonies. Let my heart be perfect in thy statutes, that I be not put to shame."* From this we take comfort in the following:

1. God's judgments are right
2. God's merciful kindness comforts
3. God's law is my delight
4. God's precepts are my meditation
5. My heart rejoices in His statutes.

Jesus taught, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matt. 6:33).

Do you know why most of the world is lost? It hinges on Matt. 6:33. Instead of seeking first the kingdom of God, the vast majority of people all over the world are seeking food, clothing and shelter first and putting God last. As a result, they don't come up very well on food, clothing and shelter! Jesus challenges us and gives us the best insurance policy ever issued, now or to the end of time, in Matt. 6:33. Not many people take the Lord seriously on that promise. It is a tragedy how that high ethical standard is ignored!

higher ground. *"My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world"* (1 John 2:1-2), Those who teach that it is not possible for people to live up to the standard of godliness that Christianity demands are wrong. Yes, we can live the life the Bible sets forth because we get so much help from the Savior. May we never turn back.

THE POWER OF A LIFE OF PURITY

Christianity demands our very best because it is demonstrated by purity of life. The basic, fundamental values of the religion of Christ can best be seen in His life: *"One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin... Him who knew no sin he made (to be) sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him"* (Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor 5:21). It was said of Jesus, *"He went about doing good"* (Acts 10:38). So do His followers, because Christ *"suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps"* (1 Pet. 2:21). The same values seen in the life of Jesus are seen in the dedicated demeanor of His fervent disciples.

Too many times the world receives a faulty impression of the way of the cross because of our failure to portray the ethics of godliness. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, we learn anew of the intense value and power of a life that magnifies Christ and shares the message of the Redeemer with others (Phil. 1:20-21). Oh, what demands the gospel places upon devotees of the Savior! There is an enthralling stanza of a seldom-used gospel song that ought to ring in the ears of every Christian:

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity,
May His spirit divine, All my being refine,
Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

THE POWER OF A LIVING HOPE

Christianity is great because it brings hope, optimism and joy into the daily walk of children of the heavenly Father. Trusting in the Creator (Prov. 3:5), instead of earth's vain trinkets, gives us the enrichment that only the hope of heaven can bequeath to us. Hope includes faith, but it also is assurance. We have that because of the resurrection of Jesus: *"God ... begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* (1 Pet. 1:3).

Christians never look back to a life of sin, but ever press on to the beautiful home of the soul. As parents, we choose early in life to etch indelibly into the mural and fabric of our children's lives that we, *"Look for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ... look for a better country, that is, a heavenly"* (Heb. 11:10,16).

*A careful man I ought to be,
A little fellow follows me.*

*I do not dare to go astray,
For fear he'll go the self-same way.*

Let us all rise up to meet the challenge of Christianity. With a firm commitment and deep resolve, we will one day, by the grace of God, when the saints go marching into glory, join in that heavenly chorus.

What Is The Significance Of "Jehovah" As God's Name?

BOB PRICHARD

Names are important. It is difficult for us to conceive of things apart from their names. The many different names for God in the Bible describe and demonstrate His character. "Jehovah" (usually rendered "LORD" in the King James Version) appears often in the Scriptures. *Jehovah* means "the Eternal One, the Unchangeable One, the One Who was, and is, and is to come." When Moses met God in the burning bush, he asked His name. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14). God spoke as Jehovah, the self-existent God.

The Hebrew people came to consider one particular name of God His personal name. Scholars call this name, derived from four Hebrew letters, the "tetragrammaton" (from "tetra," four, and "gram," letter). The Jews were so concerned about using this name in vain that they would not even pronounce it when reading the Bible aloud. (They substituted "Adonai," meaning Lord.) As a result, the proper pronunciation of the original Hebrew is unknown. Most scholars say "Yahweh" or "Yahveh" is likely the proper pronunciation, although Jehovah has been used since the sixteenth century.

The Bible stresses the importance of respect for God by emphasizing the importance of the name of God. Solomon said, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10). The psalmist said, "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name" (Psalm 111:9). (By the way, "reverend" refers only to God in the Bible, and never to man.) Isaiah spoke of "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name

is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). Jesus told His disciples, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9).

The third commandment warns, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). Although this commandment is part of the old covenant, the need for respect for the Lord's names continues. Paul wrote, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed" (1 Timothy 6:1).

Do You Have Spiritual Life Insurance?

ALLEN WEBSTER

This generation has seen its share of natural and unnatural calamities. Terrorists destroy buildings and lives; planes fall from the sky; evil people have given "hate mail" a new meaning. Periodically, hurricanes "huff, and puff, and blow our East Coast houses down" and earthquakes "shake, rattle, and roll" our West Coast structures. A little closer to home, fires often destroy neighborhood houses, storms leave us in the dark, and auto accidents injure those we know.

Usually, upon finding out that no one was injured in such a time, we immediately ask, "Were they covered?" We are interested in whether victims had insurance; we sympathize more with those who did not. It multiplies the sorrow of misfortune if there is no "starting over" check.

Insurance companies provide a valuable service, and most of us have been wisely counseled by informed agents. They always advise, "Take out ample coverage. You never know when you might need it." Though we do not like to pay the premiums, most of us realize that the potential benefits are worth the cost of being covered. We often advise our children and grandchildren to take out a policy "just in case."

There is a spiritual angle to the "insurance business."

GOD IS IN THE INSURANCE BUSINESS

There is a sense in which God is in the insurance business. He

promised Moses that He would “cover” him as He passed by (Exodus 33:22), and Moses promised the tribe of Benjamin, “The Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders” (Deuteronomy 33:12). In a beautiful word picture, the psalmist describes God’s protection:

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler (Psalm 91:3-4).

From His vantage point, God can see an impending disaster worse than any hurricane or earthquake. It will not destroy just one town but the whole earth (2 Peter 3:10). It will not involve only a few thousand people, but all the people of the whole earth (2 Corinthians 5:10). God is providing coverage for those willing to “pay the premiums.” Jesus put it this way:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:28-33).

Having such coverage helps us “rebuild” in a better place (Hebrews 11:10).

CHRISTIANS ARE INSURANCE AGENTS

If God is in the insurance business, then Christians are His agents. We seek to “cover” our friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, fellow citizens; actually, all our brothers come down from Adam. Love motivates us. Gratitude sends us.

When Noah was uncovered in his tent, Shem and Japheth took a garment and went backward to cover their father’s shame (Genesis 9:23). They did what love always does—cover the shame of sinners. The Bible teaches us to do just that:

- “Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins” (Proverbs 10:12).
- “A fool’s wrath is presently known; but a prudent man covereth shame” (Proverbs 12:16).

- “He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends” (Proverbs 17:9).
- “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

Love does not sweep sin under the rug. In younger days, our older brothers or buddies from school occasionally pressed us to “cover for them” to keep them from the wrath of parents or teachers. It never worked. The truth came out, and then we looked as bad as they did.

Sin is like a rubber tire—it won’t stay buried (Numbers 32:23; 1 Timothy 5:24-25). So what does it mean that “love covereth all sins”? We cover sins by assisting sinners in getting rid of them. James wrote, “Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

ARE YOU COVERED?

It does no good to cover one’s sins so that others do not know of them. Children may hide things from their parents; husbands and wives may hide things from each other; and workers may hide things from their employers, but no one hides anything from God (Hebrews 4:13). “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

The only way to cover ones sins is to have them erased from the mind of God (Hebrews 8:12). For sinners this is done through faith in His Son (John 3:16), repentance—turning from sinful behavior—(Luke 13:3), confession of faith (Romans 10:9-10), and immersion in water to have sins blotted out (Acts 2:38). For erring Christians, sins are covered by repentance, confession, and prayer (Acts 8:22).

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1).

GOD’S PROMISES

BOBBY KEY

A Christian brother writes, “I am persuaded that God has lost control of the world. Evil is predominant and good is shortlived. There is rebellion all around us, and I have concluded that wrong

is stronger than right. I have learned to live with the motto that most things will turn out bad. Everything bad that can happen has happened to me. Everything I've tried turns sour after awhile; I have fewer breaks and more bad luck than most."

There is no doubt that this brother is in the valley of despair. For too many of the world's problems there seems to be no human solution, but "the gloomier the outlook, the brighter the uplook"; the darker the night the brighter God's promises shine. We have assurance that God's hand is not shortened that He cannot save (Isaiah 59:1). I am persuaded that for every human need for your every need ~ there is a divine promise to meet that need. Let us study a few of these together.

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE WORRY ABOUT OUR DAILY NEEDS? "But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matthew 7:11). "But they that seek the Lord shall not want (lack) any good thing" (Psalm 34:10).

WHERE CAN I TURN FOR WISDOM IN SOLVING MY PROBLEMS? "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

IS THERE A REMEDY FOR MY SIN AND GUILT? "... Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21); "He is able to also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Hebrews 7:25). "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). One who puts his faith in Christ and does His will has the blessed promise that his sins are forgiven. "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A CHRISTIAN TO BE FAITHFUL AND VICTORIOUS? "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:14). "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

IS THERE VICTORY OVER DEATH, OUR LAST ENEMY? "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O

grave, where is thy victory? ... but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

IS THERE ANY PLACE TO TURN WHEN I AM BURDENED WITH PROBLEMS? "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you ... but the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:7,10).

DOES GOD HAVE PLANS FOR OUR FUTURE? "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). Our God has promised, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7). It is comforting to know that one day God shall wipe away all tears, and there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. There shall be no more pain (Revelation 21:4).

IS GOD ABLE TO KEEP THESE PRECIOUS PROMISES? "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," (Ephesians 4:20). God is honest; He cannot lie. He has always kept His word, and we may rest in full assurance that He will do even more than He promised.

God is accessible and approachable to all who will come to Him. For the Christian, the door is always open in heaven. To overcome pessimism and gloom, read God's promises—they will increase your faith.

Christ is a merciful and faithful high priest. He has suffered, been tempted, and he is able to succor them that are tempted. We must have strength from above. God cares. There is a door opened in heaven, (Revelation 3:8; 4:1). This signifies opportunity and access to God. Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18). God opens the door and no man can close it.

CONTINUED VIGILANCE

DEAN FUGETT

Speaking of political freedom, a former statesman said, "The price of liberty is continued vigilance." Can the price of our spiritual liberty be any less? We know that it cost to make us free from sin.

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). “Redeemed by the blood of the lamb” is a theme we well know. We glory in that precious bought freedom. Paul said concerning that liberty, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1). We are exhorted by Peter to “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8). We are very jealous of our freedom. We resent any threatened encroachments. All kinds of safeguards are in place to protect our personal freedoms. We have heard repeatedly about the “Constitutional” protection of our personal freedoms. Court cases are abundant that have reaffirmed the personal rights and freedoms we hold dear. But, how strange that we would give ourselves so easily into the snares of some who would deprive us of our spiritual freedom in Christ. This freedom we have from the Law of Moses, this freedom in Christ, is not freedom from all and any law, but freedom from the KIND of law contained in the Old Testament. The freedom is freedom from the bondage power of sin through the justifying power of Christ. The law we are now under is one which frees us from that which was before. Any statements of freedom command our attention. This is why some today can gain a following so quickly. They promise liberty. Those who speak of freedom and oppose encroachments claim a ready audience and receive accolades. But we must remember that the greatest tyrant claims that his subjects have the greatest freedom and liberty. Peter warned of those who promise liberty but are themselves the slaves of corruption (II Peter 2:19). Paul warns of some who attempted to “spy out” their liberty (Galatians 2:4).

Be vigilant, lest you lose your liberty to those who promise liberty.

CHRISTIANITY WILL ELIMINATE SHORT-WEIGHT SCALES

ELWOOD HOLT

“But he that looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing” (James 1:25). Take a brief

glimpse into the perfect law of liberty.

Two elderly women were talking one time, and one remarked, "Oh, but that was a grand sermon the preacher gave us Sunday." She was the proprietress in a small grocery store. "What was the text?" inquired her friend. "I don't remember," said the old lady after considerable thought, "What was the sermon about?" "I do not remember a lot about it," she replied. "Well, in what way was it good and helpful?" "It was grand because it made me come to my store and dispose of all the short-weight scales and measures I had, and put in honest ones. Hereafter, I am going to be honest with God and man. That's why the sermon was wonderful to me."

When the Bible talks about a "hearer that forgetteth" as James mentions in our text, it does not mean that one is expected to remember every word that the preacher says from the pulpit or every word that he reads from the Book. It means that one is guilty of sin when he fails to retain enough of God's message to make corrections in his heart, if such corrections need to be made. While it is true that the average person does not listen closely enough to the spoken word, many who cannot tell you just what the preacher talked about through the sermon, get enough of it to accomplish wonders in their lives. We need to be close hearers of the word of God. We need to be attentive when we read and study His word. But, when a chapter is prayerfully read, or a Bible based sermon is closely heard, enough will be retained to cause us to have compunction of conscience when we do wrong. And, it will cause us to go out and make things right with our neighbors and fellowmen if we have been wronging them. It will make the fellow who has been using the wrong weights throw them away. It will make the one who short changes his customers quit it and make restitution if at all possible. It will cause the one who is overly fond of scandal peddling to stop that, too. The best preventive against character assassination is a good dose of the word of God.

The best counteractive against malice, greed, avarice, covetousness, envy, jealousies, and strife, is a portion of the word of truth taken into the heart. I do not feel that I ever preached a sermon in vain. I believe with all my heart that every lesson that I ever delivered, though it may have been forgotten for many, many years, is still doing good in someone's heart. God's word has that characteristic. Nothing can kill it. It has been crushed down a million times, but has always risen up to haunt its would-be assassin. God's word is the cure for our spiritual heart trouble. "Blessed are the

pure in heart for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). But, the heart is purified by “obedience to the truth” (I Peter 1:22). Obedience is absolutely essential to a pure heart. The good moral man must not die short of obedience, for in obedience he accepts Christ as the author of his salvation (Hebrews 5:8, 9). Christ is not the author of eternal salvation to those who will not obey him.

When you hear the word of God, try to retain all of it that you can. You can develop greater ability the harder you try to do this. And, if your mind slips occasionally as to what the preacher’s text was, or just where the particular chapter you have in mind is located, you will be able to apply the holy principles that will abide with you as heaven—sent benedictions anyway.

“Take heed what ye hear,” said Jesus. He also said, “Take heed how ye hear.” It matters what we hear. Error heard and obeyed will enslave the heart; truth heard and obeyed will liberate the soul from the bondage of iniquity.

The word that caused the little store keeper to throw away her dishonest weights can help you make whatever correction there is to be made in your life.

We recommend that word to you, our friend. May the Lord help us to study and meditate with open minds, be willing always to make such corrections in our own lives as are requisite to our soul’s eternal well-being. GOD’S WORD, THE TRUTH, SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.

The Days of Genesis

MAX PATTERSON

In an attempt to make Genesis fit the theory of evolution, there are some who claim that the days of Genesis chapter one were long geological ages. True Bible believers have pointed out sound arguments why this could not have been the case. I list just a few here:

1. These days were half darkness and half light. What other days except 24-hour periods have ever been like this?
2. When a definite number precedes the Hebrew word for day, “Yom,” in the Scriptures, a 24-hour solar day is always meant (see Genesis 8:3; Numbers 13:25; Jonah 1:17).
3. God Himself settles the question in Exodus 20:11, “*For in six*

days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."

4. These days had "evening and morning" just as our 24-hour days do. The literal translation of the Hebrew is: "and evening was, and day was, day one."
5. Adam was created on the sixth day, lived in Eden on the seventh day and at least into the eighth day. If the day-age theory is correct, then Adam lived in a portion of one long geological age, through the whole of another, and into a portion of a third. How old would he have been?
6. How is the miracle of Eve being produced explained?
7. How is the fact that everything was created full-grown explained?

In 1984, Dr. James Barr, a professor of Hebrew and Interpretation of Scripture at Oxford University, wrote a letter to David Watson, a British scholar. In this letter Barr addresses the above question. He writes:

"Probably, so far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer of Genesis 1-11 intended to convey to the readers the idea that (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience, (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided a simple addition of chronology from the beginning of the world up to later stages in the biblical story, (c) Noah's flood was understood to be worldwide and extinguished all human and animal life except for those in the ark.

Or, to put it negatively, the apologetic arguments which suppose the "days" of creation to be long eras of time, the figures of years not to be chronological, and the flood to be a merely local Mesopotamian flood, are not taken seriously by any such professors, as far as I know."

Everything Was Created Full-Grown

Isn't it interesting that these Hebrew scholars, who would not view the Bible as inspired or authoritative, would say, purely on the basis of their scholarly analysis of what is said in the Scriptures, that the writer of Genesis one was certainly intending to give an account of what God did on *seven 24-hour solar days*? These men cannot be accused of imposing their views of the Bible on others, but merely stating, as *scholars*, what they believe the *text* says.

So, arguing from the standpoint of what God says in the text,

and from what Hebrew scholars say about what the text says, one comes up with the clear understanding that the days of Genesis one are 24-hour periods. If men had not felt compelled to try to mesh the Bible into the evolutionary hypothesis, there would never have been imposed upon the Bible an interpretation called “theistic evolution”.

It is always safer and wiser to go with what God says.

Right Thinking

HOLLIS MILLER

The modern world is constantly bombarding our minds with thought-twisting propaganda of all descriptions. Political, economic, and psychological “bombs” drop on us from every direction. One such bomb is composed of the skepticism toward Christian faith that daily flows over the airways, and voices itself through the printed page.

The many wonderful accomplishments of the scientific community have transformed science into an idol to be worshiped by modern man. But like all idolatry, the idol is frail and hopelessly limited. In every accomplishment science must utilize existing realities that were present when the first individual wondered *why*, *what*, or *how*. Were there no airwaves, science could not harness them; were there no insects, science could not study them; and were there no stars, science could not theorize about their origin. Without a grown universe no scientist could develop a hypothesis which might explain how its growth occurred.

Unlike much of the propaganda being poured out upon us, Christian faith stands firmly on facts from out of the past. Jesus lived! He is as much a part of world history as are the Pharaohs of Egypt, the Emperors of Rome, and the philosophers of Greece. The church Jesus founded exists. It had a datable beginning that was based on certain events that were known to have transpired in Judea a few days before the Jewish festival of Pentecost.

The prophets of ancient Israel who spoke and wrote about a coming kingdom were real people who walked the earth, delivered their messages, and died. The apostles of Jesus who spread the good news of the Messiah were as real as any other personality of the past. Their written records of Jesus and the early church are

real literature, authenticated by hundreds of extant manuscripts.

A moment's reflection will reveal that skepticism toward the things of God has always existed. Why? The Bible's answer is that mankind is in rebellion against God. Part of sin's activity in men is its perpetual effort to persuade them that God is not needed, that He is excess baggage being carried about by deceived and unenlightened individuals who wish to hold on to what a world come-of-age deems antiquated relics from out of the past.

It is an accepted axiom that the ultimate worth of a thing is determined by what the thing produces. If good is produced, the thing is good. If evil, the thing is bad. Bigotry, slavery, and despotic governments usually produce evil. Therefore, they are generally considered less than desirable as benefactors of human welfare.

Christian faith as it is taught in the New Testament produces good. (One should not confuse the evils of apostate Christianity with the teaching of the New Testament.) For hundreds of years rational men have praised the teaching of Jesus for its beneficial worth to mankind. Yes, Jesus makes demands, but they can be likened to the mother who insists that her child eat healthy food. The demands of such a mother are a blessing to the child, not a curse. So it is with the demands of Jesus. Every individual who follows His words is only made better.

Christian faith corrects the imbalance brought into the world by sin. It does so because it is true, and it will never be proved false.

CONVERSION

DAN R. OWEN

While people often embrace minor, surface changes, they usually resist fundamental change. Conversion is radical, fundamental change. It is a pervasive change in an individual brought about by the hand of God.

We may think it is impossible for some people to change. We may even feel that we could never really change. But things which are impossible for men are well within the range of God's ability. God can change anyone. Witness the case of Saul of Tarsus.

Saul of Tarsus was one of the most confident, self-assured persons one could ever meet. He was confident in his superior education, his recognized status in Israel's hierarchy, and in his

reputation of zeal in keeping the law. Saul was passionate and deliberate, and he was actively committed to what he believed. He was so sure of himself that the appearance of the risen Lord on the Damascus road hit him like a ton of bricks. Like a bolt from the blue he was confronted by a truth he had dedicated his life to denying. Jesus of Nazareth was alive, the risen, living Christ. Everything Saul had been doing was wrong, terribly wrong.

For three days following this life-shaking experience, Saul of Tarsus was anything but self assured. He was blind, helpless, weak, and afraid. He fasted and prayed for direction, knowing how misdirected he had been. Real conversion takes place when the helpless call out to God for help and the weak cry out for strength.

Ananias was reluctant to go to Saul. He was compelled to go, however, and when he arrived at that house on Straight Street, he found not an arrogant persecutor, but a helpless, humble, open, seeker of God's will. Ananias shared the Gospel with Saul and challenged him, *"Why do you wait? Get up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name!"* (Acts 22:16).

When Saul obeyed, he was no longer trusting in himself, but calling on the name of the Lord Jesus. He began to preach what he had once persecuted. He allowed Jesus to change his thinking, his behavior, his commitments, his associations, and his mission in life. Saul of Tarsus was converted. It took a traumatic experience to bring him to his knees, but God changed him completely.

What about you? What kind of experience will it take in your life to show you how blind, helpless, ignorant, and sinful you are and how much you need the grace of Jesus Christ? Will you have the courage to start trusting God and stop believing only in yourself? Remember, God can cause conversion or radical change in anyone. Will you let God change you?

CIRCUMCISED AND RAISED

OWEN D. OLBRICHT

The apostle Paul uses two descriptive terms, *"circumcised"* and *"raised,"* to express what takes place when one is baptized (Colossians **2:11-13**). Both of these would have been understood by the Colossians in the physical sense and should have helped them understand the spiritual realities implied by these terms.

Physical circumcision to them would suggest a removal of flesh and in the spiritual sense the removal of their fleshly passions. Since this was done without hands, the implication is that the operation taking place was on the inner person through the working of God.

God did this when they were **buried and risen** with Jesus in baptism. Because of a heart response (Romans 6:17, 18) through their association with Jesus in His burial and resurrection in baptism, the spiritual result should be a new life. If they were involved with Jesus in this way, then they received the **forgiveness of all their trespasses**. No longer were they dead in sin and controlled by fleshly passions. Now that they had been baptized they were: (1) *"circumcised,"* i.e. freed from the domination of the flesh; (2) *"made alive,"* i.e. given new spiritual life; and (3) *"forgiven of all their trespasses,"* all of which had taken place because of their response through faith in the working of God.

They had heard the gospel (Colossians 1:23) which revealed Jesus' death for sin and the power of God as manifested in His raising Jesus from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). When they came to believe in God's work in raising Jesus, they trusted that the same power could also raise them to a new spiritual life if they were buried and raised with Jesus. In their baptism they did not have faith in the water, the preacher, their own act, or their own goodness. They had faith that the same working of God that raised Jesus could also work in their lives to give them new spiritual life.

Karl Braune correctly stated, "God is then characterized: *who hath raised him from the dead*, because the syllogism runs: As God raised Christ, then can He also bring me to new life (comp. Ephesians 1:19, 20). It is precisely through faith in such an 'operation of God,' that this is experienced." Commentary of the Holy Scriptures, Colossians, Vol. III, new edition, Peter Lange, edit, translated by M. B. Riddle (Michigan: Zondervan) 1969, p. 46.

Herbert W. Carson well worded the same idea, "The mighty working of God as already demonstrated in the resurrection of Christ is thus the object of the believer's confidence. The argument would then be as follows: They had accepted the fact of Christ's resurrection. This was the signal demonstration of the power of God, and in reliance upon that power they had known a spiritual resurrection in union with Christ." The **Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and Philemon**, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans) 1979, p. 66, 67.

The conclusion is impressive. God will work in the lives of those who are being baptized, who put their faith in His working as was made known by His raising Jesus from the dead. He will remove their fleshly passions, make them spiritually alive, and forgive all their trespasses. He will do this for them because of their response of baptism with faith in His working, as was demonstrated in His raising Jesus from the dead.

YOU CAN'T DO IT THAT WAY

T. PIERCE BROWN

In Exodus 8:25, we find, *"And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land."* Many in bondage would have decided at that point to try to make a compromise with Pharaoh if he would just lessen their burdens a little. However, God does not want to simply lessen your burden and leave you in slavery. He wants you to be free. In order to be free, you have to *"come out from among them and be separate, and touch no unclean thing"* (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Satan, with all of his devices, does not let go easily. He will make whatever compromises he has to make as long as he can cunningly keep you in his service. He is even willing to let you be baptized, attend church services when you feel the urge, and give a little of what you think you own, as long as *you do not make a full commitment to let Christ be the Lord of your life.*

It is really depressing to realize that there are multiplied millions who are willing to make a sacrifice to God in the land, so to speak, but are unwilling to leave the land of bondage and march under God's orders all the way. If you do not submit and act on the belief that Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth, you have actually compromised on Pharaoh's terms.

If, on the other hand, you sincerely act on the fact that Christ has all authority, then you will attempt to let all you do in word or deed be done by His authority. That means you will not demand of anyone that which God did not demand, nor will you attempt to release anyone from the obligations He has given. You will not only *"obey from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to you"* (Romans 6:17) but you will worship God in spirit and in truth, doing only what He authorized. Then, *"as much as you have opportunity, you will*

seek to do good unto all men, especially to those of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). This includes teaching the lost the way of salvation, and urging the saved to continue in the faith, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left.

You cannot properly sacrifice to God *in the land*. Come out! You can do this by repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Christ, and being baptized for the remission of your sins. This is how the Bible describes being called out of darkness into His marvelous light. We have come out of the world and have been baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27).

The Bible Hope Of The World

W. T. ALLISON

IN THIS AGE OF much skepticism, unbelief, infidelity, immorality, and open ridicule of God and all things holy, let us consider some reasons for believing the Bible.

In spite of all the claims of the evolutionists, the Bible gives the only reasonable and sensible explanation of the origin of all things.

The Bible has withstood all the attacks made upon it through the ages. All efforts made to destroy it and disprove it have ended in miserable failure. As Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"* (Matthew 24:35).

The Bible gives strength and comfort to those who study and live by it in life and hope in death. Paul spoke of this in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Indeed it tells us of a better place for those who prepare for it (Matthew 25:34).

Obedience to the Bible brings happiness and peace now, and the hope of even more later (Psalm 1; Philippians 4:7).

Those who disregard the Bible, ignore its teaching, and violate its laws bring upon themselves unhappiness and misery. As Paul wrote, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"* (Galatians 6:7,8).

Those who refuse to believe and obey the Word of God and live faithful to it will be eternally lost.

The Bible is man's hope—his guide in life. Have you obeyed it?

The Indwelling Of The Holy Spirit

THOMAS R. DOHLING

It is being taught in some quarters that the apostles **only** were sealed with the Holy Spirit. If God “*set His seal of ownership*” on and “*put His Spirit*” in the “*hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come*” (i.e., eternal life with God forever) (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5) of the apostles **only**, then the apostles **only** are owned by God and they **only** are guaranteed eternal life! Is this what the Bible teaches (especially the New Testament)?

While it is agreed that Jesus, salvation, eternal life are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is incorrect to say that God deals differently with **Christians** of different ages. Moreover, the implication of Acts 2:38 is **not** that those who are baptized will receive a gift from the Holy Spirit (i.e., salvation, etc.), but that they will receive the **Holy Spirit** as a **gift** from God as an earnest (i.e., a deposit), as the first installment (Gk. *arabon*) guaranteeing our future salvation (inheritance) which will be consummated when “*what is mortal*” has been swallowed up by life (2 Corinthians 5:4ff) and God has guaranteed this by “*giving us the Spirit as a deposit*” (2 Corinthians 5:5). This salvation is already in progress, set in motion by the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus and His glorious resurrection by the power of God!

The Bible teaches that it was not the apostles only who were marked/sealed with the Holy Spirit! Let the Bible speak. “**You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory**” (Ephesians 1:13,14).

The “you” here implies Ephesian Christians and, by extension, all Christians, who are God’s possessions. From these passages we understand that the Holy Spirit is the gift given by God to those who believed and obeyed the Lord Jesus (cf. Acts 5:32).

The fact that the Bible is consistent and self-supporting is also evident from the passages in Acts 6:3-6. Here we find that the seven men chosen by the Jerusalem church for waiting on saints were already full of the Spirit before the apostles laid their hands on them. In Acts 13:52 we find that the **disciples** were filled with the Holy Spirit. Who are disciples? Every follower of Christ is His disciple.

The Holy Spirit is God’s gift of grace to the Christian. Paul says to the Ephesian Christians, “*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*” (Ephesians 4:30). The “**you**” here **signifies the Ephesian Christians and not the apostles** (cf. Jude 17-20).

We often quote Acts 2:38 but neglect verse 39. Let us see what these two verses together signify. Verse 38, “*Repent and be baptized, every one*

of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" contains two parts of a very precious promise. While we emphasize the first part, baptism for the forgiveness of sins, we miserably neglect the second, more vital part—the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The promise is applicable not only to the first century Christians but to Christians today as well (and always). Listen to Peter, *"The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off; for all whom the Lord our God will call."* For whom? *"For all whom the Lord our God will call."*

Isn't it wonderful? Nay, amazing! How often people try to limit God and His wondrous ways! Our Lord Jesus said in John 3:5, *"I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* Isn't Peter echoing the same thing in Acts 2:38? He is saying, be born of the water and of the Spirit.

Paul says (through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) in Titus 3:5ff,6, *"He saved us through the washing of rebirth (baptism) and renewal (made anew) by the Holy Spirit, whom He (God) poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour."* He also says in 1 Corinthians 12:3ff, *"...No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."*

And how is the Spirit received? Paul in Galatians 3:2 said, *"...Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?"* (To us who have the written word of God He would say, "You received the Spirit by believing what you read and heard.") Wonderful!

What about *"...the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him"* (Acts 5:32ff)? If that was true for the first century Christians, isn't it true for us, the twenty-first century Christians? Do we dare to question God's ways? Does He deal differently with us today after we have obeyed Him?

It is conceded that the **miraculous work** of the Holy Spirit through the apostles has ceased with the writing down of God's revealed will and the death of the eye witnesses (apostles), but He does give us to drink of the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), i.e., He gives us the **common gift** of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5-7). Who continues to stamp the revealed will (the new covenant, the new testament) of God on our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3) until we all *"become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:13ff) and *"all are transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit"* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

To the extent that we eat of and drink from God's word and to the extent that **we allow Him to dwell in us**, to that extent will He be able to produce His fruit in us (Galatians 5:22). The fruit of the Spirit will be evident in the lives of those who *"live by the Spirit"*, keeping *"in step with the Spirit"* (Galatians 5:25). The fruit will be diminished in the lives of those who limit Him or deny His indwelling. The word of God is *"the sword of the Spirit"* (Ephesians 6:17). It is He who makes the word living and active, not only in the life of the devoted, committed Christian, but also in the whole world.