

GOSPEL SERMONNETTES

J.C. Choate

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DEDICATION

To

**Bro. Sunny David and family and
members of the church in New Delhi**

INTRODUCTION

I have written many tracts during the past twenty years. These have varied, according to where I was and the need at the time. The articles contained in this book originally appeared in tract form here in Asia.

Coming to Karachi, Pakistan in 1962, I began to write tracts for the work there. Later, going to Colombo, Sri Lanka, I not only reprinted the ones that I had originally written in Karachi, but I wrote a number of new ones for the specific needs that confronted me there. Finally, coming to Delhi, once more I began to reprint the tracts I had used in Colombo and Karachi, and as time passed I wrote a dozen or so more. Not only so, but these tracts have been printed and distributed in many other parts of India and countries throughout Asia.

My intention in presenting them in this form is to bring them all together in a more permanent form and to provide the reader with a variety of material that will surely lead to further study and consideration of these truths, and I pray, an acceptance of the same as taught in God's word.

These tracts have been printed again and again with thousands and hundreds of thousands being put into circulation. My prayer would be that wherever they have gone that only good has been done and that the Lord has been praised and honored through them. My prayer would be no less for this volume.

—J. C. Choate

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WHY YOU SHOULD BELIEVE THE BIBLE TO BE THE WORD OF GOD

Millions of people around the world believe the Bible to be the word of God. They accept this as fact rather than to question it. Others are skeptical of it but only because they have not investigated its contents and examined its fruits. Still others reject the Bible entirely because they have been born into this world and reared to accept something else. If you are in one or the other of the last two groups then I would briefly like to give you some reasons as to why you should believe the Bible to be the word of God.

1. The Bible claims to be word of God. It is called the word of the Lord. (Jeremiah 14:1). Peter said that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:20, 21). Christ quoted frequently from the Old Testament, calling it the word of God. (John 10:35). Finally, Paul tells us that it was all given by the inspiration of God. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

2. The Bible agrees with true science. Long before man discovered that the earth was round, that there were paths in the sea, and hundreds of other facts, the Bible had said it. (Isaiah 40:22; Psalms 8). How did the writers of the Bible know this at such an early date? God had revealed it to them.

3. The Bible is supported by the many archaeological discoveries. Such discoveries have shed light on events

that took place hundreds of years before Christ, but they have fully supported the claims of the Bible. There have been those who doubted certain biblical stories, such as that of the flood, but, in 1872 George Smith found the Babylonian tablets which also tell of the flood. Many other examples could be given.

4. The Bible and Geography agree. Many of the mountains, rivers, cities, etc., that exist now are the same as are listed in the Bible under these names. This shows that the Bible did not just list a lot of fictitious places that never really existed.

5. The Bible and secular history support each other. For instance, many of the events that the Bible speaks of as having taken place, are described in the reading of the different histories of the world. If the Bible was a book of fables, how could this be?

6. The Bible could not have been written by man alone, since much of it was beyond man's knowledge. If man alone, wrote it, why is it that no one has ever been able to equal it? If man had written it then someone would have written a better book by now.

7. The Bible is a wonderful book of unity. Although it had some 40 different authors, over a period of some 1600 years, written by those of different professions at different places, yet it completely fits together as one complete book. How could this have been possible if God had not been directing the entire writing?

8. The Bible not only contains many prophecies but reveals how they were fulfilled. For example in Joel 2:28, 29 the author speaks of the time when the Spirit of the

Lord would be poured out. Then in Acts 2, Peter says that which was then taking place was that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. There are many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Christ, and these are fulfilled in the New Testament. Read Isaiah 53:5 and Luke 22:63, 64.

9. The Bible is shown to be the word of God inasmuch as it has stood the tests of time. It has had many enemies but it has outlived them all. It has been preserved down through the centuries and present day translations may be compared with ancient manuscripts to prove that it remains the same.

10. The Bible answers the great questions of man. Where did man come from? What is his purpose in life? Where is he going? The Bible is the only book that gives the answers. Man came from God (Genesis 1:26, 27), his purpose is to glorify his maker (1 Peter 4:11), and he will surely spend eternity somewhere. (Matthew 25:46).

11. The Bible has the greatest and best influence on man of any book of all the world, and bad as the world may be, it is as good as it is because of its influence.

12. The Bible will never pass away. Christ so states in John 12:48.

Truly, then, the Bible is the word of God. It is from God to man. It is the truth, a guide from earth to heaven. Believe it, obey its teachings, and be blessed by its promises. Surely by now, you too, believe the Bible to be the word of God.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD

If you do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God then this material is being directed to you. There are many proofs and evidences to suggest that Jesus was more than a mere man or a prophet. Rather, he was God's Son in every sense of the word and here are a number of reasons as to why you should accept him as such.

1. Jesus was with God in the beginning. In Genesis 1:26 we read: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". He goes on to show that this was Christ.

2. Jesus was spoken of in prophecy. In Isaiah 53 the prophet gives a description of Christ and the purpose of his coming. Then in Acts 8:32-35 Philip finds the eunuch reading from Isaiah 53 and then begins at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. This indicates that Isaiah was prophesying of him. There are many other such prophecies in the Old Testament.

3. Jesus was born of a Virgin. This means that Jesus had no earthly father. Rather, God was his Father. Leaving his Father in Heaven, he took upon himself the likeness of man by humbling himself and being born of a virgin, which was a miraculous birth. This was also a

fulfillment of a prophecy concerning him. (Matthew 1:18-25; Isaiah 7:14).

4. Jesus was a perfect man. He was the only man to ever live a perfect life or to live without sin. Peter declares that we should follow in the steps of Christ, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22). It was because of his sinless life that he was able to die for sinners, and thus to bring hope to the world. (1 John 3:5).

5. Jesus came to fulfill the prophecies. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17).

6. Jesus performed many miracles. He healed the sick, made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and raised the dead. He healed all manner of diseases, fed the multitudes, and walked on the water. We are told that "Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did." (John 2:23).

7. Jesus was acknowledged as the Son of God by his disciples. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16). Many other such confessions could be given.

8. Jesus was confessed to be the Son of God by devils. "And devils also came out of many, crying out and saying; Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ." (Luke 4:4).

9. Jesus is quoted by others as saying he was the Son of God. "Say ye of him, whom the father hath sanctified,

and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the Son of God" (John 10:36).

10. Jesus acknowledged that he was the Son of God. He raised Lazarus from the dead in order that he might be glorified as the Son of God. (John 11:4).

11. Jesus was acknowledged by God as being His Son. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5).

12. Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Paul said, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4).

13. Jesus can give life to those who believe. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through his name". (John 20:31).

14. Jesus is coming again. "I will come again." (John 14:3).

15. Jesus is likewise acknowledged as the Son of God in secular history.

16. Jesus lives today and will live forever.

Space will not permit us to go on with further evidences and proofs both in the Bible and outside the Bible. But you are asked to consider what has been given.

Do you believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God? If so, confess him (Matthew 10:32) and obey him that he might be your saviour and that through him, you might have the hope of eternal life. (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Colossians 1:27).

THE SON OF GOD

The Bible teaches plainly that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. There are some who feel they cannot accept this. They question it, therefore, and even deny it. But their problem is that they try to understand it on a human level. They ask, "How could God have a son?" They reason, "If God has a son then he must have a wife." So in their mind they reduce it to absurdity and leave it at that. But let us reopen the case and see what the facts are.

Let us begin by noticing that the Bible speaks of different senses in which one may be spoken of as a son of God:

1. Inasmuch as God created man, then physically speaking, all may be classified as the sons of God. This is brought out in Genesis 6:2. Man is the offspring of God. (Acts 17:28). So whether one is good or bad, serving God or not serving God, body and soul, he is God's creation, and in this physical world may be classified as a son of God or God's child. However, he now is in a state of having strayed away from his maker because of sin and therefore needs to be redeemed or brought back. (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:14).

2. God spoke of the nation of Israel as being his son. This was true, because physically and spiritually, they were his chosen people: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me:

and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." (Exodus 4:22, 23).

3. By obeying the commands of God, one spiritually becomes God's son. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14). "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Galatians 4:1-7).

As sons, that makes us the children of God. Listen: "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). "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." (Ephesians 5:1). "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (1 John 3:10). "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." (1 John 5:2).

4. And finally, Christ is spoken of as being the Son of God in a special sense, in a personal way, in a Father and

Son relationship. To begin with, God acknowledged Christ as his Son: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17). Again, God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5). Peter confessed Christ as being the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16). God sent his own Son to die for the sins of the world. (John 3: 16, 17; Romans 8:3). And Christ was preached as being the Son of God. (Acts 9:20). We could go on and on with many more similar statements but these should be sufficient.

How then was Christ the Son of God? For one thing, he was with God in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1, 2). He participated in the creation. God said, "Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:26). The Hebrew writer goes on to say, "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:2). John adds, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3).

Christ was a part of the Godhead, which consisted of God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:20). Speaking of Christ, Paul writes, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." (Colossians 2:9, 10). Read also Romans 1:20.

Christ dwelt with God in the Spirit even as God is Spirit. Then finally, at the appointed time, as had been promised,

he left his Father to come to this world to be born of the Virgin Mary, to take upon himself the likeness of man, to fulfill his mission, to die upon the cross for the sins of the world, to be buried, to be resurrected, and to return to his Father in Heaven where he remains to this time. (Matthew 1:21; John 3:17; Galatians 4:1; John 4:9; 1 John 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 2).

Although Christ was with God in the beginning, is eternal, is deity, and has the attributes of God, still he is not God the Father. There is one God, one Christ, and one Spirit. (Ephesians 4:1-6). They are one but they are three. Each one is a personality, has a work to do, and composes part of the Godhead.

To say that God could not have a Son would be to limit God. This we cannot do. We may not understand it fully, but we do not fully understand God. God and his Son are divine, but we are human. We cannot know that which is to be accepted by faith. It is not up to you and me to guess about these things. All things point to God, and he has given us his word, and in that word he reveals to us his Son. There are many proofs, facts, and evidences that point to him as being God's Son. Therefore, he said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1). Truly we can. We must, or else we will die in our sins. (John 8:24).

THE SIN OF IDOLATRY

An idol is an image made out of wood, stone, or metal which represents a "god" or "goddess". It also may be in the form of a human being, some part of nature, or anything that may demand one's time and worship. Idolatry in worship is as ancient as the past and as modern as the present. It takes many forms but it is still idolatry and idolatry is labeled a sin inasmuch as it is the worship of that which is other than the one true and living God.

Concerning idols, the Bible says: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." (Exodus 20:4, 5). "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus said the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols and turn away your faces from all your abominations." (Ezekiel 14:6).

The New Testament writers continue: "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles, are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." (Acts 15:19, 20). "Little children, keep yourselves from idols, Amen." (1 John 5:21).

The inspired writers of God show the absurdity of idols and the worship of them: "Their land is full of idols;

they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not." (Isaiah 2:1,2). "They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms; yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They

have not known nor understood; for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand? (Isaiah 44:9-20).

To show the sheer folly of such, David wrote: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." (Psalms 115:1-8).

Again in the New Testament, we have this record: "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." (Acts 17:16). Continuing, "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with the inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." (Acts 17:22, 23). He goes on to show that the God he served was the creator of all things, that he dwelt not in temples made with hands, and that he had no need of food, drink, etc. On another occasion he said, "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

So the Bible condemns idolatry and even says that all idolators, liars, etc., shall be cast into hell. (Revelation 21:8). On the other hand, the Bible tells us, and so does nature, knowledge, and common sense, that there is but one God (Ephesians 4:6), that he is Spirit (John 4:24), and him only should we serve. (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Blood has always had a part in man's relationship with God. This was true in the Old Testament period as animal sacrifices were offered. But these sacrifices could not permanently take away sin, for the Hebrew writer declared, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4). So if animal blood could not remove sin, how could man be saved? As we turn to the New Testament we are told that the blood of Christ was shed once and for all that the sinner might be cleansed of his sin upon coming in contact with it. So this is where our real lesson begins.

Man being a sinner could not save himself, so Paul says, "But God commandeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). He said in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that Christ died for our sins, and this was the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:8). By this death his blood was shed that through it we might have the remission of sins. Now the question is, how do we come in contact with that blood? The majority of religious people would say through faith. Well, faith is necessarily a part, but faith alone is not enough. In studying the scriptures we observe that we must obey him (Hebrews 5:8, 9), be doers of the word (James 1:22), keep his commandments (John 14:15), etc. So we assume that when we obey him we come in contact with his blood. Now what has he commanded us to do? Let us notice a few verses. For instance, he said, "He that believeth and

is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Since Christ said that by believing and being baptized one may be saved, then we conclude that through this obedience one reaches the blood of Christ and is therefore cleansed of his sin. Again, Peter said to a multitude of sinners, "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 Spirit." (Acts 2:38). Once more we conclude that if one must repent and be baptized to have the remission of sins, since Christ offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, shedding his blood that man might have the remission of sins, that through obedience to these commands one contacts the blood of Jesus and his sins are remitted. Again, concerning Saul's conversion, the preacher came and said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). But how does baptism wash away sin? The emphasis is not on water, but on obedience. Thus when one obeys the Lord the blood of Christ washes away his sins. It is just that simple.

In turning to Romans 6:3-6 the apostle Paul reasons: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Now what is he showing? He is telling

us that through our obedience we reach the death of Christ or that we are able to lay hold of the benefits of his death. That means that we reach the blood of Christ and are therefore cleansed and purified by the same. In Ephesians 1:7 he says that we have the forgiveness of sins through his blood, and Christ himself said in Matthew 26:28 that his blood was shed that we might have the remission of sins. Again these verses remind us of the remission of sins and salvation as taught in Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:16. Therefore, on obeying these commands we reach the blood of Christ and are cleansed. Besides this there is no other way.

Now let us notice some other things about the blood of Christ:

1. The New Testament was sealed by the blood of Christ. (Matthew 26:28).
2. The blood of Christ broke down the wall between the Jew and Gentile. (Ephesians 2:13, 14).
3. We are justified by his blood. (Romans 5:9).
4. There is redemption through his blood. (Colossians 1:14).
5. The church was purchased with his blood. (Acts 20:28).
6. Peace comes through the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:20).
7. Sinners are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18, 19).
8. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. (1 John 1:7).

9. We are washed from our sins in his own blood. (Revelation 1:5).
10. Robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14).
11. We remember the blood of Christ in partaking of the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 26:26-28).

What does the blood of Christ mean to you? Have you obeyed the Lord to come in contact with it? If not, you are still in your sin. But if you will obey the Lord's commands, you'll be saved as a result of coming into contact with it. You will then be added to the church that was purchased by the blood of Christ. Then as a Christian, if you'll remember that blood by partaking of the Lord's Supper each week and by walking in the light as he is in the light, then the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse you from all sin and unrighteousness and keep you preserved for your final reward of eternal life. Truly, there is power in the blood.

WHY CHRIST DIED

Christ died. This is a fact supported by both the Bible and secular history. With this in mind we want to make a number of observations.

1. Christ's death was no ordinary death. Many people have lived and many have died. The sacred writer says that all men must die. (Hebrews 9:27). What is so special, then, about the death of Christ? Did he not live and die like many others have done? Yes, but his life was different and the purpose for which he died was different. He lived a sinless life and he died to save man from his sins. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

2. Christ's death was spoken of in prophecy. The prophet Isaiah said, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of 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 with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:4-6).

3. Christ spoke of his own death. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 10:10). He goes on to show that he was speaking of the temple of his body and of his death and resurrection.

4. Christ was sent of God to die. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

5. Christ was obedient unto death. It was the will of his father that he should die. "And being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8).

6. Christ died without sin. Speaking of Christ, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." (1 John 3:5).

7. Christ died for sinners. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10).

8. Christ died that we might live. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." (1 John 4:9).

9. Christ died on the cross. This was the most cruel death possible. Apart from the physical pain that accompanied it, it was made even more painful for Christ in that he was placed between two thieves as though he were no more than a criminal himself. Read Matthew 27. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2).

10. Christ died to take away the old law. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Colossians 2:14).

11. Christ died to give a new law or testament. (Matthew 26:28) "In that he said, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Hebrews 8:13).

12. Christ died for the church. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it". (Ephesians 5:25).

13. Christ died that we might have hope. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3).

14. Christ died, but after his burial, he was resurrected and then ascended to his father in Heaven. (Matthew 28:6; Acts 1:10). Therefore Christ assured all mankind of a resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15). Truly there is victory in Christ. (1 John 5:4,5)

These are some of the reasons why Christ died. As you can see, he did not die just to be dying. Rather he died for a purpose. He died for you and for me. He died for all mankind. He died that we might not be lost but that we might be saved. He died that we might have a better way of life. He died, above all, that we might be eternally saved.

The Lord has shown his love for you by giving himself for you that you might live. It is up to you now to return his love and obey his will. Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15).

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ?

In talking to various ones in India about the church of Christ, many seemed to have never heard about it. What about you? Perhaps you have. Let me ask you, have you ever heard of the church of Christ? If not, then I am asking you as I have asked others: WHY NOT? Don't you have a Bible? What church do you read about in its pages? If you will read again you will discover that just one church is mentioned and that is the church of Christ. Why, then, haven't you heard of this church? Why haven't all the others? You have had the Bible through the years. Quite a number of people in this area are members of some church. But what about the Lord's church?

The church of Christ exists around the world. It doesn't exist everywhere but it can be found where there are people who will follow the Bible and the Bible only. This church is not denominational, sectarian, or man-made. It is neither Catholic, Protestant, nor Jewish. Then what is it? It is simply the church that you read about in the Bible, being made up of those who obey the Lord and are faithful to him.

Christ is the founder of this church. Read and see for yourself. In Matthew 16:18 Christ said, "And upon this rock I will build my church."

It had its beginning in the city of Jerusalem. Read Luke 24 and Acts 2 and you will see that this is true. It

did not have its beginning in London, in Germany, in the U.S.A., but in Jerusalem.

The church was established in about A.D. 33. This means it is almost 2000 years old. Read again in Acts 2 of how the church had its beginning and thus the date is determined on this basis.

With Christ as its builder then it took the name of Christ. This was true as a church. "The churches of Christ salute you." (Romans 16:16). This was also true of its members. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26). The Bible only will make Christians only. Remember that.

Christ established but one church. In Ephesians 4:4 it is called the one body. In Colossians 1:18 the writer says that the body is the church. Therefore one church.

Christ is the head of the church. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." (Ephesians 5:23). The Lord's church does not have an earthly head or earthly headquarters. Christ is the head and he dwells in heaven at the right hand of God.

Christ is the saviour of the church. This is also pointed out in Ephesians 5:23. This means that if one is to be saved then he must be a member of the church.

Christ died for the church. (Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28). This is how much it meant to him. What does it mean to you?

The saved are added to it. (Acts 2:47). And Christ adds the saved to the right church, his church.

He is coming back for his church. (Ephesians 5:27). What if you are not a member of it when he comes back? Think about that.

The Lord's church is already in this area, in this city, and in this community. You can be a member when you love the Lord enough to read and study his word and do what it teaches. In so doing you will come to believe the Word of God, its author, and Jesus Christ, his son (Hebrews 11:6; John 14:1-3; Romans 10:17), and then you will repent of all of your sins, or turn from them (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38), confess Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32), and then be baptized (buried in water) for the remission of your sins. (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3, 4; Galatians 3:26, 27; 1 Peter 3:21). As a result, the Lord will add you to his church (Acts 2:47), and you will be a Christian only. (1 Peter 4:16). This will make you a member of the church of Christ in your area and it will remain as long as there are people who love the Lord, will obey him, and be faithful to him. This does not mean, however, that you will be a part of just another church. Neither will you be beginning a denomination, for the Lord's church is not a denomination.

For the time being, if you would like to know more about this church, read your Bible. You are also invited to contact us personally for further information and for a free home Bible correspondence course.

“Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:21).

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ?

There are a multitude of churches in the world today. In many ways, they are all alike. They were established by men. They are not important, for even the members say that one can go to heaven without being a part of them. They are divided into numerous denominations but are united in their claim that one denomination is as good as another. They wear all kinds of names and titles with each having its own separate manual or creed book. But there is one church that does not belong to this group. It is different to all the rest. It is the church of Christ.

The church of Christ is not a denomination. It is not inter-denominational. It is not Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish. It is not a sect. It did not have its beginning with man. It does not have a man as head. It does not have any earthly headquarters. It does not wear the names of men. It does not follow a man-made book. Neither is it political or social in nature. Then what is it? What could it be? Let us see.

The word church comes from the greek word "Ekklesia", and means the "Called Out." In other words, the church consists of those who have been called out of the world into the Lord's service. Paul speaks of a translation that takes place—translated from the world into the kingdom of God or the Lord's church. (Colossians 1:13, 14).

The Bible speaks of the church in two senses. First of all, it is spoken of in a universal sense. Christ had this

in mind when he said, "I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18). In this case, he was simply speaking of the church in a general sense without thinking of it in a local setting. In the second place, the church is spoken of locally in the framework of various congregations in different communities. We read of this again and again, such as the church at Corinth, the church at Thessalonica, etc. (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1) Then with all of the congregations in mind, Paul said, "The churches of Christ salute you." (Romans 16:16). This is the kind of thing that is under consideration when we read of the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation.

The church is the spiritual body of Christ on the earth. It is made up of those who have obeyed him and who are serving him. This body has many members but only one head. (1 Corinthians 12; Colossians 1:18). There is but one body (Ephesians 4:4) and it is the church. (Ephesians 1:22, 23).

To learn about the churches of men, you must go to the recent history books, to their literature, etc., for your information. You cannot go to the Bible to learn about them because they did not originate with the Lord. On the other hand, if you want to learn about the church of Christ then the Bible is precisely the place you should go. The Bible not only gives the history of the church, and everything you need to know about it, but also serves as its only guide. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; James 1:25).

Christ established this church (Matthew 16:18) in the city of Jerusalem, in A.D. 33. (Acts 2). That means then that the church does not belong to me or you or any other man. It did not have its beginning in England and there-

fore is not the Church of England. It did not begin in America and consequently is not an American church. Rather it began in the city of Jerusalem, Asia. Neither is it a young church, having been established more than nineteen hundred years ago.

In the days of the Apostles there was just one way to be a member of this church and that was through obedience to the gospel of Christ. Those who heard the gospel (Romans 10:17), believed it (Hebrews 11:6), repented of their sins (Acts 17:30), confessed Christ (Romans 10:10), and were baptized (buried in water) for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38), were therefore saved and added to the church. (Acts 2:47). The Lord does the same today.

Its members were known as Christians only (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16), and as a church it was known as the church of Christ or the church of God. (Romans 16:16; Acts 20:28). It is spoken of as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), but since the body is the church (Colossians 1:18), then this means the writer again was speaking of the church of Christ which is the spiritual body of Christ. It so honors Christ today by wearing his name. (Acts 4:12).

The church is made up of thousands of individual congregations all over the world. Each congregation is independent but all are tied together by love and unity of purpose. Christ is the head. (Ephesians 5:23). Where congregations are large enough and spiritually strong enough to have men qualified, then they have their own local Elders, Deacons, Preachers, Teachers, etc. (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1).

Worship is conducted every first day of the week. (Acts 20:7). The members assemble to study (2 Timothy 2:15),

pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17), sing (Ephesians 5:19), partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11), and to give. (1 Corinthians 16:2).

God requires his people to remain pure and spotless from the world. (Ephesians 5:27). Its mission is to preach the gospel to all the world (Mark 16:15, 16), and to help those in need. (James 1:27). The faithful will be given a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 25).

This is the church of Christ — the Lord's church — the only one you can read about in the Bible. Learn more about it, and become a member of it. Only then will you be a member of the church of Christ.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

If we are to learn the truth about the church, we must go to the New Testament to find it. Although it was spoken of in prophecy (Isaiah 2:2,3; Daniel 2:44), we must go to the teachings of Christ to see its fulfillment.

Let us keep in mind that we are not interested in what man has said about the church. We desire rather to see what the scriptures themselves say. So let us begin.

1. Christ built the church. He said himself, “. . . . and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18). Note that he said that he would build his church. Therefore, it belongs to him.

2. The church had its beginning in Jerusalem. Christ commanded the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem until they received the power from on high and that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:46-48). We may read in Acts 2 how this came to pass.

3. It began in the year A.D. 33. The church was established fifty days after the resurrection of Christ; that is, on the first Pentecost after his resurrection. (Acts 2).

4. It wore the name of Christ, its founder. When Paul wrote the church at Rome, he sent along greetings from many other congregations of the Lord's church. Thus he said, “The churches of Christ salute you.” (Romans 16:

16). In 1 Corinthians 12:27 he speaks of the body of Christ, which is the church of Christ. (Colossians 1:18). If Christ built it then naturally it would be the church of Christ. How could it be anything else and still belong to Christ?

5. Its members were Christians only. In Acts 11:26 we are told that they were first called Christians at Antioch. We know that this was with divine approval because later on Peter says that Christ should be glorified through the name Christian. (1 Peter 4:16).

6. Christ loved it so much that he was willing to die for it. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25).

7. It was purchased by the blood of Christ, Paul proclaimed to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28).

8. There is but one church. The Word of God says, "There is one body" (Ephesians 4:4), and that the body is the church. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18). So if there is one body, and the body is the church, then there is but one church. That's all.

9. Christ is its head. "And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." (Colossians 1:18). He shares this with no man.

10. Christ is the saviour of the church. We read, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is head

of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." (Ephesians 5:23).

11. The Lord adds the saved to his church. The Bible teaches that one must believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16). Then Paul says that through belief and baptism one enters Christ and the church (Galatians 3:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Another way of putting it, after the people on the day of Pentecost had repented and had been baptized for the remission of their sins, then "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47).

12. Christ will return one day for his bride or his church. "That he might present to himself a glorious church, not having wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:27). It should be kept in mind that he has but one bride, or church, and that one wears his name. Furthermore, he'll be coming for that one only.

Are you a member of the church that you can read about in the New Testament? If not, how can you say that you are a member of the church of Christ? Think about these things and visit the church of Christ.

HOW LONG WILL THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BE IN INDIA ?

The question is often asked: "How long will the church of Christ be in India?" That is a question that must be answered by the people of India. In other words, it is possible for the church to exist here indefinitely, provided there are sufficient people here who love the Lord enough to obey him and to be faithful to him. If there is no interest in such then the church cannot continue to live in this land. It is just that simple.

It doesn't matter whether there are any foreigners here or not. It doesn't matter whether there is any outside support coming in or not. It doesn't matter whether there are any church buildings or not. Neither does a lot of other things matter. The thing that does matter is whether the local people want to be what the Lord wants them to be.

This applies to this country but it applies to all other countries as well. The Lord's church can exist only where there are people who want to obey him and serve him. If no such people are to be found then it cannot exist there.

Sometimes the local people are a little hesitant to become members of the church lest they find themselves in an organization that is here today and gone tomorrow. But have no fear, once you are born into the Lord's family then you are always a member of it. The one who came to begin the work may leave in the meantime, but he can-

not take the church with him any more than he can take Christ and Christianity from you. You must learn how to carry on, along with the others who may be members of the church, in your area.

It may be of some comfort to you to know that the church of Christ not only exists in the Delhi area, but also in Bombay, Lucknow, Shillong, Madras, and many other cities and villages of India. Just because it does not exist all over India, does not mean that it cannot or will not in time. Rather, it would appear that the church is spreading to all parts of the nation at a rapid pace. This indicates that it is here to stay.

The church of Christ is not a new church even though it may have only recently come to India. Actually, the gospel of Christ, and the Lord's church, was first preached and established in the country by the Apostle Thomas, if secular history can be counted on in this case. We do know that Paul wrote in Colossians 1:23 that the gospel had been proclaimed to every creature under heaven and this would have included the people of India. Now supposing there were those that not only heard the gospel in that day, but also obeyed it, then what did they become? According to Acts 2:47 that would have made them members of the Lord's church. Then what happened to it? As in many other parts of the world, the same happened here in India: over a period of time the people drifted into error and thus the church ceased to resemble or to even be the church it started out to be. That means then that the Lord's church has been restored to India in the last few years as it existed in the beginning.

Next, keep in mind that the church of Christ is not an American church. It did not have its beginning in America.

Rather, it began in the city of Jerusalem, in Asia, almost two thousand years ago according to Acts 2. Neither is it a denominational church. It did not have its beginning with man, but with Christ. (Matthew 16:18).

The Bible gives the complete pattern for the church. Therefore, when that pattern is followed then it results in the Lord's church being established. That is true here or anywhere in the world. But take a look at this pattern:

1. It tells who established the church. (Matthew 16:18).
2. It tells where it was established. (Acts 2).
3. It tells when it was established. (Acts 2).
4. It tells what name it wore. (Romans 16:16).
5. It tells what name its members' wore. (Acts 11:26).
6. It tells how people became members of it. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38, 47).
7. It tells the worship of it. (Acts 20:7).
8. It tells who the head was. (Colossians 1:18).
9. It tells how many there were. (Ephesians 4:4; Ephesians 1:22, 23).

It also tells many other things. But when the people have followed this pattern then they become members of the church of Christ and wherever you go in the world and you find people who have followed the same pattern then you will find that you are like them and they are like you—one in Christ—the one body of Christ which is the church of Christ.

We would like to urge you to take your Bible and search the scriptures in light of the things that have been said

here. If you find this to be the truth, then accept it. If you find that it is not the truth, then reject it. But if you will honestly and sincerely study, surely you will be able to see the truth of these matters. No one is trying to deceive you. We only want to help you, and the best way we can do that is by pointing you to the word of God itself.

So if you are anxious for the Lord's church to stay in India then obey the Lord, be faithful to him and encourage others to do likewise. Through you, and others like you, then the church of Christ here will live on.

FOUR BIBLE QUESTIONS

The Bible clearly teaches that there is but one church. (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18). However, there are many churches in the world today, so the question is raised as to how one may know which is the one church of the Bible. It is pointed out that all churches claim to be according to God's word. Naturally, if there is but one, then all of them cannot belong to the Lord. To determine which one is the true church, all you have to do is to ask four simple questions. Many others could be asked, but four will be sufficient to tell whether one is genuine or an imitation.

Let us begin by asking these questions and then giving the Bible answer:

1. Who established the church? I think all of us would admit that the Bible plainly teaches that Christ established the church. After Christ had been confessed as the Son of God, he responded by saying, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18). Now if Christ promised to build the church, was it not Christ who built the church? Certainly. Furthermore, you will note that Christ was to build the church, not churches. So he built one. Then he spoke of it as belonging to him. He said it is "my church." Please remember that. For if it was going to be his then it would mean that it is not yours and neither is it mine.

2. Where was it established? According to Acts 2 the church was established in Jerusalem. How do we know? Because Christ had commanded the apostles to tarry at Jerusalem until they received power (Luke 24:49) and they were at Jerusalem when the power came. (Acts 2:1-4). Not only that, but the prophet Isaiah stated that the kingdom, or church, would be established in Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:2, 3).

3. When was it established? Since the church was established by Christ in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 2, then it is dated around A.D. 33. That means that the Lord's church has been in existence almost two thousand years.

4. What name did it wear? Individual members were known as Christians. (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). All of the Christians together make up the church. In the scriptures it is referred to as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), but the body is the church (Colossians 1:18), and therefore it is the Church of Christ. The different congregations of the church were spoken of as the churches of Christ in Paul's day. (Romans 16:16). If Christ established the church then it would naturally wear his name. If it is not Christ's church then whose church would it be? Could it be Christ's church if it does not wear his name? Surely not.

These are four simple questions with simple Bible answers. If you are wondering whether a church is the church of Christ or not, then ask these questions concerning it and find the answers. A church may claim to be Christ's church but if it was established by a man then it could not belong to the Lord. If it was established in London, somewhere in America, or elsewhere in the world,

how could it be the church of Christ? If it was established in the last few hundred years then it would be too young to be the Lord's church. And finally, if it wears some man-made name then it is merely a denominational church. Can't you see then that this is a means of testing a church to find out whether it is of God or of man? This test never fails.

If you find a church that measures up to the Bible teaching in all points except one, then it still couldn't be the Lord's church. If it is the one church of the Bible then it will match the Bible teaching in every point.

My friend, are you a member of the church of Christ? Ask these four questions and see for yourself. But if you do, and you find out that you are in a denominational body, then let me urge you to study your Bible and obey the Lord. And don't worry—if you'll do what the Bible teaches then the Lord will save you and add you to his church, and he won't mistakenly add you to the wrong one. He knows his church and will add you to that one. (Acts 2:47). Then you will be a member of the church that you can read about in the Bible and you will no longer have to make excuses and try to explain why you are in this church or that church, for the Lord has only one and you'll be a member of that one.

HOW YOU CAN BEGIN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN YOUR OWN CITY OR VILLAGE

Perhaps you are living in a city or village where the church of Christ does not exist. There may be denominational churches or man-made churches there, but the Lord's church has not yet been established. So you are wondering what to do. Should you become a member of one of the churches already there? Should you continue on as you are? Should you try to move to a place where the church of Christ has been established? These are important questions and the answers may not come easy.

Let me make some suggestions to you. It is possible for you to become a member of the church of Christ and it is possible for you to take the lead in beginning a congregation of the Lord's church in your own city or village wherever you may be. Here are the suggested steps for you to take:

1. Get yourself a Bible. If you are interested in doing God's will then you need a Bible, and Bibles are available here in India. After you have obtained a copy, then begin to read it and study it. Give special attention to the New Testament section which contains the law of Christ for people today. By so doing you will learn what to do to be saved, how to be a member of the Lord's church, how to worship, how to live the Christian life, etc.

2. Obey the truth yourself. The Lord teaches that if you will believe in him, repent of your sins, confess Christ

before men, and be baptized (buried in the water), then you can be saved. (Mark 16:16; Matthew 10:32; Acts 2:38). Also, read the book of Acts to see how people were converted to Christ in the days of the Apostles. When you get ready to obey the Lord, then find some one that is willing to baptize you scripturally. Have him to take you to a place where he can bury you in the water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of your sins. Now, on being baptized, you are automatically a member of the church of Christ, for Christ adds the saved to his church. (Acts 2:47) You are also just a Christian. (Acts 11:26).

3. Now begin to conduct worship in your own home. You may encourage members of your family to attend and friends who might be interested. The meeting should take place on Sunday, the First Day of the Week. In order for it to be acceptable to God there should be a period of Bible Study (2 Timothy 2:15), there should be prayer (Acts 2:42), there should be singing (Ephesians 5:19), and this without mechanical instruments of music. The Lord's Supper should be partaken of with the bread to remind you of the body of Christ and the cup to remind you of the blood of Christ. (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11). The Lord said that grape juice should be used in the Lord's Supper. If you are unable to find any at the market then you can purchase some raisins, boil them, drain off the juice, and use that. And finally, you should have a contribution in order that you might give of your money as you have been prospered. (1 Corinthians 16:2). Others present may want to give also. This money should be honestly handled and used to help the poor and

to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now these acts of worship should be engaged in each first day of the week, every Sunday. (Acts 20:7).

4. You should not only conduct meetings every Sunday in your home, but perhaps you can arrange to have meetings in other parts of the city or in other villages. In these meetings you should just have preaching services until there are those who want to obey God. Then after they have become members of the church, worship services (as already mentioned) can be conducted. But you should tell the people what to do to be saved, that they can be members of the church of Christ as revealed in the New Testament, that they should worship God each first day of the week, and that they should live the Christian life. If you'll do this then your labours will be blessed.

5. Be faithful to the Lord in your worship, preaching, and living. Do all you can to spread the truth of God. Remember, you can become a Christian and be a member of the church of Christ where you are. All it takes is obedience to the Lord.

THE NAME OF CHRIST

As one reads through the New Testament he will be amazed at the many times the Name of Christ is mentioned. Man often argues that the name isn't important, or that there is nothing in a name. This may be true with some names, but it is definitely not the case with the Lord's name. Notice the following:

1. God's people were to be called by a new name. (Isaiah 62:2). In turning to the New Testament we learn that the church was to wear the name of Christ (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13), and that the individual members were to be known as Christians. (Acts 11:26). This was the new Name.

2. The family name is the name of Christ. Paul so declared in Ephesians 3:14, 15: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

3. The church is said to be the bride of Christ and the bride wears his name. (Revelation 21:9; 22:17). Christ has but one bride and when he returns he will come to receive the one that wears his name. (Ephesians 5:27).

4. His name is above every name. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: And that every tongue should

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11).

5. Salvation is in the name of Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

6. To believe in the name of Christ. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13).

7. To confess the name of Christ. ". . . . And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Timothy 2:19).

8. To repent and be baptized in the name of Christ. "Then Peter said unto them; 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).

9. To meet for worship in the Lord's name. Christ said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20). Note: How can you meet in the name of Christ if you are not wearing his name?

10. To do all in the Lord's name. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by him". (Colossians 3:17).

11. The righteous will be hated because of the name of

Christ. "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

12. To pray in the name of Christ. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13).

13. Forgiveness of sins may be had through the name of Christ. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (1 John 2:12).

14. Not to blaspheme the name of Christ. "Do not they they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?" (James 2:7).

15. To labour in his name. "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." (Revelation 2:3).

16. Eternal life comes through the name of Christ. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

Surely now you can see how important the name of Christ is. But if this be true, then you may also see how essential it is for you and me to wear the Lord's name both as individuals and as members of the church. I am a member of the Church of Christ, and therefore a Christian only. What about you? Are you a member of the Church that you can read about in the Bible? Are you a Christian? If not, become one today.

YOU CAN BE JUST A CHRISTIAN

We are living in a world that is divided religiously. There are hundreds of churches and thousands of names and titles. This has not helped the cause of Christ, but rather it has had a disastrous effect upon the majority. People in general have become so confused and disgusted that many have reached the point where they are ready to give up on religion altogether. But is this the solution? Surely not, since there must be a better way.

Did you know that it is possible for you to be just a Christian? That's right. You, and all others, can be a Christian and a Christian only if you really want to be. Why wear the names and titles of men, when you can wear the name of Christ? The Bible only will make you a Christian only.

People in New Testament times were Christians only. For instance, we read, "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26). What kind of Christians would be the typical question of our day? But in that day they were called just Christians. Again, we read of Paul preaching to King Agrippa, and he responded by saying, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28). How did this man know that if he obeyed the teaching of the Lord that that would make a Christian? Evidently he knew what it had done for others or else it was specifically preached to him. In either case, he knew that in obeying Christ that this would result in him becoming a Christian. And finally, Peter writes, "Yet

if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this behalf." (1 Peter 4:16). Another version says, "Let him glorify God in this name", or in the name Christian.

The name Christian is recorded in the New Testament three times and each time it is clearly shown to apply to that individual, or individuals, who have obeyed the Lord or it is shown that when one does obey the Lord that that will make him a Christian. The word Christian means to be Christ-like or to have the Spirit of Christ. How could one obey the Lord and not wear his name? How could one be Christ-like or have the Spirit of Christ in wearing a man-made name instead of the name of Christ? Surely that would be quite impossible.

It is said that there is nothing in a name, but the scriptures tell us that salvation is in the name of Christ. (Acts 4:12). On the other hand, salvation is in no other name. In 1 Corinthians 1 we have some members of the church at Corinth who had divided up and began to say that they were of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. Paul did not commend them for this, but rather condemned them for it. He said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10). Then to show the absurdity of their action, he asked, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:13). Of course they knew that Christ was one, that he had been crucified for them, and that they had been baptized in the name of the Lord. Therefore, the conclusion was that they should wear

the name of Christ rather than the names of men. The same would be just as true today.

If you are wearing names and titles that you cannot read of in the Bible, then you are not a Christian as the Bible teaches. In some cases you may be wearing some name that supposedly comes from the Bible, but if the Lord did not intend for you, and others, to wear it, then you are wrong in using it. If you have added something to the name Christian, either before or after, then you are misusing the Lord's name and therefore you are not a Christian in the sense the Bible teaches you should be. You can't be a certain kind of Christian and still be a Christian only. You are either a Christian or you are not a Christian.

We want to beg and plead with you to read and study your Bible and then do what it says. If you will then we know what you will be—you will be just a Christian—no more and no less. Shouldn't that be enough? Why be anything less than a Christian or anything more than a Christian when you can be just a Christian?

If you will hear the Lord (Romans 10:17), believe in God (Hebrews 11:6), repent of your sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Matthew 10:32), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16), then the Lord will save you and that will make you a Christian only. The same obedience will also make you a member of the Lord's church, the one and only church you can read about in the Bible. (Acts 2:47; Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16).

As a Christian only, and a member of the church of Christ, then you know that you are on the right road. You can proudly tell one and all that you are wearing the

name of Christ and that you are a member of his church. That means that you are not denominational, that you are not following the teachings of men, but that you can give scriptural proof for the name you wear, for the church that you are a member of, and for all things that you do in the name of religion. Then you can be happy and understand why Paul wrote, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17).

WHAT CHRISTIANITY CAN DO FOR YOU

Christianity has done more for the world than any other one thing. Even those who have not accepted it have been influenced by it. As bad as man may be, he is as good as he is because of its impact upon him. On the other hand, just imagine what the world might be like if Christianity had not been introduced. No doubt it would be a horrible place to live, if indeed we were living at all.

While Christianity has done so much for man as a whole, still it is personal in nature. So if we are to get the greatest benefits from it then we must start by accepting it. This can be done only as we begin to follow and obey the teachings of its author, Jesus Christ. On so doing, its principles enter into our lives and we are blessed to the extent that we allow them to bear fruit.

Some are led to believe that they will receive untold blessings and rewards on the basis that they accept Christianity mentally or become attached to some religious organization. They picture themselves becoming rich, with all of their problems immediately being solved, and in return nothing being required of them. Usually this kind of thinking is done by those who are seeking material gains only, with no interest whatsoever in spiritual matters. These are the ones that are always disappointed when their dreams are not fulfilled and they just as easily turn to something else.

Christianity is simple and it has many rewards for those

who are willing to pay the price. The price comes in the form of faith, obedience, service, loyalty, and faithfulness. Those who have accepted it from the heart have been blessed over and over again both materially and spiritually. It can do the same for you.

1. Christianity can bring you salvation from your past sins. Christ becomes the author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him. (Hebrews 5:9). He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Man is a sinner and needs forgiveness. Only Christ can do this, thus cleansing and purifying the soul, man's greatest possession. (Luke 19:10; Matthew 16:26).

2. Christianity brings you in contact with the many promises of God. There is the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), addition to the church (Acts 2:47), the Lord's presence (Matthew 28:20), the privilege of prayer (John 9:31) and the hope of eternal life. (John 14:1-3).

3. Christianity blesses both spiritually and materially. Christ taught, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). Note that the other things will be added only as the Kingdom of God, or the church, is put first. Often Christians wonder why they aren't blessed more, but they never stop to consider how little they do for the Lord. Read Matthew 5.

4. Christianity provides us with opportunities to do good. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1). "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the house-hold of faith." (Galatians 6:10).

5. Christianity teaches that the more we give then the more we will receive. Paul exhorted his Corinthian brethren, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Corinthians 9:6). Again, "... for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7). Many never receive because they never give and then they wonder why.

6. Christianity declares that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Jesus himself said this. (Acts 20:35). He also said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it". (Matthew 10:39).

7. Christianity gives one a way of life that leads from this world to the world to come. Jesus teaches that one should do unto others as he would have them do unto him. (Luke 6:31). He says that man should love his enemy (Matthew 5:44), and that he should love his neighbor as himself. (Matthew 22:39). The Christian is not to love the world (1 John 2:15), but to keep himself pure (Matthew 5:8), presenting himself to God as a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1). The end result is a peaceful, happy, and good life with the hope of eternal life. (Colossians 1:5). For what more could one ask?

So, Christianity is very rewarding, but one gets out of it according to what he puts into it. Don't expect a lot if you are not putting anything into it. But if you will give yourself to God, and allow His principles to work in your life, you will be blessed beyond imagination.

SOME WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIANS

Many people claim to be Christians. But all who make this claim are not Christians. This may come as a shock to you but it is true nevertheless.

1. Just because one was born into a family where the father and mother claimed to be Christians, that does not make him a Christian. I realize that in various religions of men that physical birth into a family is sufficient to make one a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Muslim, etc. I must at the same time acknowledge that this may even be true with regard to Catholicism. However, this is not true in pure New Testament Christianity. Physical birth into a Christian family does not make one a Christian. It is only after one has become a believer in Christ and an obedient follower of his, thus being born again and entering into the family of God (John 3:3-5), that one can truthfully say that he is a Christian.

2. Just because one was sprinkled at birth, this does not make him a Christian. In the first place, baptism is not sprinkling but a burial in water. (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3, 4; Acts 8). In the second place, the one being baptized must be baptized on the basis that he has heard the truth (Romans 10:17), that he has believed (Romans 10:10), that he has repented of his sins (Luke 13:3), and that he has confessed with his mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Matthew 10:32). Someone else cannot do this for the individual who is being baptized. And in the third place, children are not re-

sponsible to God for their actions until they reach the age of accountability. (Matthew 18:1-3). So sprinkling at birth or at any other time in one's life is not enough to make him a Christian. One becomes a Christian only by submitting to Christ but sprinkling is of man.

3. Just because one claims to believe that Christ is the Son of God, this does not mean necessarily that he is a Christian. One must believe that Christ is the Son of God to be a Christian but this alone will not make him a Christian. If so then the devils would be Christians for the scriptures say that they believe and tremble. (James 2:19). But to be a Christian then one must believe in Christ to the extent that he will not only believe that he is the Son of God but also believe in him to the point that he is willing to obey his teachings (Hebrews 5:8, 9; 1 Peter 2:21) and to be faithful to him. (Revelation 2:10).

4. Just because one is a member of some denominational church, this does not mean that he is a Christian. There are many churches and therefore there are many who claim to be Christians because they are a member of them. But they are deceived. Christians are made when people follow Christ. One will never become a member of a denominational church as a result of following Christ. The Bible only makes Christians only. (Acts 11:26). The scriptures will not divide us but will unite us in Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:10). So if one is a member of some man-made church then it means that he is not a Christian. Of course he can offer all kinds of excuses and make all sorts of arguments but the fact remains that he is not a true Christian as the Bible teaches. If he was a Christian then he wouldn't be in a denominational church but would be a member of the Lord's church and would be a Chris-

tian only. (Acts 2:47; 1 Peter 4:16). Study the Bible and see for yourself.

5. Just because one claims to be a Christian, this does not mean that he is a Christian. One could make many claims for himself in this world but without proofs and evidences to back up his claims then he would be pushed aside as a fake and imposter. Yet most anyone can come along and claim to be a Christian and there are those who tend to reason that if one makes such a claim then he should be so counted. But not so. Unless one can prove by the word of God and by his life that he is a Christian then he is not one regardless of the claims he may make. (Matthew 7:21-23).

I beg of you to consider your own situation. Are you a Christian? Are you one according to the teachings of the Bible? Can you prove it? Have you obeyed the Lord? Are you faithful to him? If you are not then become one by believing in the Lord, repenting of your sins, confessing Christ as the Son of God and being baptized for the remission of your sins. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38). Christ will save you, add you to his church, and then you'll be just a Christian. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26). Finally, by being faithful to him then you can be saved eternally. (Romans 6:23; John 14:1-3).

WHAT MUST ONE DO TO BE SAVED ?

"All have sinned." (Romans 3:23). "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23). And so we could continue with other similar verses. All of these suggest that man is lost, undone, without God and without hope as he is. So how can man be saved? If we will turn to the book of Acts, we may find out.

There are eleven cases of conversion recorded in the book of Acts. If we had the space, we could examine each one of them to discover what they had to do to be saved, but in this study we will consider only three of them. In each case, in substance, the same question was asked and the same answer given. The question basically was. "What must I do to be saved?" Now let us consider them one by one to find out what the answer was. Please note:

1. The people on the day of Pentecost asked the question, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2).

Here we have Peter and the other Apostles dealing with a group of unbelievers. Many of them had had part in actually crucifying Christ. So they had first of all to be convinced that Christ was the Son of God. To do this, Peter reminded them of the fact that Christ had performed miracles, signs, and wonders in their presence. Then they were told that Christ had not only been nailed to the cross, but three days after his burial he was resurrected, and had appeared to many of them, and then had ascended

back to the Father in Heaven. Finally, the fact was stressed that Christ had fulfilled the many prophecies that had been spoken concerning him, and particularly that David had foretold of his coming, and that Christ was at this time on the throne of David. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them. 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." For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:37-39) The record continues on to point out, "THEN they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts 2:41). Then in Acts 2:47 it says that the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47).

Please notice that the gospel was preached, the people believed it, repented, and were baptized for the remission of their sins. So what happened? They were saved and added to the Lord's church.

2. Saul asked the question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9; Acts 22).

Here was a man who was doing all within his power to destroy the Lord's church, and in so doing he was persecuting Christ. As he journeyed to Damascus, the Lord appeared to him. "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly, there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest

thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts 9:3-6). The story continues by telling how he went into the city and there dwelt three days without sight, fasting, and praying. The record also tells how the Lord instructed Ananias to go to Saul to tell him what he should do. Later in relating what happened, Paul said that Ananias came to him and said, "And now why tarriest thou: arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).

Now when was Saul saved? Some say when the Lord appeared unto him, but the Lord told him to go into the city and there it would be told him what he should do. Some say that he was saved through prayer, but if that be true then why did Ananias tell him to arise and be baptized to wash away his sins? The truth is that he was saved the same way the people were saved on the day of Pentecost. He heard the gospel, believed it, turned from his sins, acknowledged the Lord as the Son of God, and was baptized for the remission of his sins.

3. The Philippian Jailor cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16).

Paul and Silas had been beaten and thrown into jail. They were miraculously released and the jailor rushed in, fearing to find the prisoners gone. So he drew his sword to take his life, but Paul cried out, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang

in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas." (Acts 16:28,29). After asking what to do to be saved, "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house!" (Acts 16:31). Now many stop here, saying that this was all that was necessary for this man to be saved. But this was just the beginning. Who was this man? He was an unbeliever. So it was necessary that he should first of all believe, and to make it possible, the record continues, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts 16:32-34). Now what did this man and family do? When they heard "the word of the Lord" they believed it but what was the command given by the Lord? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). The result of hearing "the word of the Lord" was that this man showed his repentance by washing the prisoners' stripes, and was baptized the same hour. These commands were part of the message Paul preached; otherwise the jailor would never have heard of them.

Now what must one do to be saved today? The same. One must hear the truth, believe it, repent of his sins, confess Christ, and be baptized. Read Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:10; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38, etc.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

The Bible teaches that man is a sinner. Paul declares, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). Continuing, he says, "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This means that man is in need of salvation. But how can he be saved! The Bible reveals this too.

God not only created man but has provided him with a way of escape in spite of the fact that man was the one to turn his back upon his Creator. This way of escape is based upon the mercy, grace, and love of God. (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8, 9). It should be remembered though that He does not force man to come to Him, but rather invites him to come. Those who do so find the salvation for which they are longing.

In order for one to be saved, God requires five simple steps:

1. One must hear the truth. ". . . . This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17).

2. One must believe in God and in Christ as the Son of God. But without faith it is impossible to please him for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6). Christ said, ". . . . Ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:1). He also said, "He that

believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 6:36) Many other verses could be added to these, but you can see that belief, or faith, is absolutely necessary to one's salvation. Remember however, that none of these verses indicate that salvation is by faith alone.

3. One must repent of his sins. Christ said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3). Paul preached, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30). Peter wrote, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9). Repentance means to have a change of mind about sin. It means to turn and go in a different direction. Or in other words, it means to quit sin. One must quit sinning before he can begin to live a good life, and this is what the Lord wants.

4. One must confess Christ as the Son of God. Christ himself said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32). Paul declares that this confession is to be made with the mouth, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10). In Acts 8 we have an example of the Ethiopian Eunuch making this confession before he was accepted for baptism. This is commonly called the Good Confession. What better confession could one make?

5. One must be baptized to be saved. Christ made it plain: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). "Then Peter said unto them, 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). Again, he said, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21). Saul was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). The Bible says that there is one baptism (Ephesians 4:5), that it is a burial (Colossians 2:12), and that it is a burial in water. (Acts 8:36-39). This one baptism is also to be administered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20), and it puts one into Christ and the church. (Romans 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

On obeying these simple commands, one may be saved from his past sins, added to the Lord's church, and as a Christian, can serve God faithfully all the days of his life so that heaven can be his. We appeal to you to take action on these matters today.

STEPS INTO CHRIST

The Scriptures tell us of all of the blessings that are to be found in Christ and of course this includes salvation. Listen to some of them: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3). And finally, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him." (Ephesians 1:10).

Since all of these blessings are in Christ, then the next question would naturally be: "How does one enter Christ?" To answer this question we must again return to God's word. As we read we will discover that there are several logical steps that one must take. Each step is as important as the others. However, all of them but one simply brings the individual to that last final step whereby he is translated from outside of Christ to that of being inside of Christ. For example, to enter a building one must take all of the steps necessary to bring him to the place where he can make that one last step that at last puts him inside that building. It is not difficult at all to understand, is it? But let us see what those steps are:

1. The first step one must take is to hear Christ or to hear the word of God. At the transfiguration, God said,

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5). Paul preached, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). This is why Christ commanded the Apostles to go forth to all of the world to preach the gospel. (Mark 16:15,16). One cannot have faith in the Lord unless he has heard of the Lord, and one cannot obey the Lord without faith.

Now as important as the first step may be, that alone will not put one into Christ. To stop here would be a tragedy.

2. The second step one must take is to believe in God and to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We read, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6). Christ himself said, ". . . . Ye believe in God, believe also in me." (John 14:6). Again, he said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24).

Needless to say, faith is necessary to salvation. However, faith alone will not save and faith only will not put one into Christ. It is but a step in the direction of salvation. Listen to Paul, as he makes his point: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10). So faith or belief is unto (in the direction of) salvation but not into salvation.

3. The third step one must take is to repent of all of his sins. All accountable beings are sinners in God's eyes

and the wages of sin is death. (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23). So what is the solution? Repentance. And what is repentance? It is a change of heart, turning and going in another direction, giving up all sin that is in one's life, and thus trying to live a better life. Christ knew that man could not be saved in his sins, so he said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3). Then Paul preached: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30). Peter preached also, "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).

Although one believes in the Lord with all of his heart and turns away from his sins, this is still not enough to save him. There are still other steps to be taken.

4. The fourth step one must take is to confess with the mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Christ said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32). This is what the Eunuch did in Acts 8:37 and we have already noticed that confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:10). Then what is left? One final step that puts one into Christ and into salvation. These other steps were necessary, but it is this last step that brings one finally into Christ. Now let us take a look at it.

5. The fifth step that one must take is to be buried with the Lord in the waters of baptism for the remission of sins and thus he enters Christ and his church. The importance of baptism is set forth in these scriptures:

Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21, etc. Then Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). Again, he wrote, "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).

So there you have it. There is one way and only one way to enter Christ and that is through the act of baptism. That is not to say that baptism only saves—far from it. As already stressed, the other steps must precede baptism in order to enable one to make this final step. But be it understood that one cannot be saved until all of the steps have been taken. Otherwise one would be saved without complying with all of the Lord's terms of pardon, and this could not be. Are you in Christ? You are not unless you have taken these steps. If you have not taken them, you are urged to do so.

THE NEW BIRTH

We constantly hear people talking about being born again, born again Christians, the new birth, etc. What do they mean? Should you question them they would generally explain it as having reference to those who have accepted the Lord as their personal saviour. Should you question them further they would probably go into great detail but still end up in failing to explain the subject in harmony with the word of God.

Since this is a Bible subject then we want to go to the Bible to see what it teaches. The best way to commence is to read the text itself. So we begin to read: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not

tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:1-8).

First, let us observe that this birth that is under consideration has nothing to do with a physical birth. There have been those who have tried to explain away the water in this text as having to do with the physical birth, but not so. Nicodemus thought that a physical birth was under consideration but the Lord explains that this is not the case. Second, if it is not a physical birth, then it must be a spiritual birth that he is talking about. And so Jesus explained, by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). What is he saying?

1. "Except." There is just one way to enter the Lord's kingdom, and Jesus gives the negative side by beginning, "Except", or unless.—
2. "Man." Man here is used in the generic sense, meaning both male and female. In other words, all accountable beings. Infants are not even included.
3. "Born." A birth requires two essentials: the begetting and the birth itself. In the new birth, which is a spiritual birth, one of the essentials is the Spirit and the other is the water. In this instance one is begotten of the Spirit and born of the water. It is that simple.
4. "Water." The water here has reference to baptism. You will note that it is literal water inasmuch and on all occasions when water is symbolic or figurative it is always said to be living water, etc. There is

just one act in the Christian religion that involves water; and that is baptism. Thus when one is buried in the water in baptism (Romans 6:3,4), there is the coming forth or the new birth.

5. "Spirit." In the new birth one is begotten by the Spirit, but how? Through the word of God. The word was given by the Spirit, and as it is planted in a good heart, it begets and brings forth obedience. The believer determines to give his life to God, to turn away from worldliness and sin and he is buried with Jesus in baptism so that he can rise as a new man, washed clean of sin and born into the family of God. Listen to Peter: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1:22, 23). So the Spirit works through the word of God to beget, and through obedience one is baptized. Thus he has been born of the water and of the Spirit. It is just that simple.
6. "Kingdom." This is the kingdom of God, the church. (Matthew 16:18, 19). Jesus says there is just one way to enter it, and that is through being born of the water and of the Spirit.

Christ continues by showing the difference in the physical and spiritual births and then illustrates with the wind. Although one cannot see the wind, the results of it can be seen and felt. So with the Spirit. Its operation cannot be seen, but the results are clearly visible. The Spirit

works through the word and by obeying its teaching one is saved, enters the Lord's kingdom, and brings forth the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Finally, the Lord does not have two ways of being saved or two ways of entering the kingdom or the church. The teaching of the new birth agrees completely with Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38 and all other verses that tell what one must do to be saved. In other words, when one hears the truth (Romans 10:17), believes it (Romans 10:10), repents of his sin (Acts 17:30), confesses Christ (Romans 10:10), and is baptized (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16), he is by this process born again and thus enters the Lord's church. (1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:47). The question is: Have you been born again according to God's word?

NEW TESTAMENT BAPTISM

Baptism is a Bible subject. Had it not been for the Bible we would have never known anything about such an act. This means, then, that God is the author of it and He chose to reveal it to us through His word. Therefore, it should cause us to want to know the truth about it.

1. There is one baptism. In Ephesians 4:5 Paul says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." There had been other baptisms, but by the year 64 or 65 A.D. the inspired man of God proclaimed there was but one baptism remaining. Man has since added others, but this addition is plainly contrary to the scriptures.

2. The meaning of baptism. We read in Colossians 2:12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Continuing, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3, 4). Baptism is a burial then. This would automatically eliminate sprinkling, pouring, and the such like.

3. Baptism is a burial in water. Baptism is not only a burial, but Acts 8 teaches us that it is a burial in water. In the story of the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch it says that ". . . as they went on their way, they came

unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:36-39).

4. Baptism is for the remission of sins. "Then Peter said unto them, 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). Then read Acts 22:16.

5. Baptism saves. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21). When does baptism save? When one believes the Lord enough to repent, confess him as the Son of God, and to be baptized as he has commanded. (Acts 10:48). Then baptism saves, but not until.

6. Baptism puts one into Christ. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:26, 27). Also read Romans 6:3, 4.

7. Baptism puts one into the church. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or

Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13). The body is the church. (Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22, 23).

8. Baptism brings about the new birth. "Jesus answered, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5).

9. In baptism one pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Read Romans 6.

In these verses of scripture, and others that could be given, it is very plain that baptism is essential to one's salvation. Have you been baptized according to the Lord's command? If not, you need to be.

THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

Baptism is a Bible subject. It is set forth in the scriptures as being very simple, but it is most often misunderstood. One of the main problems is that the majority do not understand the purpose of it. What does God's word teach on this?

First of all, let us understand that there is only one baptism. (Ephesians 4:5). There had been other baptisms, such as the baptism of John, the baptism of suffering, etc., but by the time Paul made this statement in A.D. 64, there was but one. That being true, then how are we to determine which one Paul was thinking about? That is easy. All we have to do is to turn to the book of Acts and consider the various cases of conversion listed there. When we do then we discover that it is a burial, a burial in water, and that it washes away sins, that it is for the remission of sins, and it is commanded of the Lord. (Acts 8:27-39; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48).

In reading various passages in the Bible that deal with baptism, many pass them off as being the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Please remember, however, that Holy Spirit baptism was never commanded. Neither was it preached. But keep this rule in mind when you come across the subject of baptism in the scriptures, if the baptism being discussed has reference to some baptism other than water baptism, then it is always clearly stated, such as Holy Spirit baptism, John's baptism, etc. However, if the word baptism only appears, as in such cases as Mark 16:16,

Acts 2:38, and so on, then you can always mark it down that it is having reference to water baptism. This also applies to the one baptism spoken of in Ephesians 4:5.

Next, keep in mind that it is possible to be baptized for the wrong purpose. For instance, it is widely taught that one may be saved and then he should be baptized. Again, it is said that if one is saved then he should be baptized to enter a church. In both instances, baptism is for the wrong purpose. One cannot scripturally be baptized because he is saved since one is not saved until he has been scripturally baptized. Neither can one be scripturally baptized into a denominational church. Such is to say that many people are deceived into thinking that they have been baptized when in reality they have not. Although one may have been immersed in water, this does not necessarily mean that he has been baptized. There is one scriptural baptism but in order for it to be the one baptism of the Bible then it must be for the right purpose. If it is not for the right purpose then it is not the one baptism and be not deceived into thinking that it is. In such a case, the individual needs to be immersed again — not because he is saved, but in order that he might be saved. Then and only then has he had the one baptism of the scriptures.

Let us now notice the scriptural purpose for baptism:

1. Following faith, repentance, and confession, one must be baptized to be saved. Christ himself said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Christ places salvation after baptism, not before baptism. Unbelief is enough to damn one, but to be saved then one must

believe and be baptized. Again, Peter wrote, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21). Who will say, "Baptism doth not save?"

2. Baptism is for the remission of sins. Peter preached, "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).

3. Baptism washes away sins. Paul was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).

4. Baptism puts one into Christ. Paul writes to both the Romans and to the Galatians: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). "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). Now if one claims that he has been saved before baptism, that means he is saying that he has been saved outside of Christ, and thus without Christ. This is what a false doctrine will lead one to confess by his actions.

5. Baptism puts one into the church. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13). The body here is the church (Colossians 1:18) and the baptism under consideration is not Holy Spirit baptism

but water baptism. Holy Spirit baptism never was given to put one into the church. Rather, it is by or through the directions of the Spirit, that is, as he works through the word, that one is baptized into the body or church.

6. Baptism pictures the Lord's death, burial and resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The sinner dies to his sins, as Christ died on the cross. He is buried in the waters of baptism as Christ was buried in a tomb. He is now raised a new man in the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:17) as Christ was resurrected from the grave. (Romans 6:1-12).

7. Baptism brings about the new birth, Christ said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). This is not Spirit baptism but rather it is water baptism that is under consideration. It is through the direction of the Spirit, as he works through the word, that we are taught to be baptized to enter the kingdom or the church. Again, read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Also, read 1 Peter 1:21, 22.

Baptism only does not save, but one must be baptized to be saved. Have you been baptized according to the scriptures? If not, we pray that you will be.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

One of the most popular characters in all of the Bible is the thief on the cross. Especially to those in the religious world, who deny that baptism has anything to do with the salvation of one's soul, like to accompany with the thief on the cross. In an attempt to prove that baptism is not necessary, they retreat to the thief and ask the oft repeated question, "But what about the thief?" The question is not asked, "What did the Lord say?" but "Wasn't the thief saved without baptism?" It is sad indeed that intelligent people will resort to such a tactic in order to try to prove a doctrine that is not to be found in the New Covenant. One can certainly tell when they are running out of anything to fight back with when they go to the thief for help and every one of these people will finally turn to the thief when there is no where else to go and no other argument that can be made. How strange for a person to have to go to a thief to try to prove his practice.

Those who go to the thief on the cross to try to prove that the thief was saved without baptism overlook several things:

1. No one can prove that the thief was baptized but no one can prove that he was not baptized. The record says, "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matthew 3:5, 6) So the thief might have been one of those who were baptized of John. But someone

might say that he was a thief. That is right, but I am sure that you have heard of baptized people becoming thieves, and in this case a baptized person might have become a thief. But the point is, one cannot use the thief to suggest that he was saved without baptism, and thus prove that people do not have to be baptized today to be saved.

2. The thief lived under the Law of Moses and so did Christ. Under that law Christ forgave various ones of their sins. He had the power to do so. So I will not argue with one as to whether the thief was saved or not. That is not the question. The question is: Under which law did he live?
3. The thief lived on the other side of the death of Christ. At the time the thief made his request, the Lord had not died for the sins of the world. Therefore, how could one today use the thief as an example of how one can be saved?
4. When Christ died on the cross he sealed the New Testament with his blood. We read, "For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Hebrews 9:17). So before the death of Christ he had the power to forgive sins by simply saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." However, once he died then his will came into force. While he may have said one thing to the thief, he told the Apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16). Now when did he say this? Before his death,

or after his death? After his death, of course. Then what did the Apostles preach? They preached what the Lord commanded them to preach. Not one time do you have them referring to the thief on the cross as an example of how one is saved, but throughout the book of Acts in every case of conversion, you have them, and others, preaching the things that Christ had taught them. As a result, the people believed, repented, confessed Christ, and were baptized for the remission of their sins.

5. The will of Christ cannot be broken or changed. What Christ included in it is there to stay, being sealed by his blood. (Revelation 22:18, 19; Galatians 1:6-9).
6. The will of Christ is simple and plain. Anyone who wants to understand it can understand it. One would have to have help to misunderstand it.
7. Death-bed salvation cannot be supported by the story of the thief on the cross. The thief will be judged according to the law under which he lived and died and you and I will be judged according to the law of Christ. Man is constantly trying to come up with some sad tale to suggest that under such and such circumstances a person can be saved, without baptism, but there is not one Bible example after the death of Christ, to prove it. All we know is what the Lord has said, and he still says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). I have read and studied the Bible much, but I have never found an exception to that yet. If men would work as hard to do what the Lord has said as they do to get around

it, all of them would be saved on the terms that the Lord has given.

Notice that we are not saying that baptism only saves or that any other thing "only" saves. Rather, we are emphasizing that one must do what the Lord has said to be saved and that includes the act of baptism, just as it includes faith and repentance. That's all.

INFANT BAPTISM

Infant baptism is a widespread practice in the religious world. In spite of that, it is no where taught in all of the Bible. It had its beginning many years after the written word was given. A man by the name of Origen was the first writer in church history to teach the doctrine of infant baptism. After the Catholic Church was established in the six hundreds, this practice was adopted. Many years later sprinkling was introduced to replace baptism, and this is one of the things that divided this church. Those that accepted sprinkling continue to practice it, thus being the Roman Catholic Church. Those that refused it, and continue to practice immersion to this day, came to be known as the Greek Orthodox Catholic Church.

The practice of infant baptism grew out of the belief that all men are born with original sin. That is, it was taught that all babies were born with the guilt of Adam's sin. It is true that all men are born to suffer the consequences of sin, but no man has ever inherited the guilt of another's sin. 1 John 3:4 tells us that "Sin is the transgression of the law." How can a newborn babe do this? It does not even know the law. In the long ago, the prophet of God said, "*The soul* that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezekiel 18:20).

Jesus taught, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3). Again, "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14). The Lord therefore pictured little children as being pure, sinless, and free from the guilt of sin. Certainly had they been full of sin and iniquity he would not have exhorted that one must be converted and become as little children to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again, had they been sinful he would not have said that the kingdom of heaven is made up of people who have the traits of children.

A child is born into this world without sin. He may be born into a world full of sin, and he may have to suffer the consequence of sin, but at birth he is without sin. He continues to be pure and innocent before God until he grows up and reaches the age of accountability. He becomes responsible for his actions only when he begins to understand and comprehend the difference between right and wrong. It is then, and only then, that he must obey the Lord.

The plan of salvation as outlined in the word of God is directed to accountable beings. The Lord does not have a plan of salvation for infants. They are without sin, and therefore safe before God. Should they die they will go to be with the Lord. When David's child died he said that the child could not come to be with him but that he could go to be with the child. (2 Samuel 12:22).

How can another person, even a well-meaning father and mother, make a decision for a soul? How would it

be possible for an infant to benefit from something that it does not understand, and which is actually forced on him? The Lord directed his will toward those who are old enough to hear the truth (Matthew 28:19; Romans 10:17), old enough to believe it with their heart (Romans 10:10; Hebrews 11:6), old enough to repent of their own sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), old enough to confess with their mouth (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32), and old enough to be baptized for the remission of their sins, (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Could an infant do this? Certainly not. Could an infant pray, partake of the Lord's Supper, teach others, sing praises unto God, etc.? You know he couldn't, and yet these are all things a Christian must do. So God's will is not directed to babies, but to adults, to the ones who are accountable before God, and are therefore sinners.

Finally, infant baptism is not baptism at all. It may be sprinkling or pouring, as practiced by a large number of religious people, but it is not baptism. In the first place, the baptism of the Bible is a burial. Listen to the Apostle Paul: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Colossians 2:12). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3, 4). Also we have an example in Acts 8 where Philip took the eunuch down into the water. What happened? He buried or immersed the man in the water, thus baptizing him. In the second place, baptism must

be for the right purpose. Christ taught that one should believe and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16). Peter said that one should repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38). Also Christ taught that it should be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19). And finally, there is but one baptism (Ephesians 4:5), and as pointed out, it was always a burial, to put one into Christ and into the church. (Galatians 3:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

No, babies have no need for baptism, but their fathers and mothers need to be obedient to the Lord. Have you been baptized scripturally?

SHOULD ONE BE BAPTIZED AGAIN ?

The Bible definitely teaches that one should be baptized. There are a number of reasons for this. Baptism saves (1 Peter 3:21), it is for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), it puts one into Christ (Romans 6:3, 4), and into the church. (1 Corinthians 12:13). Yet, the scriptures clearly teach that there is but one baptism. (Ephesians 4:5). Now the question is if one has been baptized, should he be baptized again?

Of course if one has been scripturally baptized then naturally it would not be necessary for him to be baptized again under any circumstances. In the first place, this would be impossible to do. One can never be scripturally baptized but once.

So the question arises as to whether one has been baptized scripturally. There are literally thousands and millions of people who think they have been baptized when they have not. I will list some cases at point:

1. Those who were sprinkled as babies have never been baptized. Sprinkling is not baptism. It is but a human custom without a scriptural foundation. Rather, the Bible teaches that baptism is a burial (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3, 4), and a burial in water at that. (Acts 8:26-39). And then in the next place, the Bible no where endorses infant baptism. Instead, it teaches that children are without sin. (Matthew 18:1-3). And finally, it teaches that in order to obey the Lord one must be old enough to hear

the truth himself (Romans 10:17), old enough to believe with his heart (John 3:16), old enough to repent of his sins (Acts 17:30), old enough to confess with his mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32), and old enough to be baptized for the remission of his sins. (Acts 2:38). So any way you look at it, if one has been sprinkled as a baby then he has never been baptized, but needs to be baptized as Jesus commanded. (Mark 16:15, 16).

2. Consequently, those who have been sprinkled as adults have never been scripturally baptized. Once more, understand that sprinkling is not baptism because the Bible teaches that baptism is a burial in water. There is no possible way to justify sprinkling as baptism. Even if you go to a dictionary and find the term baptism defined as sprinkling or pouring, you must realize that the author is but defining the word as it is commonly used today. He is not trying to give a Bible definition at all. Jesus said that all power or authority belongs to him. (Matthew 28:18-20). He has not authorized sprinkling or pouring and the many people who accept it as baptism have chosen to follow man instead of the Lord. Therefore if one has been sprinkled then it means that he has not been baptized. It is not a matter of being baptized again, but it is a matter of being baptized scripturally.

3. Those who have been buried in water to become a member of some denominational church, have not been scripturally baptized. The one baptism is a burial in water, but that is not all. It must also be for the right purpose, and it must be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19, 20). If one has been baptized as the Bible teaches he will not end up in

a man-made church, but he will be buried in the water, for the remission of his sins, and will be added to the Lord's church, having been baptized by the authority of Christ. If one is in a denominational church, even though he was buried in water, then he still needs to be baptized, but this time for the right purpose. Only then will he have experienced the one true baptism.

So baptism is important and it must be done right. Otherwise it is not baptism at all. I have had many to tell me that they had been baptized when in reality they had not been. But when they learned that sprinkling was not baptism or that true baptism does not put one into a denominational church, then they submitted to the one baptism of the Bible. Only then could they say that they had been baptized. Such a similar case is to be found in Acts 19.

Have you been baptized scripturally? If not, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).

SALVATION BY FAITH

The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is by faith. That is, one is saved by faith. Another way of putting it, we are justified by faith. Paul says, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28). The law referred to is the law of Moses, according to context. Continuing, he says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1). We could go on with dozens of other similar verses. So we cannot deny that salvation is by faith.

While we cannot deny that salvation is by faith, neither can we teach that salvation is by faith only. The great majority of the people in the religious world read the little word "only" into the verses that deal with salvation by faith and make it appear as though one is saved by faith only. This is not true. Salvation is not by faith only. James supports this when he says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24).

If one is not saved by faith only, then what do the scriptures mean when they speak of salvation by faith? The point is, faith includes much more than a mental acceptance that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Faith includes acting upon God's word, doing the will of the Lord, serving the Lord, keeping his commandments, working for him in obedience. This does not take a thing away from faith, and does not eliminate the grace of God. Rather,

God extends salvation to us and we must reach up to accept it in faith and obedience. After we have done all that the Lord requires of us to be saved, our salvation is still by faith and by the grace of God.

Let us see how it works. For instance, take John 3:16. Christ said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Just as soon as this is quoted someone is ready to say. "But the Lord said that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but would have everlasting life." That is right. But he didn't say, "Whosoever believeth only." Instead we should ask, "Believe what? It is obvious that "Whosoever believeth in Jesus." Now the question is this: Do you believe in Jesus? You say that you do. Then do you believe in him to the extent that you will do what he says? If so, you will obey him. If you do not believe in him enough to obey his teachings then your faith is dead.

Notice now John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." First, observe that he does not use the expression "believeth only." Then note that in the last part of the verse he tells what will happen to those who believe not. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible renders it like this: "he who does not obey the Son..." shall not see life. In other words, he that believeth or obeyeth the Son hath everlasting life, but those who do not believe or do not obey will not see life.

Turning to Romans, Paul says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in

thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9). In the very next verse he says that both the belief and confession are unto salvation or going in the direction of it, not that one already has it. If one so confesses and so believes, will he not do what the Lord has commanded? Let's notice an example in Acts 8:26-39. Here Philip preached Christ to the eunuch, and as they were riding along they came to a certain water. "And the eunuch said, See, here is water what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Now what did the eunuch do? He confessed Christ and believed with all his heart, showing it to the extent of obeying the Lord. Therefore he was saved.

In Acts 16:31 the jailor was told, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Many stop here, but this is a mistake. Who was the jailor? He was an unbeliever. So first of all he needed to believe. To make it possible for him to believe, Paul and Silas preached the word of God unto him and his household. After faith was produced (Romans 10:17), he washed their stripes, showing repentance, and then was baptized, he and his house, straightway.

Remember also all of the many verses that deal with the specific commands. For instance, Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). Peter told a group of believers, "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). Now, does the Lord tell people one time that they can be saved by faith only, and then the next time tell them that there are certain commands they must obey? Certainly not. The point is, if one believes the Lord or has genuine faith in him, he will be moved to obey the commands of the Lord. That is, he will prove, show, or demonstrate his faith. Read Hebrews 11, for example, to see how the people of God down through history showed their faith. Surely God will accept no less today.

In closing this brief study, the question is: How much faith do you have? Remember the Lord asked this question one time: "AND why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say " (Luke 6:46). If you are upholding the doctrine of faith only, the Lord might well ask you the same question. Don't isolate a few verses of scripture, misread them, and try to uphold an unscriptural doctrine. Believe in the Lord and do what he says and then you will be saved by faith, but only then.

NEW TESTAMENT UNITY

The world is divided religiously. There is Catholicism, Protestantism, denominationalism, sects, bodies, etc. All of these are supposedly trying to serve the same Lord. At the same time, all of these recognize that there is something wrong. As a result, an effort is being put forth to bring about unity. There are conferences, meetings and seminars among the leaders of the religious groups to try to find some common ground on which to build unity. Although it is commendable to know that these people are at last waking up to the need of unity, it can never be had until these groups lay down their creed books, peculiar beliefs, names, doctrines, and practices, and return to the Bible to do what it teaches. Once this is done there can be true unity.

God hates division and confusion. This is clearly set forth in the scriptures. For instance, some divisions came about in a congregation of the Lord's church at Corinth and Paul condemned it immediately. Notice the reading: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?"

was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." (1 Corinthians 1:10-17).

In the foregoing, you will note Paul's plea for unity. In dealing with the division itself he simply asked three questions to show the absurdity of their position. First, he asked, "Is Christ divided?" They knew he was not. The second question, "Was Paul crucified for you?" Again, they knew that the Lord had been crucified for them. And finally, he asked, "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" No, thy had not been baptized in any man's name, but had been baptized in the name of Christ. Therefore the conclusion was that they should all be one in Christ. How simple!

Paul continues to show that since there was this problem at Corinth, under the circumstances he was happy that he had personally baptized only a few lest they should say that he had baptized in his own name. With this in mind, he said that he had not come to baptize but to preach the gospel. In other words, he had come for the purpose of preaching the gospel. Naturally, as a result people were baptized, some by his hands but most by others. Paul was not teaching agaisnt baptism. If so, he would have baptized no one; but due to the circumstances he was happy that in this case he had baptized only a few.

In Romans 16:17, 18, Paul said, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them, For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The Apostle says that those that cause divisions should be marked and that they should be avoided. Why? Because they served not the Lord Jesus Christ, but with fair speeches were deceiving the hearts of the simple. On the other hand, he did not say they should be commended, praised, or even tolerated. There are many other verses that convey the same message. How we need to realize that not all who claim to be of God are truly of God, and not all who claim to teach the Bible are teaching it as it is. Many of them are decided, and deceive others because they fail to take heed.

Christ prayed for unity, which means oneness, completeness, wholeness. Listen to him: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:20, 21). Here Christ is praying for the Apostles, but also for all of those that would come to believe in him through their preaching. Then he says concerning all of them, "That they all may be one." To what extent? He said even as he and the Father were one. That is real unity.

Going back to Paul's writings, a foundation is given for unity, when he said: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation

wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:1-6). There are how many of each one? Just one. How many is one? One only. If there are many churches, etc., and by putting them together that makes one church, etc., then the same could be said about God and Christ. How absurd.

My friends, God has given us but one book, the Bible. When we all read it and believe it, and obey its teaching then we will all obey the same teaching, be added to the same church, wear the same name, worship alike, and preach the same thing. The Bible will not divide us but will unite us. Christ has not prayed that we be divided but that we all be one in him. When we do God's will we will be united, but not until.

NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

The New Testament speaks of three kinds of worship. First, there is ignorant worship. Paul describes the people at Mars Hill as worshipping ignorantly since they were bowing down to idols. (Acts 17:22-31). Second, there is vain worship. This is worship that is useless or void since it is based on the teaching of men. Christ said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9). And third, there is true worship. This is the kind that God wants. Christ stressed this, when he said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth." (John 4:24). Please notice that God is to be the object of our worship. Although he does not force us to worship him, if we choose to do so then we must worship him in spirit and in truth. To worship him in spirit means to worship him with all sincerity and with the proper understanding. To worship him in truth suggests that we must worship him according to the teaching of the New Testament, which is truth. This is the only way our worship can be true and acceptable.

Since we must worship God in truth, then we must discover what the truth demands of us. And to discover this, we must turn to the New Testament itself. For surely if the Lord would have us to worship according to the truth then he has revealed in the truth what he requires. Now in studying the New Testament we learn that there

are at least five distinct things or acts in which the early Christians engaged as worship to God. They are as follows:

1. They assembled to study God's word. In Acts 20:7 we have Paul preaching to the assembly. Christ taught that we should search the scriptures. (John 5:39). And Paul commanded Timothy to study. (2 Timothy 2:15). Surely we could not picture a worship service without a period of Bible study. This is only right since it is God's way of speaking to us.

2. They assembled to pray to God. We read that the early Christians "...continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42). Since Paul said to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), then this would surely include worship as well. And Christ taught that man should always pray. (Luke 18:1). This is man's way of speaking to God and certainly we could not picture a worship service without including this part of it.

3. They assembled to sing praise to God. There are several verses to support this, but we'll consider the following one first: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:19) Also consider Colossians 3:16. Note too that there are two types of music: Vocal and Mechanical. In the scriptures the Lord designates vocal music as the type of music he wants in worship. Hebrews 13:15 makes it plain that the Lord desires the fruits of our lips to praise him rather than a cold, lifeless, heartless, mechanical instrument of music. Remember, it is the Lord that is to be pleased.

4. They assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper. In Matthew 26:26-28 Christ instituted this supper by saying that the bread represents his body and the cup represents his blood. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11 that the Christian is to partake of the bread and the cup in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ. In Acts 20:7 we have an example of the early Christians meeting on the first day of the week to break bread. And in Hebrews 10:25 we are warned that we are not to forsake this assembly.

5. They assembled to give as they had been prospered. Paul exhorted the church at Corinth, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:2). Please keep in mind that they were to do this on the first day of the week and that they were to give as they had been prospered. No certain amount was set. It was a free will thing, but they were expected to give if they had prospered, and it was their duty to determine how much they had been prospered.

So this is what the scriptures reveal. The early Christians met each Lord's Day to worship in this manner. If we are Christians, can we do any less?

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

There are seven days in each week. On which one of these is the Christian to worship God? Has any particular day been set aside as the day of worship? What does the Bible teach?

As we all know, the Jewish day of worship under the law was the Sabbath day. In other religions, the Muslims point to Friday, the Buddhists have their Poya Day, etc. But what about the Christian? Does it matter on what day he worships?

There are those among us who tell us that the old Sabbath day of the Jewish law is still binding, but please note that it was given originally to the Jews (Exodus 20:1-17), a part of a different law to that under which we live (John 1:17), and it was fulfilled and taken out of the way. (Matthew 5:17-19). Christ kept the Sabbath Day, but he lived and died under the Law of Moses too. It should be remembered that not one time did Christ ever command anyone to keep it. The Apostles never commanded it, and never kept the Sabbath day. Paul entered the synagogues on the Sabbath day time and time again, but never to worship. Then why did he go? To teach the word of God, and you will observe in reading the book of Acts that once the Jews discovered his real purpose for being there, he was no longer welcome.

There are those who say that the day of worship was changed by the Catholic church. The Catholics also claim

to have given the Bible. Both are untrue. The Bible does not teach or show that those who lived under the law of Christ observed the Sabbath day. History does not teach this either.

Once we are able to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15) and see the distinction between the law of Moses and the law of Christ, then we will see that with the abolition of the law of Moses, and consequently the Sabbath day (2 Corinthians 3:6-16), that the law of Christ was ushered in along with a new day of worship, the First Day of the Week. Read Acts 15:13-29 to see that Gentile Christians were freed by the Holy Spirit from keeping the Sabbath, or any of the law given by Moses.

Now let me point out a few things about the first day of the week before you jump to too many unscriptural conclusions. First of all, the first day of the week is not the Christian Sabbath. Neither is it a rest day or a day that is to be observed or kept. It is not a holy day, etc. Then what is it? It is simply the day that the Lord has set aside on which Christians are to assemble to worship. In no other way does it resemble the Old Testament Sabbath.

What does the scriptures say about the First Day of the Week? Please note:

1. Christ arose from the grave on the first day of the week. (Matthew 28:1-7); He also met with his disciples twice on the first day of the week after his resurrection. (John 20:1, 19, 26).
2. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week. (Acts 2:1-4).

How do we know? Because Pentecost always came on the first day of the week.

3. The gospel was preached for the first time as fact on the first day of the week. (Acts 2).
4. The church was established on the first day of the week. (Acts 2:38-47).
5. The disciples met on the first day of the week to break bread. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." (Acts 20:7). If the Sabbath day was the day of worship then why did Paul tarry a number of extra days, even by-passing the "sabbath", to worship with the disciples on the first day of the week? Surely you know.
6. Christians were commanded to lay by in store on the first day of the week. "Now concerning the *collection* for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). That this was a public assembly during which the collection was made clear, for the purpose of Paul's instructions was to alleviate the necessity of a gathering of the funds when he came. If the contributions had been kept at home, a gathering at his arrival would have been necessary. Now if the day of worship had been the sabbath, why would Paul have the Christians to gather again on the first day of the week just to lay by in

store? Do those of you who cling to the sabbath day follow Paul's instruction here? If not, why not?

7. Christians are not to forsake the assembly as they see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25). This would be the first day of the week. John called it the Lord's Day. (Revelation 1:10). It is the day of worship, putting the Lord first instead of last. (Matthew 6:33).

Those who try to hold on to the old law need to read and study Romans 7:1-7; 2 Corinthians 3; Ephesians 2; Colossians 2; and Hebrews 8:7-10. May we realize though that we are not under the law given by Moses but under Christ. Let us therefore worship on the day that his law sets forth. The Lord will accept no less.

WHICH LAW IS BINDING ?

The Bible is divided into two major books — the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word testament means covenant or law. So this within itself suggests that God had a law for his people, but later he gave a new law, making the first one old or no longer binding. It should be remembered that both of these laws cannot be binding at one time.

In studying the Bible, it is obvious that the old law, with emphasis on the law of Moses, is no longer binding since we are not even living in the time in which it was given. Going back to the book of Exodus we observe that it was given by God to Moses for the people of Israel. (Exodus 20). Now let us read some from the book of Deuteronomy: "And Moses called all Israel and said unto them Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). Then he proceeds to give the ten commandments. Therefore, this law was given to Israel or to the Jews, but not to the Gentiles. Now the question is, how long did this law continue? Could it be that it is still binding? Let us see.

Christ himself lived and died under the Law of Moses. Concerning it, he said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy,

but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:17, 18). Now some have understood this to mean that the Lord was putting his approval on the law to the extent that it would continue on and on, but not so. There are two ways to handle a contract or a law. It may either be destroyed or the terms of the contract or law may be honored or carried out. Christ said that he did not choose to come to destroy it, but rather to fulfill it. Furthermore, he stressed that no part of it would be done away until all had been fulfilled. The little word till places a time limit on it. The law would continue TILL what had happened? TILL all had been fulfilled. This could not be at the time of the Lord's second coming, or the destruction of all things, because it is evident that all things would be destroyed then. However, he is talking about the fulfillment of the law within the immediate future. When did this take place?

Just before the Lord died on the cross, he said, "It is finished." (John 19:30). At the precise time of his death the record says that the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. (Matthew 27:51). Thus the law was finished and the renting of the veil was symbolic of it. Paul wrote, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Colossians 2:14). So Christ nailed the law to the cross.

John wrote, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17). Please note the distinction that is made in the two. God himself said, in the presence of Moses, Elias, and Christ,

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (Matthew 17:5). God has spoken in times past in different ways through different individuals, but now speaks to us through his Son. (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

The Hebrew writer makes it clear, “For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” (Hebrews 9:16, 17). Again, he says, “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:9, 10). What was the first? The Old Testament law. What was the second? The New Testament. Therefore, he took the old law away so that the new law might take its place.

How could one ever read 2 Corinthians 3 without being convinced that the law is no longer binding? Paul declares that the law is the ministration of death whereas the new law (the law of Christ) is the ministration of life. Through the book of Galatians Paul tried to show how foolish it would be to leave Christ to return to the law, but he concludes by saying, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4). Also read Galatians 4:21-31.

Therefore we are no longer under the law of Moses but now we are under the law of Christ or the New Testament. That is why we cannot go back to the thief as an example of conversion. Neither can we go back to the law for tithing, mechanical music, the Sabbath day, and many other things. Just because the law of Moses is no longer

binding that does not give us the license to commit murder, adultery, etc., inasmuch as the New Testament likewise condemns these sins—both physically and mentally.

The Old Testament is God's word but as a law it is no longer binding. Rather, we are living under the law of Christ and therefore look to Christ as the author and finisher of our faith. Why would anyone want to go back to the law when Christ came to die for us that we might be saved and have the hope of eternal life? Take Paul's advice when you study, and rightly divide the word. (2 Timothy 2:15). When you do then you will have no problem in seeing the differences between the laws and which one is binding today.

MEASURES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A large number of people believe that miracles are still being performed. These are the ones who teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for God's children today as much as it was for the Apostles in the first century. But all of this confusion is a result of the majority not having a knowledge of the measures of the Holy Spirit.

1. Christ received the Spirit without measure. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:34). As a result, he had the power to do all things. He healed the lame, gave sight to the blind, made the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear, fed the multitudes, walked on the water, calmed the sea, and raised the dead. Greater than that, he arose from the dead. But why? To confirm the word and to make believers. (John 20:30, 31).

2. Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We have only two cases of this in all of the New Testament. First, the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2). Prior to this, Christ had promised them the Comforter who would guide them into all truth. (John 16:13). Christ was going away, and realizing that the Apostles would still need guidance, he said that he would send the Holy Spirit to direct them. After they were baptized with the Holy Spirit they had the power to speak in other languages, heal the lame, make the sick well, raise the dead, and to lay their hands on others that they might have the power to do miracles.

Second, Cornelius and his household received the baptism of the Holy Spirit to show that the Gentiles had been accepted of God as well as the Jews. (Acts 10 and 11). After they received it, and proved it by speaking in other languages, Peter wanted to know, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47). In relating the story he said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning." (Acts 11:15). Note that Peter does not say that Cornelius and his household had received the Holy Spirit as all other believers had, but rather says that he and his household had received the Holy Spirit as they had, that is, the Apostles. He said that they had received it as the Apostles had in the beginning.

3. The Laying on of Hands Measure of the Holy Spirit. Since the Apostles were few in number, and yet there was much to be done, they laid their hands on various ones that they might have the power of the Holy Spirit. First of all, the Apostles laid their hands on the seven. (Acts 6:6). This gave men, such as Philip, the power to go down to Samaria to perform miracles. As a result, a number were obedient to the gospel but Philip couldn't pass his power on to them. Later, Peter and John, Apostles, were called down from Jerusalem and they laid their hands on the people that they might have miraculous power. (Acts 8:14-17).

4. The Ordinary Measure of the Holy Spirit. Except for those who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and those who received the laying on of hands measure of the Holy Spirit, all received the ordinary measure of the Holy Spirit. This assured the receiver of the Holy

Spirit, but not miraculous power. Peter said to the people on the day of Pentecost, "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).

Remember that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised only to the Apostles, was administered by the Lord, and was given to them to guide them into all the truth, to confirm the word, and to direct them in the writing of the New Testament. Furthermore, in the case of Cornelius and his household, they received it before submitting to water baptism.

Then the laying on of hands measure of the Holy Spirit was administered only by the Apostles. And so when the Apostles died, and those they laid their hands on, these miraculous measures of the Spirit ceased to exist. By then there was no longer a need for them since the New Testament had been given in written form and was designed to lead man into all truth. (James 1:25; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

But what about those today who claim to have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and have the power to perform miracles? They are deceived, misguided, and are imposters. They are not even doing God's will, so how could the Spirit be leading them? Would the Spirit guide them into churches not found in the Bible, to wear man made names, etc.? Certainly not. If they had the power they claim to have then they could do all the things that Jesus and the Apostles did. But they do nothing but talk and brag about what they can do. My friend, be not deceived by their false teaching but go to the Bible and let it be your guide.

THE UNKNOWN TONGUE

There are religious people among us who claim to speak with tongues, or in an unknown tongue. Their own interpretation of this is that the Spirit of God is speaking through them. They further explain that they do not know what they are saying, that those who hear them do not understand what they are saying, but that only God knows. But the Bible no where teaches such a thing. Such people are merely deceived and are not speaking in any tongue, let alone in an unknown tongue, and end up in only making sounds and jibbering and jabbering.

The Bible does speak of an unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 14:2), but even then it is not unknown to the individual doing the speaking. In this case, the speaker understands what he is saying but the audience does not—thus *his* understanding is *unfruitful*. As a result he speaks to God and he is edified (through understanding), but to his audience it is meaningless because his language is unknown to them. (1 Corinthians 14:4).

We know that by "tongue" the writer has reference to words that can be understood, because Paul explains, "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue *words easy to be understood*, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air." (1 Corinthians 14:9). Going on, Paul says, "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit,

and I will sing with the understanding also." (1 Corinthians 14:14,15). Unknown tongue here is an unknown language to those who may be listening. Therefore in such a case Paul says that he would be praying but that those listening would find his prayer to be meaningless. The same would be true with his singing. So he determined to pray and sing with the spirit and with the understanding also.

It is very clear that when Paul speaks of tongues he is speaking of languages, and thus when he speaks of the unknown tongue he is talking about an unknown language. Continuing his thought, he says, "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the *unlearned* (those *uneducated* in the language being used) say Amen at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." (1 Corinthians 14:15-19).

Going on, the Apostle reminds them, "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." (1 Corinthians 14:21, 22).

Listen again: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let

him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to *himself* (the inference is that the speaker understands what he is saying), and to God." (1 Corinthians 14:27, 28). The unknown tongue is a language unknown to the *unlearned listeners*. So if there be those who speak in an unknown language, then let them take their turn in speaking, and let it be interpreted. But if no interpreter is present then there should be silence and each one is to speak to himself and to God. In other words, they should have their own private prayers.

Now who had the power to speak in other languages? The Apostles did, for the Lord promised them the baptism of the Holy Spirit and one of the resulting signs was the fact that they spoke in other languages. (Acts 2:6). Cornelius and his household also received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to show that the Gentiles had been accepted of God too, and they spoke in other languages. (Acts 10). Then those on whom the Apostles laid their hands received the Holy Spirit and were given the power to speak in other languages. (Acts 19:1-7). Were there any others? If there were, the Bible no where says so. But why did these men have this power? To have the ability to go into the different parts of the world and preach the gospel in the local language without the need of taking the time to learn the local language or of having an interpreter. How long was this to last? Until the New Testament could be written and given to the world. Paul said that the time would come when tongues or languages (miraculously) would cease. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; James 1:25. So there are no miraculous tongues being spoken today. There is no need for such. The Bible has been given to the world.

Even those who claim to speak in tongues overlook several things:

1. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not promised to them.
2. Since only the Apostles could lay their hands on others that they might have the "laying on of hands" measure of the Holy Spirit, and since the Apostles are dead, no one today can have that measure.
3. Speaking in tongues always had reference to speaking in other languages.
4. Speaking in tongues was for the unbeliever. (But today it is done in their religious services among believers only, preferably).
5. Today if the claimants don't know what they are saying, and those who hear them don't know what they are saying, then how could they expect God to know? This is not the way it was in New Testament days, so obviously men don't have the same power today.
6. Those who claim to speak in tongues cannot speak in other languages as did the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. When their big preachers come to Ceylon, they have to have translators just like those of us who do not claim to have the "gift of tongues." So, in no way does the "unknown tongue" claimed today compare with the tongues used in the New Testament.

In conclusion, it means that many people have been deceived. We beg of you to read and study your Bible that you might know the truth on this subject. But don't be deceived into thinking you have something, or that others have something, when really there is no such power given to men today.

RELIGIOUS NAMES AND TITLES

Man is vain. He loves praise, honor, and glory. He seeks attention, loves titles, and hungers for power. It is not enough just to be a Christian, to be known as a teacher, and to be what God wants him to be. He wants more. To satisfy this craving, man has created names, practices, and offices according to his own liking. That is why you will notice men wearing names and titles and filling positions that did not originate with God. To the contrary, he spoke out against them. Let us notice a few of these.

1. Reverend. Not only is this title used by most religious leaders, but it seems they can't put enough emphasis on it. So they talk about The Right Reverend, The Most Reverend, and so on. The majority of them, as with the majority of those that honor them, by calling them by this title, are not aware that the term reverend appears only one time in all of the Bible and it is applied to God. David said, in speaking of God: "Holy and reverend is his name." (Psalms 111:9). Now, are you God? What about those of you who call your preacher reverend? Is he God? Shame on any one who would so use this term. It belongs to God and let us not try to take it away from Him.
2. Father. Thousands and thousands of religious leaders are called father. They are called not only father, but holy father, etc. And those who wear such a title feel insulted if they are addressed in any other

way. All of these people need to remember what Jesus said: "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." (Matthew 23:9). In the same setting he also condemned the titles of Rabbi and Master as used by man. To go ahead and use them is to openly oppose the Lord in these matters.

3. Pastor. Most denominational preachers use the title Pastor to suggest that they are preaching for a particular church. But in the scriptures the title pastor is no where so used. We do read of pastors, but not pastor. Furthermore, those who became pastors in the first century were so ordained because they were able to meet a number of qualifications as outlined by Paul in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. They were also called bishops, elders, shepherds, and presbyters. There was always a plurality of pastors or bishops over each congregation. As it is used today by the religious world, it is unscriptural and meaningless.
4. Doctor. Just because one has pursued an education to the point of being awarded the doctor's degree, that does not mean that he should use it as a religious title. For it to be so used is an indication that it is being misused. Jesus condemned the idea of striving for position. (Matthew 20:25-28).
5. Pope. His is another title that is unknown in the scriptures. God, Christ, and the scriptures no where say or teach that a mere man can serve as an earthly head of the church and accept the title of Pope. This is simply not of God. The scriptures say that Christ is the head of the church. (Colossians 1:18; Ephe-

sians 1:22, 23). To accept a living man as head of the church is to infer that Christ is not living, but dead.

Not only are the foregoing titles forbidden by the scriptures but hundreds of others would also fall into the same category. For example, titles like the Mother of God, Priest, Bishop, Archbishop, President, Pastor-in-Charge, etc. These are names and titles that are religiously applied to individuals without God's authority. All such man-made names and titles are condemned by the word of God. Why can't people see that? Why would anyone want to openly oppose the will of the Lord? The only conclusion we can reach is that their rebellion and disobedience stem from a desire for glory.

Why is the religious world divided? Well, this is one reason. But do you think that the average religious leader would be willing to lay down these titles, if it would lead to unity? The majority would not. They have too much pride. They love themselves too much. So this is not being written with the idea that those religious leaders who read it will *readily* give up their unscriptural titles, for in almost every case, they will not. Rather, this is being written to cause those of you who are not aware of the error you are committing to think seriously about what you are doing. You are probably going along in life not giving any thought to these matters but blindly following the blind and thus using unscriptural titles from beginning to end. Thus you accept yourself as the laity, which is another unscriptural term, and you honor the clergy, which is also an unscriptural term, by bestowing upon them unscriptural names and titles. I beg of you to wake up to what you are doing. Do not take my word for it,

but go to the Bible and see if you can read of Reverend Peter, Doctor Paul, Pastor John, etc. See if you can read where any preacher of the gospel was ever called Father, Pope, etc. Go to the scriptures to see if the preachers were ever called Clergy and the members, Laity. If you will, you'll find the truth.

Then what were religious leaders called? Preachers, teachers, evangelists, elders, Christians and brethren. And the Lord's church wore the name of Christ. Let us not be unscriptural when we can be scriptural. Let us not follow error when we can follow the truth. Let us wear only the names and titles that the Lord has given. Then, and only then, will we be right.

INDEPENDENT PREACHERS AND CHURCHES

There are many preachers and churches. The majority of these are denominational. Most all others claim to be independent. What do they mean by this? They mean that they are not associated with any particular denomination. Perhaps at one time they were, but for one reason or another they cut loose to go their separate way.

Quite often you have a doctrinal problem to arise in a denomination, or maybe a personality clash, and this may result in one or more individuals breaking away to begin a new work. Sometimes those that attempt to become independent do so out of a desire to get away from denominational teachings and practices. Then there are always those who do not want to work with other groups, where they must give an account for what they do, especially for all of the money that is collected, and therefore they go out as independents and build independent works so they can direct it, control it, and reap material gain from it.

Here in India in particular there are many so-called independent preachers and works. Every man seems to want to be a full time preacher, and every full time preacher wants to have his own group. They find it very difficult to work with other preachers. Often times they are nothing more than hirelings. You not only have this kind of situation within "Christianity", but it also exists in other religions as well. Think of the many self-appointed "Gurus" in India. Just look around at all of the

“Babaji’s”. There is always another one coming along seeking to lead his share of followers away. Man is so easily deceived, and seemingly wants to be deceived.

It may come as a shock to you, but did you know that we do not read of any independent preachers and churches in the Bible? Neither do we read of any denominations in God’s word. We do read of those who caused division, and the scriptures say that they should be marked and avoided, for they serve not the Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 16:17, 18). We also read of false teachers, false prophets, hirelings, etc., and of course they stand condemned (2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; John 10:12, 13).

Paul, Peter, and all of the other preachers and teachers were never spoken of or described as independents. They did not oppose one another, or work against one another, or compete with each other. Rather, they worked together, rejoiced together, suffered together, and so on. (Acts 2; Acts 8; 1 Corinthians 12:26).

We do not read in God’s word of Peter having a church and Paul having another church or of John having a church and then James having a church. Neither do we read where any of the Apostles or members ever referred to the church as being theirs. We do read of the Lord’s church but that is all. (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23).

Going through the scriptures, you will note that there is but one church mentioned. (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18). This is Christ’s church. It is composed of many congregations and each congregation is made up of a multitude of members. While each congregation is independent, as far as government is concerned, they are not in-

dependent, in that they work against one another and they oppose one another. Rather, they have fellowship with each other and work together in the interest of furthering the Lord's cause.

To be an independent as an individual or as a congregation means that you are also setting yourself up as being independent of the Lord and His church. You therefore become a competitor to the Lord and His cause. That means instead of being with him, you are against him, instead of being for him, you are opposed to him. (Matthew 12:30). Is that what you want? Is that your mission in life? You need to think seriously about what you are doing and make some corrections.

The Lord is not interested in you being an independent, but he would have you obey him and be a Christian. Independents are not Christians anymore than Christians are independents. If you are opposed to the denominations of men, then don't join them by beginning another one, but become a member of the Lord's church. If you want to preach, then preach, but preach the truth. (2 Timothy 4:2).

No one has given you the authority to go out on your own, of being a religious organization, and to encourage people to become members of it. It may be independent, but that is all. As a result, you will be lost and those who follow you will also be lost.

You are urged to return to the Bible and accept pure New Testament Christianity. Obey God by believing in him, repenting of your sins, confessing Christ, and being baptized for the remission of your sins. (Mark 16:15,16;

Acts 2:38). Then the Lord will save you and add you to his church. (Acts 2:47; Acts 20:28). This will not make you denominational but it will make a Christian out of you. (1 Peter 4:16). Then as a Christian you can preach and teach God's word and encourage one and all to do as you have done. Only then will you be right. Only then will you be free. (John 8:32).

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Christ came one time, but he is coming again. His first coming was in the past but his second coming will be in the future. Last time he appeared in the flesh, but this next time he will come as a glorified Lord. He came before to be man's saviour, but at his next appearance he will come to serve as man's judge. As sure as he went away, it is that sure that he will come again.

Before the Lord departed from his disciples, he promised them, "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 14:3). On the day of the Lord's ascension, the record says, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11).

There are those who teach that Christ will come back to earth one day and he will reign in Jerusalem with his disciples for a period of one thousand years. However, the Bible does not teach this. As we have just observed in Acts 1, the Lord will return one day in the manner in which he went away, but the scriptures no where teach

that Christ will ever set foot on earth again. Rather, the scriptures teach that Christ will come in the clouds and we will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Let's read it to be sure that it says that: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the cloud, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

When will Christ come again? There have been many to predict the time of the Lord's second coming. Some have thought that the Bible symbolically or figuratively revealed the date of the Lord's return, and that they had discovered the key to this mystery and therefore could now make it known to the world. All of these people have only made fools of themselves. In spite of this, there are still some who insist that he will come at such and such a time. They, too, will be shown to be imposters. In the mean time they will get a little attention and some will be even deceived to the point of believing them. This is the sad part. But there is not a man on the face of this earth who knows the time of the Lord's return. Why can

such a statement be made? Because Christ himself declared: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matthew 24:36). Now if the angels do not know, and if Christ does not know, but only God knows the time of the Lord's coming, then how could I, or any other human being, know? We can't.

Again, the record says that Christ is coming as a thief. Not that he is a thief, but he is coming as a thief. That means that he will come at an unannounced time. Listen, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thessalonians 5:2-4).

There are other things that we know about the Lord's second appearance. For instance, all shall see him: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him..." (Revelation 1:7). Furthermore, the heavens and the earth and all things therein shall be destroyed and burned up: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the element shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10). Likewise, the Lord is coming to take vengeance: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with ever-

lasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

When the Lord comes again a general resurrection will take place, both of the righteous and unrighteous. (John 5:28, 29). He will come to receive his bride or church, which is also spoken of as being the kingdom of God, from which the angels of the Lord will take the wicked and cast them into the fire. (Ephesians 5:27; Matthew 13:41, 43). And finally, Christ is coming again to judge the world. (Matthew 25; Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Yes, the Lord is definitely coming again. We don't know when, but he is coming nevertheless. The question is, will we be ready? Today is the time to prepare. Tomorrow may be too late. Read Matthew 24:36-39; Luke 12:14-48.