

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity

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EDITORIAL



It Does Make A Difference

After His resurrection from the dead, Christ met His disciples at the appointed place and said unto them: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20). How much authority did Christ say He has been given? He said, ALL. How much is all? Well, all means all, absolute and complete. He does not share or divide that authority with any one. He has it ALL. To reject His authority is to reject God, who gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth. The disciples were asked to go and teach and make disciples or learners in all nations by His authority. They were to baptize believers (Mark 16:15, 16) by His authority, and further, by Christ's authority they should teach the baptized believers to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded or taught them during the time He was with them on earth. Of course, the disciples or the Apostles, being human like us, would not be able to remember all things that the Lord had commanded them to observe and to teach others; for this reason Christ had promised to them that He would, after His leaving them, send the Holy Spirit upon them,

Who would bring to their remembrance all things he had commanded and taught them and would teach them many more things which the Lord had not told them, because they were not prepared to receive or digest them during the time the Lord was with them on earth physically. Just before His death, after He had revealed some important things to them, He said, "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:25, 26). Again, He said, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will tell you things to come. He will gloryfy me, for He will take of what is mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you." (John 16:12-15).

Accordingly, the Holy Spirit filled Apostles not only preached to the people of their time, but they also, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote those things in the books of the New Testament of the Bible. The New Testament of Christ therefore is the standard for us today in all religious matters. The Holy Spirit inspired or guided the Apostles to write in the New Testament books whatever Christ wants us to know and do. But what about the Old Testament of the Bible, is it not the word of God? Surely, the Old Testament is as much the word of God as is the New Testament. But the writer of the book of Hebrews shows us the difference between His Old Testament and His New Testament when he says: "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:1, 2); And, "He takes away the first that He may establish the second." (Hebrews 10:9). See also Hebrews 8:7-13; 9:16, 17. Therefore, if we are going to do the will of God the Father then we must do what His Son asks us to do, whom He has given all authority and through whom He speaks to man today. He is not

speaking through angels today. He is not speaking through a person, whether living or dead, today. He is not revealing to any man His will in dreams today. (Galatians 1:7-9; Revelation 22:18, 19). The only way God speaks to us all today is through His Son, Who has all the authority in heaven and on earth.

So what do we learn from all of this? We learn that whatever we do religiously, it is our responsibility that we check in our New Testament if that is authorised by Christ in His New Testament or not. To illustrate: It is not uncommon for some people to call me "Father", because I am a minister of the Gospel of Christ. But I have to bring to their attention what Christ Himself said about it. He said, in Matthew 23:9, "Do not call anyone on earth your father, for one is your Father, He who is in heaven." Likewise for everything else we must check about the authority of Christ, in the New Testament. We need to check in it about everything we do in His worship, whether those things are authorised by the Lord or not. We need to check about baptism, why and how and who should be baptized. We need to check about the church what is it and how can one become its member. We need to likewise check about religious festivals. Is there any authority in the Book of God for their celebration. Whatever we do religiously we should not just do them blindly, but let us first find out if Christ has authorised them in His book. Whoever the religious leaders may be, any where in the world, we must not forget the fact that they are not the authority in religious matters, because Christ Has *All Authority*. Human doctrines and human creeds cannot replace or substitute the authority of Christ.

"But why do you call me Lord, Lord," asked Christ, "and do not do the things which I say." (Luke 6:46). To some who serve and worship Him in manners He has not authorised he said, "These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips. But their heart is far from Me And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:8, 9). Merely doing some things in the name of Christ to please God does not necessarily make those things right and acceptable to God. One might preach in the name of Christ,

and do many wonderful things in the name of Christ and still be lost, if those things were not done by His authority. "MANY", said Christ, "will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in your name?" But, He said, "Then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." (Matthew 7:22-23). The inference is, no doubt, they had done many things in the name of Christ all their lives, BUT they had failed to follow His authority, those things were simply not authorised by Him. "Not everyone" therefore, said Christ, "who says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21). Let us now examine our religion. Let us now examine everything we do and believe in Christianity and find out from the New Testament of Christ whether He has authorised them or not. Many will learn this lesson only on the day of judgment, but then it will be too late for them!

What Kind Of Taste Do You Have?

J.C. Choate

Most of us have a taste for certain foods and then there are other types of food that we do not care about. Sometimes we even refuse to try a particular food or fruit, because we have never tasted it before and we have heard that it is not good. Or we may have tried other dishes but did not like them at first, but with the passing of time, we developed a taste for them and now we consider them to be some of our favourites.

We have heard someone say that their friend has developed a taste for expensive clothes. If we have grown up, being deprived of something, and then we get a taste of it, we certainly do not want to go back to the time that we had to do without it.

In speaking of taste, literally speaking, it is that which we like, it has flavour, and we enjoy it. We also use the word taste

figuratively, like referring to one who has a taste for expensive clothes. Sometimes we say that he or she has good taste when it comes to the way they dress. We may also talk about getting a taste of something, like beginning a new job, or starting to school.

The scriptures also talk about taste. Peter has just been discussing how one is born again through obeying God, and therefore has purified his heart and life. (1 Peter 1:22,23). That being true, then he continues, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." (1 Peter 2:1-3).

In other words, he is saying that once one has been born again or saved through his obedience to the Lord, that in so doing that person lays aside or gives up all of the bad things in his life like malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speakings. Malice would be to have an ill-will or bad feeling toward another or to be moved by hatred to do something bad to that person. Guile is to be cunning and deceitful. Hypocrisy is to act or to put on without being sincere in one's actions. Envy has to do with being jealous or wanting what the other person has. And of course evil speakings would be bad language. Now Peter has listed some bad things, hasn't he? Just to rid one's self of those kind of things would be a big improvement within itself. But he said when one is born again, when one is saved, that one repents of those kind of things and therefore rids his life of them.

He goes on to say that when one is born again that such a person is as a new born babe. He or she may be fifty years of age, but in being born again spiritually, then they start from that point. Therefore, through their obedience to the Lord they become new people, people who have put away their sin, and therefore they are said to be new creatures in Christ. That birth, or new birth as it is called, is discussed in John 3:3-5. Christ says that one is born of water and of the Spirit. The Spirit has

revealed God's will through the pages of the New Testament. Therefore when one learns of God and his Son, Jesus, and becomes a believer, and then they go on to repent of their sins, to confess Christ as the Son of God, and to be baptized, that is, buried in water, for the remission of their sins, then through this process one is born again, or is saved. We can read about this in John 14:1-3; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Matthew 10:32; Romans 6:3,4; and Acts 2:38. But in being buried in baptism there is also the coming forth, or the birth that takes place. (Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12). Also in being baptized, one enters Christ, and Paul says, "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).

Therefore being born again, one is a new creature or as a new born babe. Now as a babe in Christ, or as a beginner, then one begins to feed on the milk of the word or the simple teachings of Christ. He certainly doesn't begin on the hard and difficult things of the scripture. That would hurt him and discourage him and possibly cause him to fall away. But as he feeds on the milk of the word then he grows and develops. Then with the passing of times he can begin to partake of the meat of the word or the deeper things of the scripture.

But notice that Peter says that one goes on with this process if he tastes, finds, or experiences that the Lord is gracious. In other words, if he is convinced, if he is growing and developing, if he is observing the change in his life, and seeing how the Lord has blessed him, then he would never want to go back to his old way of living.

There are some other statements in the scriptures that have to do with taste that we might do well to read. The first one is in Psalms 34:8. There David declared, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." David is saying that if one will only try the Lord, give him an opportunity to influence his life; if he will only do this then he will find the Lord is good.

The idea is that one may be out in the world of sin, lost, and

living in a terrible state, but once one comes into contact with Christ and his teaching, and obeys him and changes his life; once one has tasted or experienced this new way of living, how could he ever think of going back to that old way of life?

The world tells us that this earth and all things therein, including man, came about by accident. Evolution is taught and accepted by many as fact, but what does it offer? Nothing. But when one uses his mind and begins to realize that something cannot come from nothing, but there is a God in heaven who has created man and all things; once one has become aware of that, he has had a taste of that, how could he ever settle for any less?

We are told by the religious world that there are many churches, that one is just as good as the other. The majority of the people accept this. They are not aware of the Lord's church, the one for which Christ died (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23; Acts 20:28). Once one comes to know these truths, and especially after one becomes a member of Christ's church and experiences pure New Testament Christianity, then he would never be satisfied with what man has to offer.

No, there is nothing like the truth. The Lord's way is the best way, the only way. Nothing can compare to it. God's grace, mercy, and love is far beyond anything that man has ever experienced before. One will accept and be satisfied with many things in this world, materially and spiritually, until he finds something that is better. But once he has had a taste of that then there is no returning to what he had before. There is no comparison.

So Peter is saying that if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, if we have found that he is good, if we have experienced the better way, salvation, hope, and all that the Lord has to offer, then how could we ever be satisfied with anything that is less than that?

But the Hebrew writer says, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift,

and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Hebrews 6:4-6). So the idea is that if one has tasted all that the Lord has to offer, but in spite of that, if somehow somehow he rejects that and denies the Lord and refuses the very sacrifice that made it possible for him to be saved, then that means that he is lost, and having gone that far, will probably never return to the Lord in this life so that he can be saved. Therefore, it is a dangerous thing to accept all of the grace and mercy of God and then to turn against him. In that case, there is only one place he can go and that is to eternal destruction.

My friend, the Lord invites you to a feast. He has the bread of life to eat and the water of life to drink. (John 6:35; John 4:14). Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4). You are invited then to come and partake of this spiritual food that is being offered. Taste it and try it. Surely you will find it to be better than anything you have ever tried before.

Christ's Relation to His Church!

Dillard Thurman

Nearly all of the problems that have plagued Christianity centre in the question of Authority. It is not a matter of interpretation, but a matter of accepting what God has revealed unto us! Of Jesus they asked, "By what authority does thou these things? and who gave you this authority?" (Mt. 21:23). Jesus did not reprimand them for questioning authority, but countered by questioning them regarding the authority of John's baptism. It is deplorable when a people will bow to mandates with no question as to who has the authority to bind them upon men—be it religious or political. A government is in trouble when bureaucracy has become so prolific that one cannot find who has

the authority to settle a matter! Wisdom dictates that we ask, "Who has the authority? Who speaks with authority?"

Source of Authority in Christianity

Authority is defined as "The right to command and to enforce obedience; the right to act officially." The second definition given is: "Personal power that commands influence, respect, or confidence." There are two kinds of authority; *Primary Authority* is in the source of authority; it is inherent in the office. *Delegated Authority* is that which is transferred, or given, to another by one having *Primary Authority*. God had all power and authority as Creator and Maker of all things! Authority centered in Him. But God delegated authority to His Son, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." (Mt. 17:5). Thus, God "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." (Heb. 1:2). Jesus Christ, heir of God, was given authority greater than that received by any other from God! He could say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Mt. 28:18). Jesus Christ will retain that power and authority to the end of time. (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

Christ Was Given Authority!

Jesus Christ and Christianity are inseparable; and from any angle that Christianity is viewed, Jesus Christ is the central figure, and the focal point! *Christianity* is defined by Webster's New Unabridged Dictionary as "the system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ." But the definition is faulty in that it refers to *doctrines* in the plural. In the Scriptures the doctrine of Christ is always singular, whereas the doctrines of men are plural! It is in the Scriptures that the words of Christ are revealed, and His authority is shown. He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Mt. 24:35). Very pointedly Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (Jno. 12:48). That is the badge of His authority exerted through His words!

Christ's Relation to Christianity

To cultivate a more wholesome respect for the authority of

Jesus Christ, let us study His relationship to Christianity.

1. *As a system of revelation*, Jesus Christ is the precious Word of Truth. John tells us: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (Jno. 1:1, 14). God sent forth the Word of truth in the form of man, that His Son might more effectively give His truth to the world! Thus it was written, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Clarifying this yet more, Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Imparting truth to the world, He then said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jno. 1:17; 14:6; 8:32). You can't separate Christ from the truth he brought!

2. *As a system of law*, Jesus Christ is Himself the lawgiver. Long before it was prophesied, "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. 18:18). Even earlier, Jacob had been told this One would be a "lawgiver." (Gen. 49:10). Jesus Christ had given His "perfect law of liberty" before Paul wrote: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2). James refers to this as "The law of liberty." (Jas. 1:25; 2:12). He then stated, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." (Jas. 4:12). Jesus Christ cannot be disassociated with the law of Christianity! Remember, it was God Himself who declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

3. *As a means of reunion with God*, Jesus Christ declared: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jno. 14:6). To make this perfectly clear, Jesus said again, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (Jno. 10:9). Paul explained, "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. 2:18). There may be many entrances into benevolent and fraternal orders, but Jesus Christ is the only door of entrance to God! He is the Way!

4. *As a system of reconciliation and salvation*, Jesus Christ is the Saviour. Before His birth an angel announced, "And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Mt. 1:21). An angel also told shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Lk. 2:10-11). The beloved apostle wrote much later: "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 Jno. 4:14). Paul also spake of Him as "the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour," (Tit. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:10). It is through Him we are reconciled (Col. 1:19-21).

5. *As the kingdom of God*, Jesus Christ is King! When questioned by Pilate, Jesus stated: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." Pilate was dubious, and asked, "Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." (Jno. 18:36:37). Though born in a stable and laid in a manger, Jesus was to reign as *King of kings and Lord of lords* (1 Tim. 6:15). *Jesus did not evade this issue*: "And Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it." (Lk. 23:3). To the very last scene, He wears the name, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." (Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

6. *As a church*, Jesus Christ is the Head, for God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22-23). Paul sets this forth with emphasis: "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." (Col. 1:18). Paul told the saints to "grow up into him, in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly framed together...maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:15-16). Thus Paul could say, "The head of every man is Christ" (1 Cor. 11:3).

That we might better understand, Paul set forth a parallel: "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." (Eph. 5:23). We honor both the head and the body!

7. As a structure of faith, Jesus Christ is both the foundation and cornerstone. Paul declared: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon...For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus." (1 Cor. 3:10-11). The apostle Peter quoted from Isa. 28:16—"Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." (1 Pet. 2:6). Paul therefore stated that saints "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:20-21). Thus we can sing, "How Firm a Foundation!" "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. 2:19).

8. *As a source of true Life.* Jesus Christ is the exemplar. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (Jno. 1:4). "For as the Father hath life in himself: so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." (Jno. 5:26). He could say, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (Jno. 10:10). On becoming a Christian, it can be said, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:3-4). Surely those who have been baptized into Christ should be raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4).

In Conclusion : As the sun is the centre of the solar system, so Christ is the centre of Christianity! The whole of the Bible concerns Him primarily. All that was written before was in preparation for His coming; and all that was written since was because of His advent into the world! He is the central theme of God's revelation to man. And the greatest declaration man can make for himself is "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts

8:37). May this then prompt faithful obedience that can save your soul (Heb. 5:8, 9).

The Amazing Grace Of God

Donald Ramey

When called upon to write of the amazing grace of God, it makes one to shudder and withdraw as if unqualified for the task. The magnitude of God's grace is so overwhelming that one grows in appreciation of it only after living many years in Christian service.

The word "grace" properly and basically means "unmerited favour of God." Let us remember that the time was when we all stood condemned to eternal death. However, Jehovah God looked down upon us with favour and extended his grace while we were yet sinners. (Romans 5:6). It is by this grace that we are saved. Paul wrote: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9.)

Grace is a gift. When God gave his Son as a ransom for all, it became evident that Jesus Christ constitutes the grace of God. Paul says: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." (Titus 2:11.) The lost, sinful person must believe that Jesus is the Son of God and accept, in obedience, his gospel in order to partake of the amazing grace of God.

One should consider these three points in regard to the amazing grace of God. (1.) From a human standpoint, it is illogical. To love a world of sinners who constantly insult and shame the God who made them, argues against the logic of God's grace when viewed by human minds.

(2) The magnitude of God's grace is evidenced in the giving of his only begotten Son. (John 3:16).

(3) God's grace is useless unless accepted. The rope that will save a drowning man is useless unless caught and held. God has done his part in extending his grace. You and I must do our part by taking advantage of it.

Sinner, will you accept God's amazing grace while time and opportunity are on your side.

God's Unchanging Plan For Man

Don Hughes

Everything around us seems to continually change. It seems everything man can change he does change.

Every season the clothing industry changes the style of our clothes. Some people go to great expense to change their appearance. Others change their companions with regularity.

In the midst of a changing world, there is great comfort in knowing that some things never change.

God says that he does not change. "For I am the Lord, I change not." (Malachi 3:6). His physical laws do not change. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22). His spiritual laws do not change. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6:7, 8.)

Before the world began God planned the redemption of man. "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the words unto our glory." (1 Corinthians 2:7).

Before man fell, God warned of the consequences of his

disobedience. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17.)

When man fell from his sinless state, God made the promise to redeem man. (Genesis 3:1-15.) The theme of the Old Testament from Adam through his descendants, Noah, Abraham, David, etc., is the eventual redemption of man. God made a covenant with Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. (Genesis 12:3.) This promise was renewed in Isaac and again in Jacob.

The book of Genesis tells us of the origin and fall of man. The rest of the Old Testament tells us of man's need for redemption. The Law of Moses served to teach man that he could not, by the works of the law, redeem himself. Thus the need of a Redeemer (Christ).

By his divine providence God preserved the lineage through which Christ would come, when the time was right. "And when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." (Galatians 4:4.)

While God's promise was made to Abraham, a Jew, his promise was not limited to the Jewish nation, for he said that through his seed all nations would be blessed. (Genesis 22:18.)

The promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ. "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. There is neither Jew, nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26-29.)

God's great love for sinful man caused him to plan from the beginning for man's eternal redemption. Man's love for God must cause him to accept this redemption.

A Bible-Wide View Of The Messiah

Jim Massey

Old Calabar in Nigeria, West Africa, was a central slave port in the 1800's. Every time I preached there I could visualize some of the dreaded horrors of slavery. I would think of the crushing blow to one's sense of worth to be sold by one's own family or village. I would imagine the animalistic treatment inflicted by slave traders. I have seen pictures of the narrow slots on board slave ships whose contents could be jettisoned overboard if the ship were apprehended. I read of the disease and deaths at sea and the only thing to look forward to in the future—slavery.

Slaves Cannot Deliver Themselves

Only slaves can fully appreciate freedom. Non-slaves take freedom for granted. This is why God's scheme of redemption centers in a slave-deliverer, a Messiah, the Christ. Since man's real slavery is the slavery to sin, and since his deliverance from sin's slavery depends upon a deliverer, instead of upon himself, man's greatest need is to see the need of his deliverer. Slaves cannot deliver themselves.

God's Deliverer Pre-pictured

Almost in the same breath after promising Abraham a great nation, God predicted in Genesis 15:13, 14 that the nation would be slaves four hundred years and afterward released and delivered by God's power. After their deliverance Moses reminded Israel in Deuteronomy 5:15 that they had been slaves in Egypt but had been brought out "by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm." God wanted Israel to know that slaves cannot free themselves.

A Powerful Ruler—Deliverer from Judah

Genesis 49:10-12 promises that Shiloh (a deliverer) will descend from Judah with a ruler's staff and with his hand on the neck of his enemies. His fury will be as a lioness and as a lion's young whelp who relishes his power over his prey. "Unto him

shall be the obedience of the peoples." God's Messiah is to be a powerful ruler-deliverer who will come through the tribe of Judah.

Moses Pre-pictures that Deliverer

In answer to Moses understandable lack of faith in himself, God promised Moses in Exodus 4:10-17 to put inspired words in his mouth. In verses 30, 31 Moses did signs in the sight of the people, and they believed, and in Exodus 7-12 Moses brought ten plagues upon Egypt, and the Egyptians released their captives. God's power through Moses' inspired message confirmed by miracles and signs had delivered Israel from slavery. Numbers 11:17-26 shows that God's power upon Moses was the Holy Spirit.

Moses Typifies God's Coming Prophet

Peter in Acts 3:22 shows that Moses as God's delivering prophet pre-pictured Jesus. Stephen in Acts 7:36 shows that Moses' deliverance was by "wonders and signs in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years." Both Moses and Stephen quote Deuteronomy 18:18, 19 to show that Jesus was the prophet whom Moses had predicted would be "like unto me." Moses pre-pictured Jesus' deliverance by speaking God's delivering message backed up by miracles and signs so as to release Israel from slavery.

Sin was the Slavery

The miracle worked by Peter and John was explained in Acts 3:16-26 as confirming Jesus as God's suffering servant spoken of by all the prophets. Verses 19:21 show that their bondage was the sin-slavery, for which they must repent and be converted. This would blot out their sins and bring the power of the Christ like Moses spoken of by the mouth of all God's prophets. Verse 26 shows that forgiveness of sins would fulfil the blessing promised through Abraham and now fulfilled in Jesus as God's suffering servant.

This Truth Made Men Free

To Jews bound in sin Jesus offered the truth that he was

God's deliverer that would make them free. (John 8:32-36.) They replied that they were Abraham's seed who had never been in bondage to any man. Jesus showed that anyone committing sin was a slave of sin, but that "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." All men (like the Jews) must see their slavery in sin and the freedom in Christ's power to forgive sin through the gospel message.

Freedom by Obeying the Gospel

Romans 6:16-18 teaches that men are slaves of what they obey, whether of "sin unto death or obedience unto righteousness." The Roman Christians had been slaves to sin, but they had obeyed from the heart the gospel and had been released from sin and enslaved to righteousness. Romans 8:1, 2 shows that the gospel ("the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus") made them "free from the law of sin and death."

How the Spirit's Power Delivers

The Spirit's inspiration empowered Moses' message to deliver Israel from Egypt's slavery so as to typify the Messiah's power to deliver believers from sin's slavery by obeying the gospel. Man must believe that his slavery is sin and that his deliverance is the gospel and then obey the gospel to be delivered from bondage.

The Love Of Jesus

Tim Boyett

Love So Amazing

God's love for mankind motivated him to give the greatest sacrifice known to man. "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.) The purpose of this Divine act of love was to provide lost humanity a way to obtain salvation from sin. (Romans 5:6-11.)

The love of Jesus is clearly seen in his death upon the cross of Calvary. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13.) This death has given to us a new and living way. (Colossians 2:14.)

What does the love of God and Jesus mean to you? Their supreme love is to create a corresponding love within man. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19.)

The Greatest of These

Paul declares in I Corinthians 13:13, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Faith in God and Christ is essential. The hope that we have in them is unequalled. Yet, Paul says that charity, or love, is the greatest of these three. Why?

Love is the fulfilling of all the requirements, duties, and obligations contained in the law of God regarding God and man. (Romans 13:8-10.) The life and works of Jesus comprise the greatest of all proofs that God loves sinful man and desires his salvation. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8.)

One of the characteristics of love that Paul gives is that it "seeketh not her own." (1 Corinthians 13:5.) Simply stated this means that it is the good and happiness of others that love looks to, not its own selfish desires. This characteristic is exemplified in the life of Christ, and especially so in the closing hours of it. Notice his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, "O my Father, if it be possible, let his cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matthew 26:39, 42.) Jesus Christ, as well as God the Father, has nothing but our best interest at heart.

Companion of Faith

Love is the companion of working faith, or as Paul stated, "Faith which worketh by love." (Galatians 5:6.) According to God's word, faith and love are not genuine unless proved by

works. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:26.) "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me... He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." (John 14:21, 24.)

Can God see our faith? (Mark 2:5.) Can He see our love? (1 John 2:2.)

Love is Motivating

The love of Christ for mankind in general, and me specifically, should be a motivation to honestly, sincerely, and diligently study his will. (2 Timothy 2:15.) It is his word, or will, that will be the standard of our judgment. (John 12:48.) It should also motivate to obedience of that same will upon learning it. Do I really love and appreciate all that has been done for me if, upon learning God's will for my life, I choose not to obey it?

A proper love should motivate one to serve. Jesus is our example in this, as well as all things. John records how Jesus girded himself with a towel and proceeded to wash the feet of his disciples. (John 13:4-5.) Service! Jesus taught by example and deed, as well as by his word. Love also makes our service easier.

Notice what is said about the seven years of service given to Laban by Jacob for the hand of Rachel. "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel: and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." (Genesis 29:20.) If your service is a burden and not a joy, you should look to the attitude of your heart.

After obedience to the gospel of Christ in becoming a Christian, love will motivate one to do several things in his Christian life. 1. Worship regularly. (Hebrews 10:25.) 2. Serve diligently. (Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 12:28.) 3. Live faithfully. (Revelation 2:10.)

Conclusion

The love of Christ for us is a "love so amazing" that it is difficult for us to fully comprehend the magnitude of it. One of

the ultimate examples of this love is shown in his words to God the Father concerning those who caused his death. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.)

What does the love of Christ mean to you? To love is to conform to the laws of God and bring ourselves into harmony with them. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.)

What the Church Needs Now!

John Hobbs

The day the church began, 3,000 souls were added to it (Acts 2:42, 47). From there, the growth was spectacular, as the number grew to 5,000 men (Acts 4:4); the number multiplied (Acts 6:1); and greatly (Acts 6:1). Years later the number increased daily (Acts 16:5). Even in our time, the church of Christ was the fastest-growing church in America! But studies show it has stopped its growth, and even has declined! Why? Allow me to set forth five factors that must attend our efforts to restore church growth!

I. The Church Needs Strong Leadership

The nation of Israel went astray and fell when it did not have a leader. "In days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6). God's purpose for evangelists, pastors and teachers was for building up, strengthening and edifying the church (Eph. 4:11-16). Paul saw the continual need of leaders, and wrote Timothy: "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. 2:2). The church of the Lord grew rapidly in England under leadership of the Haldane brothers. But when they died, the restoration movement died there also. They had not raised up faithful men to teach others!

These points emphasize our need for godly men of wisdom in place of leadership! Our lack of growth today stems from lack of dedicated leaders! Ed Wharton said, "half of all the men in eldership are not qualified." He is probably right, as dictatorial shotcallers have replaced loving spiritual shepherds! But God calls for qualified elders for His church! Still there are churches who reject elders, as they do not want those in authority over them! As a rule a growing church indicates capable men of wisdom leading; a dying church indicates a leadership lacking in qualifications! And too often it is the preacher who is fired, rather than unqualified men resigning!

II. The Church Needs the Word Preached!

Some churches are *swelling*, but not really growing; for real growth comes only with strong biblical teaching! Christianity is a religion of faith for we live by faith (Gal. 3:11); walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7); overcome by faith (1 Jno. 5:4); and will receive the eternal crown by faith (Rev. 2:10). As it is written: "And without faith it is impossible to be wellpleasing" (Heb. 11:6). That faith is obtained by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17); not by emotional experiences, or hallucinations! Our sermons must be filled with Scripture, that babes may have the sincere milk of the word, and the mature saints feast on meat!

The Psalmist declared, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa, 119:11). If members are fed diet of His word, their lives will be enriched, and they will be strengthened to resist the devil. We must restore erring members by getting back to fundamentals by preaching the truth in love (Eph. 4:14). Churches must demand good, sound biblical preaching; and fire the preacher who will not deliver! The preacher, in turn, must have the support of elders and other members while contending for the faith, and he should never have to worry about being "fired" for doing so!

III. The Church Needs Unity!

Psalm 133:1 states "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity". Paul was even more urgent in writing: "Now I beseech you, brethren,

through 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 perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1:10). Yet again Paul wrote: "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3). The lack of the growth in many churches is due to their lack of unity. Jesus taught, "Every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." (Mt. 12:25). My father has often told me, "Kicking mules are not pulling, and pulling mules are not kicking." A church must be united in brotherly love to effectively do the Lord's work! Members fussing and feuding reveal their spiritual discontent to those whom they would bring to Christ! Internal strife in any church will nullify its efforts to save the lost! Jesus taught that unified members would lead the world to believe that God had sent Him (Jno. 17:21). But disunity hinders the gospel and makes growth impossible! Selfish members who stir up strife and sow discord are hated of God! (Prov 6:19); and will have to answer for their destructive deeds!

IV. The Church Needs a Will to Work!

Jesus taught His disciples: "Let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Mt. 5:16). Paul says we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:10); and told Titus that we should be "zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14). The church won't grow by chance or accident, but by a purposeful plan of work, with someone working the plan! Many members want to attend the business meetings, and be heard on what should be done; however, they are conspicuous by their absence when the work actually begins! There still awaits a day of reckoning; but in the meantime that church is stifled in its efforts to grow!

Members must be made to realize their responsibility for church growth. The preacher can't do the work of others! He is not a paid "get-well-card." His responsibility to visit the sick is no greater than that of other members. We must restore the preacher to the pulpit to proclaim the same gospel of salvation! Years ago the preacher had a "study", but now he has an "office."

We have ignored the primary obligation of the preacher.
"Preach the word" (2 Tim 4:2)

V. The Church Must Evangelize!

Jesus charged His disciples: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mk. 16:15-16). The book of Acts gives a constant picture of their reaching out to teach people the gospel. "They therefore that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word". (Acts 8:4). It is aptly said that the church that doesn't reach out will soon fade out! Many churches have become small social groups performing as worshipping societies with no outreach! Many members attend and sit in the pews—and that is all they do—SIT! After hearing the truth preached they make no effort to reach out to the lost! Keep in mind that the gospel is yours until you accept it—and then it belongs to others! Take it to the lost!

Every member must realize that his personal responsibility is to lead the lost to the Saviour! Each can invite folk to the services, pass out tracts, call on sick neighbours, encourage the faint hearted, arrange a home Bible study! One couple became Christians because another couple had invited them seventeen times! We must not give up; we must have a continued evangelistic thrust! Christianity is a taught religion, as Jesus said: "And they shall all be taught of God." (Jno. 6:45). Every saint this side of heaven must be concerned with every sinner this side of hell! True many will reject the truth! But our responsibility is to teach the gospel, then what they do with it is their responsibility (Ezek. 33:8-9).

Conclusion

One can see these concepts are not new fangle ideas never visualized before. They are simple, basic and fundamental biblical concepts. These points are valid because they come from God. Real church growth comes not from doing something new, but by performing the simple and basic things well! I

pray that our brethren will return to God's plan for church growth, and realize the seriousness of the task!

Sin Costs too Much

Johnny Ramsey

Just as Jesus was "laughed to scorn" (Mk. 5:40), so can loyal devotees of heaven's will be scorned by their contemporaries. Peer pressure is more than some folk can endure—even for the sake of Christ. In many metropolitan areas congregations that still stand for the bulwarks of righteousness walk a lonely road.

Ridicule from the world and mockery by some brethren can be the high price of living for the Lord. When popularity with people is a high premium with us, we ought to read again the clarion call of Gal. 1:10 "If I were yet pleasing men, I should not be the servant of Christ." When we think we are alone because we courageously live for Jesus, we need to remember the beauty of Jno. 16 and 2 Tim. 4: "I am not alone because the Father is with me . . . At my first defense no man stood by me. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me." A powerful gospel song exhort us: "Live for Jesus, O my brother, His disciple ever be. Render not to any other what alone the Lord's should be."

The cost of serving the Lord is well worth whatever the price may be. Yes it pays to serve Jesus. The most scintillating journey this earth affords involves walking hand in hand with the Master. It takes faith, firm resolve, commitment, dedication and perseverance. However, does not the One who died for us at Calvary promises sufficient reward? "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give unto thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). When we seriously consider the cost of not pursuing moral

purity we learn that Christianity with all attendant challenge, is still a much better bargain than any other alternative.

The high cost of immorality can best be seen in the broken and shattered debris of homes across the land. Impurity has contributed mightily to the sad statistics of the divorce courts. Marital infidelity has left many young children as the innocent victims of selfish, sensual and ungodly action by parents who learn too late the awesome wages and heart-break sin brings (Rom. 6:23). The momentary, fleeting nature of sexual gratification is one of Satan's best tools for ruining a family unit and disrupting the joy that children have in the peace and solidarity of a home built on mutual love and trust.

Another tremendously high price tag that attends immorality is one's reputation. When we had rather be popular than be respected, we lose sight of the value of purity. The high school girl that has loose morals may be "surrounded by the boys," but her reputation will be ruined for years to come. Some preachers have forever hurt their influence by escapades of compromise on morals. Reputation is one of the most valuable commodities. May we remember that when temptation comes. (Jas. 1:12-25).

We lose self-respect also when we detour from the road of godliness to the side-street of compromise. Ask David if the sad saga of Bathsheba was worth it. When real peace flees from our personal ties with the Lord, we can surely know who is out of step because God never wavers (Rom 3:4). Losing communion with Christ is not worth the fleeting thrill of compromise.

Ultimately, the major cost of iniquity is the missing of heaven. How could we barter our soul for a mess of pottage? Esau learned the sad dividends of pursuing earthly comfort and and pleasure by profane thinking and actions (Heb 12:16). And in the Day of Judgment millions will wish they had been wise

enough to choose early in the life (Eccle. 12:1) the diligent pursuit of godliness. In this life and the one to come, it pays to be morally pure (Mk. 10:30). In the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest Teacher who ever walked the shores of time proclaimed these marvelous and pulsating words, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

New Testament Christianity— Our Unchanging Plea

Thomas Rosenblum

As time passes and civilizations change some conclude that our religion must be revised and modernized also. This feeling arises from a failure to understand that true Christianity was given to us in a perfect form. It was designed by God, executed by Jesus and revealed by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Since perfection can only be marred by change, we do not need change in this religion. In fact, we cannot allow any change. As members of the church of Christ, we are set for the defense of the gospel. Our constant plea is for a restoration of New Testament Christianity to its original purity.

Let us define our words a little more clearly. "Christianity" is the religion that centers around Jesus as Lord and Saviour. "New Testament" Christianity limits Christianity to those things recorded in the New Testament. It did not exist, except in prophecy, in the Old Testament time. It cannot be found in the creeds of men that have been adopted since the first century A.D. True Christianity must be confined to the things taught in the pages of the New Testament. The curses of God rest upon anyone who would alter this divine plan. Read the following, Hebrews 1:1, 2; Galatians 1:6-9.

Is there some feature about our plea for Christianity that

is unique? Yes. So many who plead for a religion that accepts Christ rather than some other, will openly accept teachings and practices did not originate with Jesus and cannot be found in his New Testament. Isn't this being extremely inconsistent? Let's look at a few examples. Some proclaim salvation by faith only. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). James said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only". (James 2:24.)

Others accept sprinkling or pouring for baptism. In the New Testament, baptism was burial. (Romans 6:4.) The candidate was brought to the water and both the baptizer and the candidate went down into the water. (Acts 8:26-39). The word baptism as used in the New Testament never meant sprinkling or pouring, but only immersion.

Let me ask further, where is the New Testament reference that teaches salvation to the alien sinner by prayer? Mechanical instruments of music for Christian Worship? Remembering the sabbath Day (Saturday)?

Now you see why our plea is unique while most other groups of "Christendom" have made numerous changes in God's Plan, we are still insisting that all speak only as the oracles of God. (1 Peter 4:11.)

Our plea on the church of Christ is an unshanging plea and one that you will find unique in this age. Why not visit the Church of Christ in your community and see the difference. The more you search the Scriptures and compare religions the more you will understand our reason for this plea. May God bless all your efforts to know and to do His blessed will. May all things work together so heaven can be our eternal home.