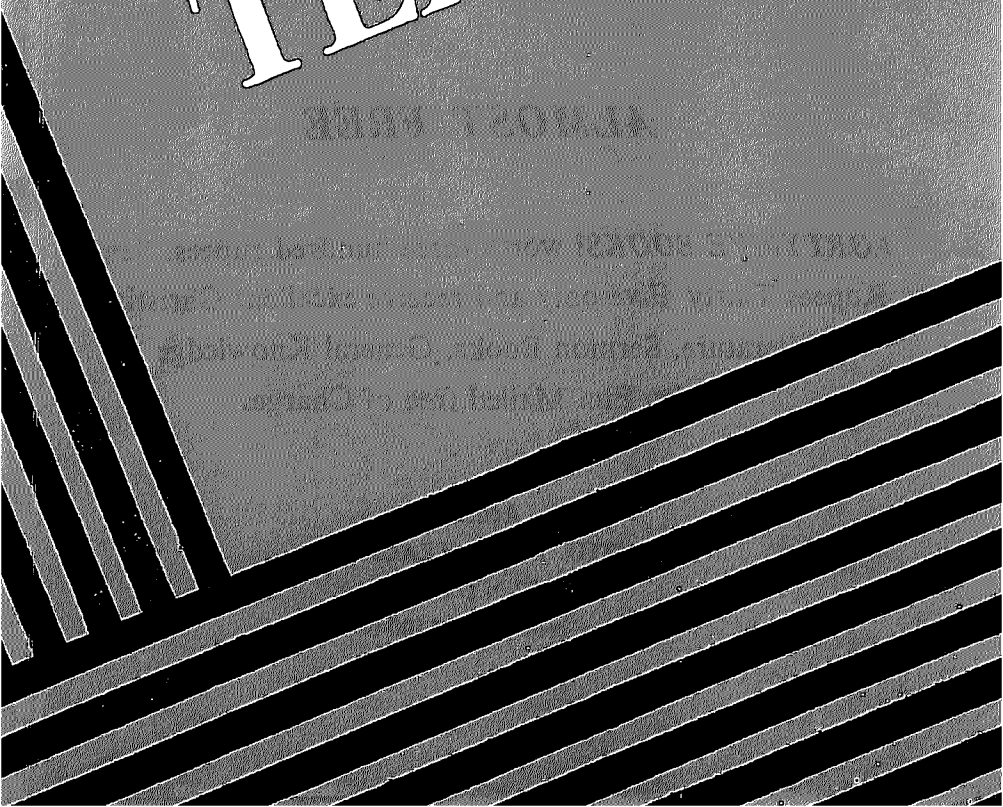


THE BIBLE TEACHER



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EDITORIAL



Scripture Quotations And References

You have probably noticed in my writings, and the writings of my brethren in general, that we often quote from the scriptures or give scripture references. Maybe you have wondered about this practice and perhaps you have even questioned the need for doing this. To clear up any question you might have about it, let me explain why we do it.

This question involves authority. You see, I am not an authority in religion. My opinions and ideas are not necessarily any better than anyone else's when it comes to religious matters. Peter tells us that even the scriptures are not to be of our own private interpretation. (2 Peter 1:20). The problem in the religious world is that there are many men who have set themselves up as authorities. They do not speak God's will, but their own thoughts, and they have concluded somewhere along the way that they are big enough to say what they want to say, and the very fact that they say it then that should be enough.

But this is not the case at all. Such people only deceive themselves and others. Man is only man. He is not a saviour—he cannot save himself and neither can he save others. How, then, can he speak for God unless he speaks the word of God? Jeremiah, the prophet of God, said in the long ago that it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. (Jeremiah 10:23).

The reason I quote from the scriptures or give you scripture references all along is that I am backing up my major points with God's word. In doing this, I am showing you that what I am saying is not actually my own word but this is what the Lord says in his word. I do not want you to take my word for it, but I ask you to believe what the Lord said about it. Even when I make a statement in my own words, by giving a scripture reference I am suggesting that the teaching itself comes from the word of God.

As I said, sometimes I quote the scripture itself to support my statement or teaching on some point. In so doing, you, the reader, can see for yourself what the Lord's word says on that subject. At other times, because of a lack of space or because there are too many references, I may simply list the applicable scriptures. Then as you read the article you can see that I am supporting what I say from God's word and, if you desire, you may turn and read for yourself what it says.

There are those who attempt to support their statements with quotations from historical sources, religious leaders of the past and of our own day, from disciplines, confessions of faith, manuals or creed books. They reason that as long as their teaching is in harmony with the creed book of their church, what they say is authoritative. Others depend on psychology or philosophical reasoning. But what do all of these things have to do with the word of God? Absolutely nothing, except for the fact that the Bible condemns teaching the doctrines and commandments of men. (Mark 7:7). On the contrary, there is but one true authority in religion, and that is Jesus Christ. Christ himself said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18). He was simply saying that all authority belongs to him. Paul declared that we should

do all in the name of the Lord. (Colossians 3:17). James wrote that we should continue in the perfect law of liberty, that we should be doers of the word. (James 1:25; James 1:22). Only then will the Lord be pleased with us.

Even Jesus, in his preaching and teaching, quoted often from the prophets of the Old Testament scriptures. For example, when Satan came to tempt him, with each temptation Jesus said that it was written, and then he would quote some Old Testament scripture to back up his statement. (Matthew 4:1-11). The Apostle Paul refers back to Exodus 32:6 and to Numbers 14:2 to show that God destroyed idolaters and murmurers of that time, and he concludes in 1 Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. In James 2 the inspired James refers his readers back to the stories of Abraham and Rahab to show how they proved their faith by their works, and then stated that likewise we must show our faith by our works. We could go on with many other examples, but these show that God's messengers of old backed up their statements with a "thus saith the Lord". Should we not do the same today?

When you hear a preacher and he never shows from God's word that that is what is taught in the scriptures, then you had better not believe what he says. Some even quote the scriptures but they misuse them. There are some rules that you should keep in mind when you hear someone saying that he is teaching the will of the Lord. First, God's word is the truth and it will not contradict itself. (John 17:17). Second, the Lord has but one way, which means that he is the saviour, the one and only way to heaven (John 14:6), he saves all alike (Mark 16:16), adds all the obedient to the same church (Acts 2:47), his people wear his name (1 Peter 4:16), all are to worship alike (John 4:24) and all are expected to remain faithful to him to go to heaven. (Revelation 2:10). Now when someone teaches otherwise, and things that are contradictory to what the scriptures teach, then he is teaching error. The Apostle John said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the

world." (1 John 4:1). Third, all of those who follow Christ believe, practice, and teach the same thing, and therefore there is unity among them. (John 17). Christ says that by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matthew 7:16). Therefore, in these, and in other ways, we may easily tell whether one is teaching the truth or not.

The Christian, and the one who would proclaim the Lord's will, must be completely committed to preaching the gospel to every creature under heaven (Mark 16:15), preaching the word (2 Timothy 4:1-4), not adding to the word of God or subtracting from it. (Revelation 22:18, 19). There is power in the gospel (Romans 1:16, 17), in the word of God (Hebrews 4:12), but it—and it alone—must be preached if man is to believe it, obey it, and be saved by it." (1 Peter 1:22, 23).

My friends, we know what we believe, and why we believe it, that it is based on God's word. We want you and all people to know this, and we want to show you from God's word itself what we believe and teach. We are not ashamed of the truth, and we are not afraid to be questioned about it. We are ready to study with one and all. If we can show you the truth from God's word, we would hope that you would want to accept it. If you can show us wherein we are in error on any point, then we will not only count you as a friend, but we will thank God that we have now had the truth called to our attention. If you and I, and all people everywhere, will have this attitude toward the scripture, surely all of us will be benefitted by it.



**associate
editorial**

The Distinctiveness Of The Church Of Christ

No. 5

The distinctive plea of the church of Christ is: that all believers in Christ must unite in one body and follow only the

New Testament of Christ in all matters pertaining to the faith, and wear the same common and scriptural name, Christian. Contrary to the denominational concept for giving thanks for so many different churches existing today on God's earth, the church of Christ with the inspired author of the Corinthians' letter condemn denominational Christianity which is the cause of division among the believers of Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

Most members of the church of Christ today have come out of some denominational churches, as the author himself has. In denominational churches they have seen division, in fact, the word denomination itself means division. Not only they have seen division in churches of denominational origin but they have also seen in them unscriptural teachings and practices. There is not a single denominational church which can successfully claim Christ to be its builder, its head. Because each one of them was started by some man and all of them have their own headquarters and some particular doctrine by which to identify them. They are all known by their different special names, follow their own creeds, worship in different ways and believe in different things. When these things are brought to the notice of sincere people who want to please no man but God alone then they can see the difference themselves. They can see that since God has given us only one book, the same Bible, then we should not be divided and yet claim to be following the Bible. Sincere and God fearing people have reasoned that since the word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11) then it cannot produce different kind of Christians and different kind of churches, because the seed always produces after its own kind. Christian and the churches of Christ were the product of the word preached by the apostles in the first century, A.D. (Acts 11:26; Romans 16:16). Why can't we all become the same today by following the apostles' doctrine? So they have, many of them, left various denominational churches of which they were members, and have accepted the Bible as their only guide in matters of faith. Just like the religious people of the days of the apostles were commanded to repent or turn away and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and when they did that then the Lord added them to his church, (Acts 2:38, 41, 47), likewise they have

repented and have been baptized to become the members of the church of Christ. Now they want to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), and want to abide in every thing in the doctrine of Christ only. (2 John 9-11). Their plea is that all people of every denominational church must do the same and come back to the Bible for a "thus saith the Lord" in religion.

We can all be one only in one and not in two or more different things. The Bible declares that God wants for all his children to be united in one body. (Ephesians 2:16). All have been baptized into one body. (1 Corinthians 12:13). When we are scripturally baptized then we put on Christ, become one in Christ. (Galatians 3:27). To be one in Christ, united in him as one body we have to have a common ground acceptable to all who believe in Christ and want to do his will. That common ground for unity cannot be provided by doctrines and commandments of men, or by creed books of men. No convention or council or conference of men can bring out such a perfect plan of unity where all denominational churches could be united. Some of them might form a union, but they cannot have unity and yet be different. For instance, all who believe in Christ cannot agree to be called by the name Methodist, or Baptist, or Lutheran. But we can all agree on the name Christian, because the Bible says that the disciples in the beginning were called Christians. (Acts 11:26). The same principle may be applied to any number of things where all men cannot agree on a certain point, but if we let the Bible speak and accept what it says then an agreement can be reached and the result will be the unity of all the believers of Christ. The inference is that we all cannot agree on what men says but we can all agree on what God says, if we are humble enough to accept God's authority. So the common ground of unity of all the followers of Christ is the word of God. When we all believe and do the same thing, the word of God, then we will not be divided in many different denominational churches, but we all will be the same, Christians and members of the Lord's church. This is what the Lord prayed for in John 17:20, 21.

She Shall Be Called Woman

Betty Burton Choate

Inferior ?

Are women inferior to men ? Are we only second-rate creatures ?

It would be surprising how many people would openly answer "yes" to those questions. Even women, sometimes, are so defensive that they are subconsciously answering, "Yes."

Why is it that often when a woman reaches a post of authority, she is hard and demanding in her dealings ? Is it because she has lived so long under the cloud of being counted inferior that she is going to the extreme to prove that she is not ? When a woman runs a shop, usually she is even more "business-like" than her husband would be because, sub-consciously, she is proving to him and to herself that she is not inferior.

But we don't have to compete with men, and become hard, uncompromising and unsympathetic, to prove our worth. Actually, God never intended women and men to be in competition with each other. He intended, rather, that they form teams, working together in harmony.

Yesterday I dropped a dish. It broke into two parts, with a long uneven edge on each piece. I picked them up and put them back together, the "ins" fitting the "outs" of the other, so that the plate looked whole again.

A man alone, or a woman alone, would be something like one half of my broken plate. God formed them so that the two parts would fit perfectly together to form a whole.

The bodies of men and women are different, Neither is "inferior" to the other, but both are made according to the individual roles God intended for them to fill. Naturally, a man is physically stronger than a woman—his role is to be the protector and provider for the family. And why can women not compete well in foot races with men ? Because a woman's pelvic

bones are shaped for bearing children, not for allowing her to run freely.

Women and men are not alike emotionally. A man must carry the responsibility for the family. Day after day he must go to his job and face the challenges of the world. So, generally, men are steady, enduring, not easily discouraged. A woman, on the other hand needs gentleness and tenderness in the care of her children, in the encouragement to her husband. She should provide in the home the haven of peace he needs. Yet, even though a woman may be weaker, physically, than a man, and even though she may be gentle, this does not mean that she is weak in spirit or in character. Often when a man is discouraged, it is his wife's strength, her faith in him and the future, that enables him to go on. In this way they are helpers for each other, as God intended.

Spiritually, too, a woman usually has great strength. She has more time to study and learn about God, more time to pray. She is with the children and can teach them. She can encourage her husband in his spiritual growth. So, in this area, the Christian woman can do much to shape her home life.

No, woman is not inferior to man in any way. Both are carefully fitted by God for each other and for the work He had given them to do. For this we should be thankful.

Once A Week Is Not Enough

W.L. Totty

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus, in contrasting the things of this life with eternal life, said, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? (Matt. 6:25-26). Then in verse

33 he said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Some members of the church today are so overwhelmingly concerned with the things of this life that they neglect the things that pertain to everlasting life. Instead of seeking first the kingdom of God, too many are seeking first the material things of this life. The kingdom of heaven is the least of their concern. Many members of the church of our Lord think that if they attend the worship on Sunday morning that is all that is needed for the week for their spiritual life. How many would think that one meal a day would suffice for the physical needs of the body? or that one day a week at work would be enough to provide for the material needs? Yet many who would complain if the worship services lasted more than an hour will be among the more than 300,000 persons who will attend the 500 mile race in Indianapolis and sit most of the day. That is not putting the righteousness of God first.

Jesus said God feeds the birds. That does not mean, however, that the birds can sit on a limb and God will bring the food to them. He has provided the food in the world for them, but they have to hunt and scratch for it. Likewise, if we will seek the things of the Lord first, he has promised to provide for our material needs, though we will have to work for them. We must not allow our seeking after material things to keep us away from the work of the Lord. We must trust in God that he will provide. David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psa. 37:25). Too many who think they do not have time for the church also think they do not have money enough to help support the church if they provide for the physical necessities of life for their families. The trouble with such persons is that they do not have faith enough in the Lord to try him. We should remember what God told the Israelites: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. 3:10). And to the Christians he emphatically said

those material needs will be provided. Do we have enough faith to do what he said ?

He has not, however, promised to provide us with everything we could desire. But Jesus said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 19:24). Jesus has not promised to provide a cottage on the lake as well as a home in town, to buy us boats for the lakes and to give us enough money to constantly be touring the globe on expensive vacations. Those things may be enjoyable; but if we get them at the expense of the church, it will cost us our eternal life with Christ in heaven.

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16); that is, saved from our past sins. But after baptism we must grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. In Hebrews we are told to lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us and *run* with patience the race that is set before us, ever looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. (Heb. 12:1-2). We will never win the race if we act like the rabbit in the old fable when he was racing with the tortoise. We cannot run fast for a little while, then loiter along the way. Some of us may not have as much ability to do as much in a short time as another person; but if we, like the tortoise, keep moving along, continually working to the best of our ability, we shall win the race in the end. We cannot carry every weight of sin in the world while trying to run the race, but must lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us and look to Jesus as our goal.

The Bible says, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk; and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness : for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. 5:12-14.) We cannot obey the gospel and then sit down as a baby and expect to go to heaven. We must exercise our senses by working and studying.

Our senses will be dull with once-a-week exercise. Study the Bible daily, talk about it with those with whom you come in contact daily, and meet with the church to study and worship at every appointed time.

Have A Good Day !

Any day that is to be a truly "good" day must be one that begins, continues and ends with Jesus, Without Christ one is without God, without salvation and without hope in this world and the world to come. (Ephesians 2:11-12).

A day spent without Jesus is a day in which no lasting good has been accomplished. Pleasures may have been enjoyed, desires satisfied and a "good time" had but how long will that last ?

Yes, a day spent without Jesus is just that—spent ! If you are trying to make it without Jesus you need to face up to some facts :

1. Jesus is the one through whom God speaks to this world. (Hebrews 1:1-3).
2. Jesus is the one whose word must be faced in judgment. (John 12:48).
3. Jesus is the one before whom all must stand and be judged one day. (II Timothy 4:1).
4. Each of us will be judged on the basis of how we have lived in relationship to the word which shall judge us. (II Corinthians 5:10).
5. To appear before Jesus in a lost state means you will be lost forever, separated from all the mercy of a loving God, world without end. (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Many people think they are living for Jesus and imagine they are walking with him each day when in reality, they are not. Israel, in ancient times thought they were walking with God but were actually going in the opposite direction ! Why ? Because

they were not walking in harmony with the covenant under which they were living. Although they imagined they were walking daily with God, God asked them a penetrating question, the answer to which was self-evident : "Can two walk together except they be agreed ?". (Amos 3:3).

Although they were his covenant people they were lost and doomed to captivity! Why? They were spending their days without God! Today as people live apart from Christ they are apart from God—lost and doomed to perish except they turn to Christ.

How may I turn to Christ that he might save me and that I might walk with him? Please read the following passages to see the importance of the doctrine (teachings) of Christ and the need for our faith, repentance, confession of our faith, and baptism into Christ for the remission of past sins and the necessity of living a life of faith ever afterwards : (II John 9-11; John 8:24; Acts 17:30-31; I Peter 3:21; Mark 16:16; I John 1:7).

Have a good day! Walk it with Jesus and be truly happy!

A Word To My Smoking Brethren

Ben F. Vick

Brethren (and this includes sisters), have you stopped to consider that every time you "light up" and take a "drag" on a cigar or cigarette you are sinning against God? that you are harming your own body? and that your practice is offensive and may cause someone to stumble? In this short article, I want to give some Bible reasons why one should not smoke and, if he smokes, why he ought to quit immediately.

Medical science has proven that smoking causes cancer. *Collier's Encyclopedia* says, "Smoking is a major cause of lung cancer among men and women and the major cause of lung cancer among men Ninety per cent of all primary lung cancer cases occur in people who smoke cigarettes." It has also been shown that those who smoke are cutting their lives short

of the normal expectancy. Dr. Raymond Pearl of the Johns Hopkins University discovered that the death rate for smokers as compared to nonsmokers is 61% higher in smokers. Charles Cameron, M. D., took Dr. Pearl's figures and concluded "the heavy smoker pays with 3.46 minutes of life for each cigarette he smokes. The pack a day smoker pays with 11.5 hours for each pack he smokes." A 25-year-old smoker who inhales 1-9 cigarettes a day cuts off 4.5 years of his life; if he smokes 40 or more a day, he cuts off 8.5 years of his life. A smoker who is 55 years of age and smokes 1-9 cigarettes a day loses 3.5 years of normal life expectancy; if he smokes 40 or more a day, he cuts off 5.2 years of his life.

What does the Bible say about this? "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Cor. 6:19-20). Think of the years of service that could be rendered to God but which are literally going up in smoke!

Christians should not smoke because of their influence upon others. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:13-16). What kind of influence are you having on your children? on your grandchildren? Do you want them to take up your nasty habit of smoking? (Matt. 18:6). What would you think of your Bible teacher if he or she smoked? What if the elders smoked? Would you want a preacher of the gospel to sit down and have a smoke with you? If Jesus were here today, would he smoke as you do?

Paul wrote, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is

required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (I Cor. 4:1-2). Not only are we to be good stewards of our lives and health, but of our money. Millions of rupees could be invested in good causes each year instead of being wasted on the worthless habit of smoking. Years ago, some brethren said to brother J. D. Tant, "We would love to have a meeting, but just aren't able." He made them this proposition: "Brethren, every time you buy a pack of tobacco to smoke or a plug to chew, put the same amount of money in the treasury and save it for the meeting next year. I will take whatever you save." After the brethren figured it up, they told brother Tant they could not do that with a clear conscience because, "No preacher is worth that kind of money."

Many who smoke are veritable slaves to the filthy weed. Some cannot go through Bible class and worship without slipping outside to puff on a weed and that before the whole world on the porch or parking lot of the church building! Shame Shame! Others wait till the last minute before coming into the building or hurry out after services lest they collapse of a nicotine fit. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8:34). "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16). If my smoking brethren were as committed to the Lord as they are to cigarettes, the Lord's cause would be prospering much more both spiritually and numerically.

Recently, a couple, who was looking for a congregation to work and worship with, visited our services. As they drove into the parking lot, they noticed a number of men smoking around the cars and near the porch. They were appalled. It could very well be a deciding factor in causing them to go elsewhere. I pointed out to them that I preached against smoking from time to time and that I could not force people to quit smoking. As much as I might want to, I could not go out and say, "You men, put those cigarettes out and behave like Christians." It may also have been the case that some of the smokers were not even members of the church; but if by any slight chance some were, why not leave your cigarettes at home on the Lord's day. Better

still, leave them alone every day and let those who are not interested in the Lord and his cause waste their money and life on them.

The "golden rule" is another reason for putting out the cigarettes for good. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Lk. 6:31). Having to breathe cigarette or cigar smoke is offensive to most nonsmokers and many times smokers are too rude and uncouth to refrain. There have also been some studies which have linked cancer even to the non-smoker who has had to endure the smoke of others. It is also the case that one who smokes can be described in similar fashion to Lazarus who had been dead four days, of whom it was said "he stinketh." (John. 11:39). Those who smoke are unable to detect this odor on themselves because their sense has been dulled.

Works Of The Flesh

Glenn Colley

There, to my knowledge, is no sin that someone, somewhere doesn't commit and yet contend is right. Because of that, sometimes the difference between right and wrong gets cloudy. We may fall into the confusion of seeing no action as black or white, but only grey. Perhaps this will help. The text is Galatians 5:19-21. Since some of these words are seldom used in our 1985 vocabulary, defining them may be helpful.

Works Of The Flesh

1. Adultery—voluntary sexual impurity; especially in connection with unfaithfulness to a marriage bond.
2. Fornication—voluntary sexual impurity; can be but is not necessarily connected with a marriage partner.
3. Uncleaness—unnatural practice; self-abuse, bestiality, homosexuality, etc.

4. Lasciviousness—that which is lewd; lustful; excites sensual emotions. (ex. immodest dress, modern dancing).
5. Idolatry—paying honour, that rightfully belongs to God, to someone or something else.
6. Witchcraft—sorcery; the use of magical enchantment, supposed to be assisted by evil spirits.
7. Hatred—enmities; ill will; the desire that another person will have bad fortune.
8. Variance—acts of contention to which hatred leads.
9. Emulations—jealousies; unfounded suspicions aroused in the heart over the excellences of others; unholy desires and strife to excel another.
10. Wrath—wrongs in word or deed out of a “lost temper”; bursts of anger.
11. Strife—that which promotes contentions; especially between brethren.
12. Seditions—encouragement to rebel against God’s primary authority, or the authority He has delegated.
13. Heresies—a belief opposed to the truth of the Bible.
14. Envyings—resentment excited by the sight of another’s success or superiority.
15. Murders—the purposeful taking of another’s life.
16. Drunkenness—the state in which one’s senses have been effected by the drink. (one drink therefore makes me “one drink drunk”).
17. Revellings—excessive and boisterous festivities; carousals; taking part or enjoying something without proper restraint.

Should we be concerned with these things? Note the rest of the verse: “They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Perhaps you could use this as a check list to make certain your life is free of the "works of the flesh". Should you find that one or more of these are part of your conduct, please take the proper steps to repent and correct the sin.

It is a Heaven or Hell question.

What Think Ye Of Christ ?

Tim Fuqua

What we think and how we think are most important. Solomon wrote, "For as the thinketh in his heart, so is he . . ." (Prov. 23:7). We can notice by the actions of others what they think of Christ.

Many show what they think of Christ through their unbelief. Isaiah prophesied of those who would be blinded and hardened from believing in Jesus. In John 12:34-41, we read of those Jews who could not get the idea of an earthly kingdom out of their minds. They would not believe in Christ, because they did not understand how Christ could die, but His law would abide forever. Many today say that they can not believe because we can not really know that we have the truth. But Christ said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). But what is truth? Christ said, "Sanctify them through thy truth thy word is truth." (John 17:17).

Many show what they think of Christ from fear of others. In John 12:42-50, many would not confess Christ for fear of excommunication. But Christ says, "... Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father . . ." (Matt. 10:33). Some today will not believe in Christ because of family ties. Read what Christ says about that in Matthew 10:34-38.

Many show what they think of Christ by the way they evaluate material possessions. Notice the account of the rich young man as recorded in Matthew 19:16-22. Many morally good people will be lost because they think more of worldly goods than they do of Christ. (Matt. 6:19-21).

However, isn't it great that many accept Christ because He is the Son of God? Peter accepted the truth as he was willing to confess Christ before men. (Matt. 16:13-18). Although Peter was not perfect, he was willing to die for the cause of Christ. This type of people shows what they think of Christ by putting their faith in action.

Are you willing to accept the inspired Word of God and obey its teachings? (John 14:15). Are you willing to put Christ first, others second, and yourself last? (Matt. 6:33). Are you willing to put the cause of Christ above worldly possessions? (Col. 3:2). Are you willing to confess him as the Son of God by the life that you live? (Matt. 10:32). What think ye of Christ?

Public Enemy Number 1

Winfrey Hennessee

Satan quite often takes the form of various despicable people in order to carry on his work. One of his favorite workshops is with the trouble maker in the church. This enables him to try his hand at undermining any good undertaking which might come along.

Sometimes he appears in the form of a gossip carrier which takes very little changing in order to be like this malicious bearer of falsehoods.

Those who gossip wound without mercy anyone they choose to turn their venom upon. "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison". (James 3:8). These people soon become 'marked' as such and most Christians will learn to avoid them.

Elders who are vigilant will keep close watch on the trouble maker; and when he learns that he is being watched, he will become dormant, only coming to life now and then. One of the best ways to silence a trouble maker is to find out who his "silent partner" is and threaten to expose him. They thrive on agitation.

The gossip bearer and the trouble maker never miss an opportunity to strike a blow for Satan, but they can be controlled. But on the other hand, the thing which cannot be controlled is indifference in the church. When widows and orphans are cold and hungry and no one seems to care, indifference is at work. When only five or ten people attend a personal work meeting, we again have indifference. When fewer than half the Sunday morning crowd returns for evening service, call it indifference once again.

If any good could be said of this condition, it might (?) be that anyone with the symptoms of this disease would be completely unprejudiced; but so is a sleeping monkey.

Yes, we know we'll always have obstacles to overcome. Satan will see to that. But when we begin falling back instead of forging ahead, we can't blame it all on the trouble maker, although we know he tried. We can't blame it all on the gossip bearer although much hurt has been caused. Let us place the blame where it rightly belongs: **INDIFFERENCE IS PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1!**

The Marriage Issue

W. Edwin Kearley

Marriage and divorce were a problem in the Roman Empire. Therefore, it was a problem in the church. It affects the church today. Problems do not go away by being ignored. Problems ignored become worse, rather than better. Since we are going to be judged by the word of God (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12-15) we need to have a clear understanding of God's will for our lives.

The following is in response to a request from an eldership to state what I believe the Bible teaches on this issue.

FALSE DOCTRINE: Some teach that those who are not Christians are not responsible to the law of God. Therefore,

whatever marriage relationship a couple may be in at the time, of conversion is all right.

ANSWER : If this doctrine were true, it would be better for one not to be a Christian. However, Paul said, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". (Romans 3:23). Therefore, Gods laws, including his laws of marriage, apply to all mankind.

FALSE DOCTRINE : It is taught by some, that where neither has committed adultery when a separation takes place, and either (or both) remarry another party (or parties), the act of remarriage is sinful, but the marriage itself is not sinful.

ANSWER : In Jesus' answer to the Pharisees he said, "And I say unto you. Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, COMMITTETH adultery; and who so marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery". (Matthew 19:9). The word COMMITTETH is not a one-time action. Not only is the act of marriage in such case wrong, but remaining in such a sexual relationship continues to be adultery. If one can commit adultery and the marriage be scriptural, this would be doing evil that good might come from it. Such action is condemned. Paul said that it was slander to report "as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just". (Romans 3:8). Therefore, committing adultery is not a one-time act. The act of adultery continues as long as the sinful relationship exists.

Sometimes circumstances make it impossible for a married couple to remain together. Paul addressed this situation : "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord; let not the wife depart from her husband : but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife". (I Corinthians 7:10-11).

Paul is saying that the ideal is for married people to live together in their married relationship. But should this be impossible, they must refrain from any other sexual relationship, or else be reconciled to live as husband and wife.

Unity In Christ

Flavil H. Nichols

A distinctive plea of churches of Christ is for the unity of all believers (John 17:20-21), in the one body of Christ (Ephesians 4:4), over which Christ himself is head (Ephesians 5:23), in which the Holy Spirit dwells (I Corinthians 3:16), and to which all the saved are added by the Lord (Acts 2:47). It has always been "good and pleasant" for "brethren to dwell together in unity". (Psalm 133:1). Among the seven things which God abominated even in the Old Testament, Solomon listed "he that soweth discord among brethren". (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Saints of God are admonished "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". (I Corinthians 1:10). Christians are directed to cultivate hearts of compassion (A.S.V.), "kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful". (Colossians 3:12-15).

Some attitudes of heart are necessary prerequisites for unity. Before the Holy Spirit guided Paul to list the seven-plank 'platform' for unity (Ephesians 4:4-6), he laid out this background: "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; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". (Ephesians 4:1-3). Out of this atmosphere agreement and harmony can easily grow.

It is a sin to fragment the body of Christ. Hear the apostle Paul: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause

divisions and offenses 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 works and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple". (Romans 16:17-18). Such a person is to be disciplined by the church, for "A man that is an heretic (A.S.V. : "A factious man"), reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself". (Titus 3:10-11). Every child of God on earth has a divinely-imposed responsibility to be a peace-maker (Matthew 5:9). However, each of us is equally obligated to see that the purity of the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ, is preserved.

In his dying on the cross, our blessed Lord intended to promote unity. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby". (Ephesians 2:14-16). Through one of the Minor Prophets, God promised: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent". (Zephaniah 3:9). That "pure language" is the gospel of Jesus Christ under which all—Jews and Gentiles—may call upon the name of the Lord. On Pentecost Day the apostle Peter preached that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved". (Acts 2:21). He also announced that "the promise is unto you (Jews) and to your children (they would be Jews also), and to all them that are afar off (and this takes in us Gentiles), even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (verse 39). It should be clearly evident, therefore, that now, under the gospel of Christ, all may call upon the name of the Lord "with one consent"—and that is the unity for which we plead. It must be based upon our mutual acceptance of the word of God as our final appeal in all matters of religion.

The 'pioneer' restoration leaders coined a phrase which very aptly expresses our plea for unity in religion which we believe

pleases God : "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity (or, love)." In this spirit, every Christian should "follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another". (Romans 14:19).

This will promote the unity in Christ for which Christ died. (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Binding The Socratic Method

Tim Nichols

There was a time when gospel preachers and other members of the Lord's church were known to be virtual "experts" on the Bible. Some who are not members of churches of Christ still maintain this perception. A construction worker from another part of the country recently reported to this writer that he and many of his neighbors regularly take their Bible questions to an elderly woman who is a member of the church of Christ. He enthusiastically declared, "She not only knows what the Bible says, she knows where to find it!" He did not seem to perceive her to be an arrogant person. Rather, he pointed out that she is a quiet, humble individual who has consistently devoted herself to studying the Bible. A great many present examples could be given of men and women who know the Bible and are willing to present to others what they have come to know.

Within certain ethical and biblical limits, how one communicates Bible truths must be regarded as a matter of judgment. In fact, it may be best that we have a variety of people expressing a single message in a variety of ways. In this article we will attempt to focus our attention on a specific method that seems to have gained wide acceptance among us.

In recent years, a growing number in our society are being influenced by a philosophy of communication in which nothing is affirmed or denied absolutely. The communicator may or may

not believe certain truths to be absolute, but he will not express them as such. It is said that Socrates taught in this way as he walked with his disciples. Instead of affirming truth he asked probing questions and presented possibilities. He said, "I am reputed the wisest of men because I know that I know nothing."

Benjamin Franklin (the statesman) attributed much of his success to the use of this method. In his autobiography, Franklin wrote: "I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbade myself the use of every word of expression in the language that imported a fixe'd opinion, such as "certainly," "undoubtedly," etc., and I adopted, instead of them "I conceive," "I apprehend," or "I imagine" a thing to be so or so; or "it so appears to me at present." . . . I soon found the advantage of this change in my manner; the conversations I engaged in went on more pleasantly . . ."

In recent years, Dale Carnegie has recommended this approach. Millions of people have read his books. No doubt, many who read this article have been influenced and aided by them.

The purpose of this article is not to condemn the use of the Socratic method in every instance. Diplomats and statesmen can work with greater latitude when they phrase their subjective judgments in appropriate language. Those involved in counselling often achieve results with those they are trying to help when they present the possibility that certain applications of psychological theories may be helpful to them. In a limited sense perhaps teachers of biblical truth are justified in presenting eternal truths as tentative truths while they are in the process of presenting additional evidence or while helping others reason through additional scriptures. Ultimately, however, one must not leave the impression that Bible truths are opinions, nor that matters of faith are matters of judgment. (Revelation 22:18,19). Certainly we need to realize that we do not know everything. But lest we allow the pendulum to swing too far, let us remember that we can and ought to know many things. It is not an arrogant thing to claim to know what God has revealed. To say that we

do not know to be true what God has revealed, is to be without faith. (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6).

Some have adopted the Socratic method for teaching the Bible, to the exclusion of other teaching methods. Of course we all are aware that some will not affirm anything to be absolutely true because of a firm conviction that absolute truth does not exist! Others fail to make clear statements because they feel that such statements do not effectively communicate.

In some circles, brethren are passing judgment upon brethren for failing to use the Socratic method. Today, a gospel preacher can stand up and expound upon a given verse of scripture and attempt to explain the responsibilities it imparts to the Christian. Some would declare the attempt to be inappropriate, not because it failed to give the sense of what the Bible teaches, but because the speaker openly claimed to know what the Bible teaches. Recently a man was heard to say that a certain gospel preacher was guilty of the "sin of having a bad attitude." When asked to explain the "bad attitude" in terms of some objective, biblically-defined sin, he replied, "It's sin to claim that you *know* what the Bible teaches." This is admittedly an extreme case. Few would express it in such clear terms. But the basic concept seems to be quite widespread.

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men". (I Corinthians 1:21-25).

Can One Be Saved In A Denominational Church ?

W. A. Holley

No, not according to the Holy Bible ! Why ? Because denominationalism, in any shape or form or color, is contrary to the sacred Scriptures ! Do you (the reader) know of a single passage in the Old Testament or the New Testament which endorses denominational churches ? Where is the book, chapter, and verse, please ?

The apostle Peter (I Peter 4:11) demands Bible terms to express God's truth. The teaching of the Scripture is : Call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. This noble concept forever eliminates denominational jargon, because no Bible writer or speaker ever used such sectarian terminology. Today, denominational speech is the language of Ashdod (Nehemiah 13:23-24).

We raise an honest and sincere question : To what denominational church did Paul or Peter, James or Jude, Matthew or Mark, Luke or John . . . or any other writer from Genesis to Revelation, belong ? If these men belonged to some denominational church, isn't it strange that they never said any thing about it ? Denominational preachers, today, are very proud, often boasting of their denominational heritage; but inspired writers of the Bible never did ! In apostolic times, there were those who "belonged to Christ" (Mark 9:41) ! They became Christ's possession *after* they had been baptized into him (Galatians 3:26-29). Thus, the Galatian brethren (Galatians 1:1-2), were members of the Lord's church approximately 1500 years before protestant denominationalism was ever heard of.

John the Baptist established no church. His mission was to herald the coming of Christ, and to "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight". (Luke 3:4-6). John was dead and in his grave before Jesus Christ ever said, "Upon this rock I will build my church . . ." (Matthew 14:1-12; 16:18-19). John

the Baptist prepared people by preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Not one was prepared by him to become a member of denominational churches !

What was John's name ? It was not "Baptist" . . .

Could You Spare Five Minutes ?

John Waddey

Are you a Christian in the same sense and in the same way as were Peter, James and the other disciples in the first church in ancient Jerusalem ? If you are not, or if you are not sure, will you take just five minutes to examine the New Testament teaching on how to become a true follower of Jesus.

RECOGNIZE that all men are sinners and therefore, lost, apart, from Christ. (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Recognize further the fact that just being *religious* is not sufficient. Jesus taught that one must do the will of the heavenly Father to be acceptable. (Matthew 7:21).

UNDERSTAND that apart from the Bible you can have no dependable knowledge of how to be saved and how to live acceptably to God. Faith cometh by hearing the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17).

BELIEVE with all your heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16; John 8:24). Your faith must be more than mere assent; it must be an obedient faith that gladly does God's will (Galatians 5:6). Your faith must be strong enough to *confess* before men your acceptance of Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10).

RESOLVE in your heart to turn away from all your sins in genuine *repentance*. Without repentance you will surely perish. (Luke 13:3). True repentance is "unto salvation", (II Corinthians 7:10).

SUBMIT yourself to the Lord's command to be *baptized* for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 10:48). The baptism authorized by Christ is a burial or immersion in water. (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 10:47).

When you thus take up your cross to follow Jesus, it must be a lifetime commitment. (Matthew 16:24). Only those who are faithful unto death will receive the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10).

This simple plan of salvation is as old as the New Testament, and as reliable as the Holy Spirit of God who inspired its writing. Your acceptance and submission thereto will guarantee the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 22:16); your membership in the Lord's true church (Acts 2:38, 41,47); and thus your place among the redeemed as a child of God. (Galatians 3:26-27).

As a fellow mortal soon to meet the Lord in judgment, I urge you to take your stand with Christ today on the infallible Word of God, to be a Christian and only a Christian. Could such a commitment possibly be wrong?

Why Some Feel No Guilt

John Stacy

Some people feel no guilt because their conscience is seared over. (I Tim. 4:2). Others are guiltless because, they cannot cease from sinning. (II Pet. 2:14). Many feel no guilt because they call good evil and evil good. (Isa. 5:20). Others are numbed spiritually because they love the wages of unrighteousness. (II Pet. 2:15). Surely, the failure to see the ugliness of sin, hardens the heart of man. (Prov. 14:12). If you can still feel guilty, rejoice! This means that it is not too late to obey the gospel and become a Christian! (Acts 2:38).

YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE !

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