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EDITORIAL



Hereafter

Death is common to all. Man is born to die. No one is here to live for ever. When Adam sinned in the beginning death spread to all men. (Romans 5:12). But what happens after one dies? Is death the end of man? Or does he live even after death? If so, where? There are three different beliefs on this subject.

Firstly, some believe man is annihilated after death, that is, when one dies then that is the end of life. Whoever dies ceases to exist, goes out of existence, and is completely destroyed, according to those who believe in the doctrine of annihilation. If this is true, then there is no hope for man beyond this world. And if this is true, then there will be no resurrection, no judgment, no reward and condemnation, and no hell and no heaven. Those who believe in annihilation say that when a man dies then he is completely destroyed just as in the case of an animal.

Secondly, there are those who believe in purgatory. Purgatory is described as being "the state or abode of temporary punishment for the souls, who having died in the state of grace, are not entirely free from venial sins or have not yet fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions". Purgatory is one

of the most peculiar doctrines of the Catholic church, according to which one must after death enter this state to be purified in fire of purgatory until all evil is burned out. People, relatives of the dead ones are encouraged to offer sacrifices of different kinds and Masses to help their dead loved ones to get out of the purgatory fire sooner.

Thirdly, many believe that soon after one dies, he or she is reborn in one form or another, according to the works of previous life, and this would continue, that is, the same individual would die again and again, and would be reborn after each death, thousands and millions of times until he has lived a perfect, sinless life on earth, and if this is achieved in ones' life at whatever time on point then that will be the extinction of the individuality and absorption of the same into the supreme being.

But, what does the Bible teach? According to the Bible, man and woman were created by God after His own image and after His own likeness, in the beginning. (Genesis 1:27). God, the Bible says, is Spirit. (John 4:24). Man, therefore; is a spiritual being. (Matthew 4:4). He is not a part of God, but was created by God after God's image and likeness. Animals were not created in this way, they were created just as other things of the universe were created. (Genesis 1:20-25). At death man's body returns to dust or earth from which it was created (Genesis 2:7; 3:19), and his spirit returns to God or to the place God has appointed for the souls of the dead. (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This place is identified in the Bible as "Hades". (Luke 16:23; Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:31). Hades consists of two parts or compartments, namely, paradise and tartarus. To the penitent thief on the cross Christ had promised that he would go with Him in Paradise that same day. (Luke 23:43), Yet, Peter, on the day of Pentecost said to his hearers that Christ's soul was not left in Hades. (Acts 2:31). So we understand that Paradise is in Hades. Tartarus is a place of torment, where the Bible says God has kept angels, who sinned, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). From the story of the rich man and

Lazarus we learn that after their death both of them were in Hades, however, they were in different places, the rich man was in Tartarus in Hades and Lazarus was in Paradise in Hades. (Luke 16:19-31). The same is true about all others who have died from the beginning, from Adam to this day, and will be the same until Christ's return on the day of judgment. Like the rich man all wicked and unrighteous, who have not lived their lives according to the will of God go to Tartarus in Hades, and all the righteous, like Lazarus, who have accepted and followed the will of God in their lives, go to Paradise in Hades, the abode of the departed spirits. Just as the rich man and Lazarus were conscious and alive in Hades, and are still there in the same state, so are all others who are there.

Death, the Bible says, is the departure of the soul from the body. (James 2:26; 2 Timothy 4:6). Some depart to go to Paradise while others depart to go to Tartarus. One day when Christ will return as the judge of the living and the dead (2 Timothy 4:1), all bodies, by His power, will be made alive, some to the resurrection of life and others to the resurrection of condemnation. (John 5:28,29). Souls do not need resurrection, it is the body that need resurrection. At the coming of Christ for judgment, the Bible says, Hades will give up all souls (Revelation 20:13), souls then will be reunited with their resurrected immortal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:52,53), whether they be righteous or unrighteous, and thus all will be judged. (Matthew 25:31,32). Then the righteous will hear the Lord say, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34). But the unrighteous and lost will be told to "Depart from me, you cursed into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41). "And these", Christ said, "will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:46). Both heaven and hell will be eternal or everlasting, and those who will go there will live there for ever and ever. The Bible does not teach about annihilation, or purgatory, or rebirth, but says, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27).

Truths Often Overlooked By The Majority

J. C. Choate

Although the charismatics have enjoyed popularity throughout much of the world in recent years, it is sad when you realize that while these people claim to be miraculously guided by the Holy Spirit, yet they are divided, are members of churches that we do not read about in the Bible, wear man-made names, and teach contradictory things. I am not talking about how they differ from others, but how they differ among themselves. Surely if they had the Holy Spirit to guide them, as they claim, they would not be so divided. As a matter of fact, either they are wrong or the Holy Spirit himself is divided, but I can assure you that the Holy Spirit is not divided. I can also assure you on the basis of the charismatics themselves, and what they teach and practice that they are neither guided by the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from the word, or according to the scripture, which is the word of the Spirit.

While these people claim that Holy Spirit baptism was for all people, although they would say that not all Christians have it because of their lack of faith, they have overlooked and bypassed any number of scriptures. For instance, Christ promised to send the Comforter or Holy Spirit, to the Apostles only. In John 14:26, Christ said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Now if you will read through John 14-16 you will observe that he was speaking to the Apostles and therefore promising to send the Comforter to them. To further identify the Apostles as being the ones to whom the Spirit would be given, Christ said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:26, 27). Now how more direct

would Christ have to be than that? Let me ask you this question: Were you with the Lord physically from the beginning? If not how do you think you could qualify to receive the Comforter?

Next, after the Lord's death, burial and resurrection, and just before he returned to the Father in heaven, he appeared to the Apostles and showed them the nail scars in his hands and feet, but let us read, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:45-49). Who would deny that the Lord was speaking here to the Apostles? That's the point, he was speaking to them, and not to the disciples in general.

Luke wrote this account in Luke 1:1-8, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which; saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Surely we can see in the foregoing that we have the Apostles being discussed, and then the Lord promising to send the power of the Holy Ghost to them. Reading on through Acts 1 we have the Apostles, along with other disciples, meeting for the purpose of choosing someone to take the place of Judas. The qualifications were on the basis that the one chosen would be one that had been with the Apostles all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." (Acts 1:22). Matthias was chosen and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (Acts 1:26). The only reason for the other disciples being there was because some of them had been with the Apostles from the beginning and one of them would be chosen to be numbered with them, but all of the emphasis all the way through is on the Apostles.

Going on to Acts 2, the emphasis is still on the Apostles. As a matter of fact, in the original manuscript there were no chapter and verse division. Therefore when the Apostles are being discussed in the last part of Acts 1, then the record would just simply read on to tell what happened to these same men. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." (Acts 2:1-4). Now who is under consideration here? The Apostles. Who then received and were filled with the Holy Ghost? The Apostles. But what about the disciples of Acts 1? They are not even under consideration. Besides the Lord did not promise the Comforter to them, and so why should they receive it now?

Continuing through Acts 2, all of the emphasis is on the Apostles. It was Peter, standing up with the eleven, Apostles, that reminded the audience gathered there that what was happening was according to what had been spoken by the prophet Joel, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh..." (Acts 2:17). But wait

just a minute. Here it says that God said that he would pour out his Spirit on all flesh. He did just like Christ died for all men. The Apostles were given the baptism of the Holy Spirit, chosen disciples received the laying on of hands measure of the Holy Spirit by the Apostles (Acts 6), and all others received the gift of the Holy Spirit, the non-miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38). Furthermore, all of the world has been blessed with the coming of the Holy Spirit because of the word that he has given to the world and of the invitation to obey the Lord and therefore to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21; Revelation 21:8).

But going on through Acts 2, we have Apostles preaching to those gathered there in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and then in Acts 2:42 those who obeyed the Lord continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and then we read, "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." (Acts 2:43). Now who are the ones that are constantly being discussed, the ones who received the power of the Holy Spirit, the ones who spoke in other language, the ones who preached the gospel, the ones who did wonders and signs? That was the apostles, wasn't it? What about the one hundred and twenty disciples mentioned in Acts 1:15? Not one word is said about them? Obviously they did not receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then in Acts 6 we have the Apostles needing some help with the work, and so they suggested that the disciples choose from among themselves seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and then they were set before the Apostles in order that the Apostles might pray for them and lay their hands on them. What happened then? They received the power of the Holy Ghost. But notice even before this they were men full of the Holy Ghost, that is, they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, but they were unable to perform any miracles or to speak in other languages. Once the Apostles laid their hands on them, they were able to do these things.

So my friends, the fact is, the Lord never intended that all of his followers have the power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles

received it, and they were given the authority to lay their hands on selected disciples that they too might have the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore help with the confirming of the word and the spreading of the gospel and helping the church to grow up. All of this was until the New Testament could be given to man in written form. Once that was done the miraculous age ended. Now faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), not by seeing signs and wonders.

It is not that God and his people could not perform miracles today, if that was God's will, but it is not his will that such be done today. God has already proven himself and the word has already been confirmed. We would be wise then to believe, obey it, and be united in the preaching the word that the Spirit has given.

My friends, be not deceived by false teachers who claim to have the power to do miracles. Their spirit is not of the Lord. John says that we should try and test these preachers and teachers by the word of God to see if they are of God or not. (1 John 4:1). Our power today is in the truth, gospel, and the word. God put it there and there it will remain.

Christ in the Old Testament

R.W. Gray

A portion of Jesus' expostulation with unbelieving Jews contains a forthright declaration of His place in their revered scriptures: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39 KJV).

In context our Lord affirmed that Old Testament writers combined their testimony with His works, with the message of the baptizer, and with the audible voice of His Father to guarantee His claim to Sonship. These revelations agree that Christ is the source of all spiritual life. (John 5:1-40).

Jesus affirmed that He came not to destroy but to fulfill both the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17). He later affirmed that all things written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning the anointed one had been fulfilled in Him (Luke 24:44).

The primary focus of the Gospel narratives is that Jesus of Nazareth was the culmination of the 300 plus prophecies of the coming Messiah. The epistles and the Revelation through John likewise are filled with references to Christ as He was delineated in the Old Testament. The writer of Hebrews, for example, returns again and again to the types, shadows and figures of the law that outlined the reality which they foreshadowed (Hebrews 10:1-10).

Although efforts to unfold Old Testament types and descriptions of the Messiah and His kingdom lend themselves easily to doubtful speculation, the Spirit's identification of their fulfillment removes all doubt. The inspired historian, summarizing Phillip's lesson to the Ethiopian, states simply that he began with Isaiah 53 and preached Jesus (Acts 8:27-35).

No more graphic description of the sufferings of our Lord are to be found than that provided by Isaiah more than 700 years before His birth in Bethlehem. Polycarp and Lysian called Isaiah 53 "the golden passion of the Old Testament evangelist." Delitzsch said of it, "it is the center of this wonderful book of consolation, and is the most central, the deepest, and the loftiest that the Old Testament prophecy, outstripping itself, ever achieved." Urwick remarks, "Here we seem to enter the holy of holies of the Old Testament prophecy—that sacred chamber wherein are pictured and foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow" (*The Pulpit Commentary*, p. 294).

The Ethiopian's question, "Of whom speaketh this prophet this?" (Acts 8:34), doubtless was raised by many through the centuries. The evangelist, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, provided the answer that had not been revealed to the sons of men in other ages (Ephesians 3:5). It is true, of course, that

unbelievers have sought to make Isaiah's words apply to some other, particularly some would-be hero of the Prophet's own time, but there was in truth only one answer that could be provided, and that was the answer given by Philip to the eunuch.

Divorce Christ from this magnificent chapter and the identity of the suffering servant must forever remain a mystery. But with the Spirit's identification of Jesus as the "servant Lord," one can appreciate the eloquence that sets forth the truth of vicarious atonement. In our stead He was led as a sheep to slaughter. For our redemption He was bruised, and with His stripes we are healed.

Someone has observed that the Old Testament is so full of the atoning blood of Christ that the pricking of any word would cause it to bleed. When we consider that the blood offered by the patriarchs and that shed upon Zion's hill throughout the Mosaic age were but a type of the blood that would flow from Immanuel's veins for the sins of the world, the underlying truth of the hyperbole stands out. Isaiah verifies that Christ and His shed blood make up the central theme of the Old Testament.

Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 was to Israel's striving with Moses at Rephidim regarding their water supply and the subsequent smiting of a rock by Moses through whom God provided their need (Exodus 17:1-6).

Those to whom Paul referred had been redeemed from slavery and were en route to the land of promise. Concerning this incident the late F.L. Paisley observed,

The Father, in His wisdom often turns the wrath of men to His own praise, glory, and honour; bringing peace out of strife, good out of evil, wisdom out of ignorance, and life out of death. Such was the case when the rock was smitten, also at the smitting of that Rock on Calvary.

But for the Spirit's revelation we would not have the insight to view the smitten rock as a type of Christ. But He is that Rock.

whom humanity had supposed could not supply its spiritual needs. There was no beauty that we should desire Him (Isaiah 53:2, 3). But how wonderfully beautiful is the thought that He was "smitten God" in our stead (2 Corinthians 5:21). Thank God for the Old Testament that provides us with hope (Romans 15:4).

Christmas Is Not A Christian Festival

Philip & Nahomi Dhinakar

Most people would be astounded by this statement which nevertheless can be proved beyond a doubt. We are going to place before you several reasons as to why this is so. All the reasons put forward may not be convincing to everyone. Even so it is sufficient if any one point seems valid to the reader. But we believe that all the points will have a cumulative effect and aid in giving the reader a clear perspective of the position of Christmas in New Testament Christianity.

Origin Of Christmas

The origin and the celebration of the festival is not Biblical as you will see from the following excerpts taken from standard encyclopaedias.

"According to Roman almanac, the Christian festival of Christmas was celebrated in Rome by AD 336, in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, however, a festival in January 6 commemorating the manifestation of God in both the birth and baptism of Jesus, except in Jerusalem where only the birth was celebrated. During the 4th century, the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25 was generally adopted by most Eastern churches. In Jerusalem opposition to Christmas lasted longer, but subsequently accepted. In the Armenian church, Christmas was never accepted.

"The traditional customs connected with Christmas have developed from several sources as a result of the coincidence of

the celebration of the birth of Christ with the pagan agricultural and solar observances at midwinter. In the Roman world the Saturnalia (December 17) was a time of merry making and exchange of gifts. December 25 was also regarded as the birth date of the Iranian mystery god Mithra, the Sun of Righteousness. On the Roman New Year (January 1) houses were decorated with greenery and lights, and gifts were given to children and the poor. To these observances were added the German and Celtic Yule rites when the Teutonic tribes penetrated into Gaul, Britain and Central Europe. Food and good fellowship, the Yule log and Yule cakes, greenery and fir trees, gifts and greetings all commemorated different aspects of the festive season.....”

(Britannica Encyclopaedia)

“In early times this day (Christmas) was not one of the feasts of the Christian church. In fact, the church fathers frowned upon the celebration of birthdays and thought them a heathen custom. It is thought that Christmas was probably not celebrated until some 300 years after the birth of Christ.

“No one is certain why December 25 was chosen. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that this is the date of Nativity. It is believed that the efforts of the early church men in Rome to change pagan customs into Christian rites led in the 4th century AD, to the adoption of December 25 as the date of the Christ Mass, or feast in honour of the birth of Christ. This day was probably chosen because according to the winter solstice, the time when days begin to grow longer in the Northern Hemisphere, the sun worshipping pagans had celebrated this day as the promise of spring”

(The New Book of Knowledge)

Human VS. Apostolic Traditions

Jesus during his ministry vehemently condemned human traditions and commands. “So, for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophecy of you, when he said: “this people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they

worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." Mt 15:6-9. This was echoed later in the epistles, "...rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, instead of giving heed to... commands of men who reject the truth." Tit 1: 13-14.

On the other hand we are to follow the teachings of the New Testament or in other words the traditions of the apostles, as they were inspired to teach by God. "So then brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter." 2 Thess. 2:15.

As we saw earlier the celebration of Christmas was not initiated by any of the apostles. Would it be the Lord's will that we celebrate an unauthorised tradition handed down by human agencies?

Specific Instruction for Observance of Festivals

When God wanted a festival or feast to be celebrated, He gave specific and clear instructions, including the date, as we see in the Old Testament. The Jews had several important feasts viz., The Passover, The Feast of unleavened Bread, The Feast of First fruits, Pentecost, The Feast of Trumpets, The Day of Atonement and The Feast of Tabernacles. There were specific instructions as to when and how these were to be celebrated (Lev 23).

If God wanted us to observe a special day to commemorate Jesus' birth, He would have been specific about it. As it is He has specified a day to commemorate His death—On the first day of the week (Sunday) by partaking of the Lord's Supper. Ironically, so many so called Christians would rather celebrate the unauthorised festival of Christmas rather than faithfully partake of the Lord's Supper each Sunday although the latter is the only commanded commemoration for Christians.

Is It Not A Way Of Evangelisation?

It would seem that God would only be happy when we set apart a day to glorify Him in a special way. It could also be argued that people the whole world over are reminded about Jesus during Christmas time and this is a good way to spread the

gospel of Christ. But then we have to ask ourselves if improvisation of Biblical teaching finds favour with God. What may appear to be brilliant to human beings may be stupidity in His way of thinking." "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord." Isa 55:8- So celebration of this festival can at best be like Cain's sacrifice which was offered with the intention of pleasing God but nevertheless was rejected because it was against His will.

The only way to be sure of His will is to stick to the Bible. Improving upon the commands contained in the Bible by adding to or subtracting from them is out of bounds because "Anyone who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; ..." 2 John 9. Let us be careful about this not only in the issue of Christmas but in all aspects lest He should have to say "...I never knew you; depart from me, you evil doers" Mt. 7:23. Verse 21 of the same chapter explains that "evil doers" refers to those who do not do the will of God.

What About Romans 14:5-6?

Rom 14:5-6 reads as follows, "One man esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all day alike. Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honour of the Lord,..." The Roman church had Gentile and Jewish Christians. The Jewish Christians continued to observe the Old Covenant customs and special days (which God had commanded under the Old Covenant), often expecting the Gentiles to do the same. There is not evidence that the Gentile Christians had brought in any of the pagan festivals at that stage. It was only more than a century later that pagan customs would begin to seep into the church at Rome. So in the light of the rest of the New Testament teachings this verse is not to be used to justify the celebration of Christmas which as we have seen has no authorisation in the Bible.

Reaction Of An Apostle

If we had an apostle alive in our day what would his reaction be? The answer to this is easy enough. There were similar problems in the early church in Galatia and Paul reacted by chiding them

thus: "...how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years! I am afraid I have laboured over you in vain." Gal 4:10-11.

The Church, The Kingdom, Is the Pearl of Great Price

Garland Elkins

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matt. 13:45,46.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Mt. 13:45, 46). The church was purposed in the mind of God from eternity (Eph. 3:10, 11). It was promised by God through the prophets (Gen. 12:1-4; Gen 49:10; Gal. 3:16). It was in a state of preparation during the days of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:1, 2). It was established in perfection or completion on the day of Pentecost (Mk. 9:1; Acts 1:8; 2:1-47). The church of Christ is to be treated with respect when viewed from its conception in the mind of Almighty God until it shall have been presented to Christ "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5:25-27) in the eternal hereafter. Let us study some important points concerning the Lord's church.

Salvation is in the Lord's Church

It is an admitted fact that salvation can be had *outside* of man-made churches, but salvation is *not* offered apart from the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). The fact that it is generally admitted by those who advocate denominationalism that a person can be saved outside the membership of their churches proves the *uselessness* of those churches!

Although we certainly do agree that one can be saved outside of all denominational churches, we strongly affirm the necessity of the Lord's church while at the same time opposing all denominational churches as not only *useless*, but also *sinful* and diametrically opposed to Christ and His church (Mt. 12:25). Let us note some of the implications which follow when one contends that a person can be saved outside the Lord's church.

1. If one can be saved outside of the Lord's church, then, the blood of Christ is nonessential. This position contradicts the teaching of the New Testament which shows that there is no possibility of forgiveness of sins apart from the shedding of the blood of Christ (Mt. 26:28; Heb. 2:9; Rev. 1:5). The New Testament explicitly teaches that Jesus shed His blood to purchase the church wherein is salvation (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25; 5:23; Acts 2:41, 47).

2. If salvation can be obtained outside the Lord's church, then it follows that salvation can be had in the devil's kingdom. The New Testament teaches that the Lord's church and His kingdom are *one* and the *same* institution (Mt. 16:18, 19). All sinners are in the devil's kingdom until they obey the gospel (Rom. 6, 17, 1-8). That very process causes the Lord to add them to his church, to translate them into His kingdom (Acts 2:47, Col. 1:13). To put it another way, the sinner is lost until he is born again, born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Jesus emphatically declared that a lost person cannot be saved from past sins until he both believes the gospel and is baptized (Mk. 16:15, 16).

3. If a sinner can be saved outside the church of the Lord, then he can be saved in the devil's family. There are only two families in the world, the family of God and the family of Satan. The church is God's family (I Tim. 3:15). To be saved it is necessary to be in the church (Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23). Therefore, salvation is in the Lord's family, the church. Salvation is not in the devil's family. God does not have any children outside His family. The average person does not fully realize the implications of the teaching which contends that the Lord's church is nonessential.

The Church Belongs To Christ

Christ built His church even as He promised (Mt. 16:18). His church is composed of His body of saved persons (Eph. 5:25-27; Act 2:1-47), who are dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity and are neither Catholic nor Protestant but simply Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16). Christ promised to build but one church (Mt. 16:18), and Paul informs us that Christ died for but one church (Eph. 5:25). His church is scriptural in the plan of salvation, worship, organization, mission, and rule of faith and practice. The words "the church" mean but *one*. So, Christ loved *one* Church; He died for *one* church; He built *one* church. The pronoun "it" can refer to but *one*. Therefore, He is the owner of but *one* church. The plural form "churches" is never used in the New Testament except in reference to a number of local congregations in a certain section of the country as, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16); "The churches of Judea" (Gal. 1:22).

The Church Is Not A Denomination

The church of Christ is not a denomination (Acts 24:5, 13, 14), but apostates of our day "compass sea and land" in numerous efforts to cause the church of our Lord to compromise with denominationalism, and thus, ultimately to become a sister denomination among the denominations. Such false teachers are striving to convince brethren that the message we preach is just another message among many messages of equal value. They aver that the Lord's church is just another religious body among many equally important religious bodies. So anxious are some to turn the church of Christ into a denomination that they have joined ministerial alliances where in effect the accepted norm is "to agree to disagree." Some have invited false teachers to speak their error to brethren and allow them to do this without exposing their error. All who do this are in direct violation of the inspired Paul's instructions. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). At least one well-known brother has spoken to a group of denominations encouraging them in their false doctrine and the distributions of the same. He, and all like him, thus, become partakers of their evil deeds. "Whosoever transgresseth,

and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9—11). When brethren fellowship false teachers while opposing faithful brethren, we are reminded of the situation of Jeremiah's day. He said, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5:30,31). The same attitude of compromise existed in Isaiah's day. He wrote, "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for every and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceit" (Isa. 30:9-10). The prophet wrote, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5:20).

Causes And Condition Of Salvation

A.H. Maner

Is man's faith causes of his salvation? Is baptism the cause of salvation? Some people think their obedience is the cause of their salvation. It is of great importance that people obey the gospel, but is that the cause of their salvation or the condition of their salvation? This article will show that obedience is in the conditional area rather than in the casual area.

Definitions

A cause can be described as a being or principle which, by its positive influence, determines the existence of a new something other than itself. That new something is called an effect.

When the cause can act because correct conditions are present, the effect normally and logically follows. In man's salvation, causes are involved on the part of God. Man is not in a position, being a sinner to cause his own salvation any more than he can lift himself by his own bootstraps.

A condition cannot account for the existence of an effect, or salvation in our case. It does not exercise a direct positive influence upon the effect's existence, though it is necessary that the cause might produce its effect.

For an example, light is a condition for writing a letter. Without light, man (the cause) could not write the letter. Yet the light in no way serves as the cause of the letter, however necessary it might be. It is a condition without which the cause cannot produce the letter. (The definitions were adapted from *Lessons in Scholastic Philosophy*, Shallo, 1926, pp. 184, 185).

Causes of Salvation

God is the cause of our salvation: "God our Saviour". (1 Timothy 2:3). He planned to save his creature man (Ephesians 1:3-5), because of his love for him (John 3:16), and that love made a move because of his holiness. A remote cause of man's salvation is God's holiness. He knew, speaking as a man would speak, that man, being a sinner, could not see him in his holy state (Hebrews 12:14) without "perfecting holiness in the fear of God". (2 Corinthians 7:1).

God made his move to do whatever was necessary to handle man's sinful condition so that he could have purposes and a heart which would please God and would attempt to become like him in holiness. Man was accepted as holy or righteous in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21) and, can now become a partaker of his holiness. (Hebrews 12:10; 2 Peter 1:4.) By this he is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24) and fit for eternal life. (Romans 6:22.) Thus man was enabled to exist with God in his holy abode and enjoy the "flowery and holy hills of Heaven.

When God's plan came into [existence, the very thing we are mentioning here came with it; a plan to take care of sin or man's guilt and make him acceptable for heaven's society. This is the basic part of God's plan for man. It is made in view of God's holiness and for fitting man into that type of existence.

In harmony with this thought we have Christ and his sacrifice for sin: "... but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (Hebrews 9:26b.). His blood become prominent, because of his sacrifice and it is expressed as a cause in Peter's statement about our being redeemed by Christ's precious blood. (1 Peter 1:18-20.). Paul said we are "justified by his blood". (Romans 5:9).

The spirit was an agent exercising the casual aspect of man's salvation also. He used the word or gospel as an instrumental cause in accomplishing his purpose of saving. (1 Corinthians 2:13; 15:1, 2.). The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17.)

Hence, God saves. (Titus 2:4,5.) Jesus saves. (1 Timothy 1:15.). The Spirit saves. (Romans 8:14; 15:16.) The word or gospel saves, (James 1:21). It is in this area we must look for the cause or causes of man's salvation. Conditions of salvation are found elsewhere. And we now go to that subject.

Conditions

As stated above, conditions are necessary for the operation of the causes in man's salvation especially since God has given them, yet conditions do not exercise a positive influence in producing salvation as the causes do.

There ere numerous conditions in man's salvation, but we must remember they fare conditions and not causes, because not one of them would produce salvation apart from God's will, the sacrifice of Christ, and the instruction of the Spirit. In other words, conditions are on man's side of the plan and man cannot save himself. (Ephesians 2:8, 9.). If what man does can pro-

duce salvation, we have a system of works whereby man can boast. This is taught against in Revelation. Conditions, by definition, do not produce effects, or salvation in our case. Man keeps conditions which will allow the cause or causes to save. Remember our example: The cause (man) can write a letter when the condition of light is present, though the light has nothing to do with actual writing. Similarly, God, the cause, produce salvation provided man keeps the condition which will allow him to do the saving. (Colossians 1:19-23; Hebrews 4:2b; James 4:10; 1 John 1:7; Mark 16:16).

Some of the conditions man must keep are:

1. Hearing, reading, or learning the truth. (John 8:31, 32; Romans 10:17).

2. Faith is a condition. (Mark 16:16). There is nothing about faith which will save a person purely because of his faith. If so, those on Pentecost could have been saved before they asked the question "What must we do". (Acts 2:37.). That reveals that they were believers when they asked the question. They were told to do other things for the remission of sins after believing. If they were saved by faith and before doing the things for remission of sins, they were saved in their sins. And that is contrary to everything we know about getting ready to live with God in his holy state. Faith does not produce salvation as a cause, but serves as one of the conditions, so that the cause, God, can save.

3. Repentance is another condition. (Acts 17:30.). There is nothing in repentance to handle previous guilt. It deals with the present and future and that imperfectly. God handles previous guilt by forgiveness on his own terms. Repentance is one of the conditions to be kept by man.

4. Baptism is another condition of salvation. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38.). Baptism cannot save of itself. God does that. And he has promised to remove sins provided man keeps all the conditions for remission of sins, baptism being the final condition for that purpose. (Acts 2:38; 22:16.).

The only way immersion can serve as a cause for producing an effect is not in the area of salvation but in the area of getting wet. Immersion produces wetness everytime it is performed—cause and effect—but that is not the purpose of baptism as a condition in the plan of salvation; getting wet is an incidental. Some people view baptism as a cause with an effect whether the person knows what he is doing or not as those who baptize babies, antisciptural practice.

5. After getting remission of sins by keeping the above conditions, the keeping of other conditions is required for eternal salvation. Continuing in the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42a) is a necessary for learning all of the other conditions man must keep through life such as the different activities of worship the various duties of benevolence, growth of the individual in the Christian graces, and the work of influencing the world for Christ, all of which go with being a Christian. Eternal salvation is promised to them who obey him (Hebrews 5:9), and to them who are faithful to the end. (Hebrews 3:12-14.). In other words, the cause will produce eternal life if the condition of faithfulness to the end is present. Otherwise, there is no hope. (2 Peter 2:20, 21). Again, the conditions in the plan of salvation to use the Latin phrase, are sine quanon—"without which not," or God's conditions must be followed or no salvation. Substitute condition are ruled out. That means the conditions of God gave must be followed without addition or subtraction. (Revelation 22:18-19.)

The Old Testament & The Christian

G.N. Chauhan

There is a plethora of views and opinions as to whether the Old Testament law of Moses applies to Christians. Many preachers and teachers in denominational churches will say yes. But if you have taken the care to study the Bible, which everyone should, you will know otherwise.

One thing that should be impressed on the mind is that the Old Testament was given specifically to the Jewish nation and was a law binding on that nation alone (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:1-22). It was their rule for living under the Jewish dispensation and for worship. For 1500 years it bound the Jews to observe it, but not one could find justification by it. It was too severe and not one individual could keep it perfectly. In fact it was downright condemnatory (Gal. 3:10). In it was no forgiveness of sins and could not by any means justify a sinner, since animals sacrifices was an exaction in it (Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:4). It was a "yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). According to (2 Cor. 3:7), it was a "ministration of death." But thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ who has "abolished...even the law of commandments contained in ordinances..." (Eph. 2:15).

It was only Jesus who could observe it fully without fault and fulfilled it (Matt. 5:17) taking it out of the way and nailing it to the cross (Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:9). It is sheer logic that if the old law was without defect or its coverage inadequate, there would not have been a second law (superior in all respects) to replace it (Heb. 8:7). The actuality is that the law was indeed perfect but its demand for perfection in order to justify was too much for fallen man. Only Jesus, as already mentioned, could keep it perfectly. In Heb. 8:8 we have these words of great encouragement: "For finding fault with them, he saith. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." And in verse 6 of this same chapter it says, "...Mediator (Jesus) of a better covenant . . . established on better promises."

At the transfiguration of Christ (Matt 17:5) God's own voice from heaven proclaims that His beloved Son is to be heard. This is also confirmed in Heb. 1:1. It is not without reason that Jesus spoke these words of admonition in John 12:48. The words of Christ will be the criterion of judging one and all in the last day.

The New Testament is the good news of salvation to all. It offers grace, mercy and forgiveness (Heb. 8:8-12). It portrays Christ as our High Priest and His blood as our sin offering (Heb.

9:11-14). Reinforcement of abiding faith come in these two very pertinent Scriptures—2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3. No doubt the Old Testament is also God's word for our examples (1 Cor. 10:11; Rom 15:4). It was a law for past ages. We benefit from it when we read it. However, now the New Testament law of Christ is binding on all Christians as a sure guide to lead us through to the portals of that celestial city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10).

“Victory Through Our Lord Jesus”

Clem Thurman

Everybody loves a winner. And everyone wants to be a winner. “Be a Winner” is a slogan often used by coaches in every kind of athletics, by sales managers, advertisers, politicians and others who seek to motivate and provoke to a better effort. When we support a team, we expect victory as the price of our interest in it. And there is certainly no virtue in defeat. Nor is it wrong to try to win. But we should learn to put things perspective, and strive to win in those things that really matter. The football game, whether in the NFL or peewee league is still just a game. And it is the striving that is important, not just the winning. And not all call can win. If there is to be a winner, there must also be loser. But in the greatest striving of all, everyone can be a winner!

The apostle Paul often referred to athletic events in his writings: “They that run in a race run all, but one receives the prize. Even so run, that ye may attain” (1 Cor. 9:24). But this race is not run on the athletic field. It is the Christian race, and we are urged to “run with patience the race set before us; looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-2). After writing of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the apostle exclaims, “But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:57). There are no losers here! All of us can be winners, if we are “in Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). That is why Paul declares, “We are more than conquerors, through him that loved us” (Rom 8:37).

Jesus Gives Us Victory over the Guilt of Sin

Our greatest problem in life is sin. In fact, every other problem we have is the result of sin. And victory in athletics, business, politics or any other thing pertaining to this world, becomes meaningless unless we have victory over sin. Sinners are called "the bondservants of sin" (Jno. 8:34) and "children of Satan" (Jno. 8:44). The sinner cannot save himself (Jer. 10:23), and, "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). It is at this point that the love of God is manifested: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (Jno. 3:16).

The reason God's Son came into this world is clearly stated: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from their, sins" (Matt. 1:21). Because we have sinned, and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), Christ died for us: "That he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man... He died for all" (Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14). When He went to the cross, it was to shed the blood that would purchase our redemption: "Knowing that ye were redeemed...with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). By His blood, Christ has "washed us from our sins" (Rev. 1:5), cleansed and forgiven us (Eph. 1:7). Even though we have sinned, because of His sacrifice and our response to Him (Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:3-4), we are no longer guilty of sin. We are forgiven!

Jesus Gives Us Victory over the Practice of Sin

Our victory over sin is not complete when we are "washed in the blood of Christ" (Rev. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:19) to become Christians. Jesus "died for all, that they that live should not live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sake died, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15). As we strive to live for Him every day, His blood "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jno. 1:7) and we are assured by His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. 28:20). His constant help and strength is what enabled Paul to declare, "I don't live, but Christ lives in me. . . I can do all things through Christ" (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:13). When we are tempted, "He will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

When we put our faith in Christ, and are "baptized into his death," we then are "raised to walk in newness of life. . . made free from sin" (Rom. 6:4,18). As a result, "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin should be done away. that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Rom. 6:6). Our victory over the practice of sin is complete when we willingly submit ourselves to His will: "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live. For as many as led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:13-14). Because we are His, the Lord helps and cares for us to empower us to live for Him.

Jesus Gives Us Victory over the Trials of Life

Job, in pain and disillusion, said, "Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). Problems and trials constantly surround and buffet us. But what a friend we have in Jesus! "For as the sufferings [of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth through Christ" (2 Cor. 1:5). Illnesses weaken us, friends betray us, death brings sorrow, and myriads of other problems nearly overwhelm us. But Jesus promises, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). So we are told. "Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

In our struggle to live for Jesus, it sometimes seems that the world is winning out over us. The allure of temptation, ridicule of scoffers, even the mockery of friends may cause us to wonder if "we can win." But Christ answers: "If the world hate you, ye know it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (Jno. 15:18-19). If we live right we can expect trouble from the world. But we can also expect help from the Lord! "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jno 16:33). To live for Christ is to share His victory over the world.

Jesus Gives Us Victory over Condemnation

Jesus came to give us the assurance and hope of a light relationship with God: "Which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast" (Heb, 6:19). Yet many still

seemed plagued with despair, as they plaintively ask, "How can I be sure I am saved?" The apostle Paul was sure, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12). And we can be, also: When ye read, ye can perceive my understanding" (Eph. 3:4). That apostle wrote it plainly in Rom. 8:1-2, "There is therefor now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ made me free from the law of sin and of death." We can live for Christ, from day to day, without being under condemnation—that is the promise.

Some question how, or even whether, it is possible for a Christian to live without being guilty of sin from day to day. But God explains it as He tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jno. 1:7). This is written to Christians; the blood of Christ continues to cleanse the Christian as he strives to live for Christ. Paul writes, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin" (Rom. 4:8). That word "reckon" is translated by "account" or "impute" in other versions, and the simple meaning is: "to put on the record." When one is in Christ, the blood of Christ cleanses him from sin so that his sin is not reckoned, and thus he is not under condemnation. That is the promise of 1 Jno. 1:7; Rom. 4:8 and Rom. 8:1. And that victory is one only Christ can give.

Jesus Gives Us Victory over Fear and Doubt

Who among us has never been afraid? Who has not harbored doubts that "things will turn out right"? Jesus came to the disciples in the midst of a storm, walking on the water. The disciples were at first afraid, "It is a ghost" (Matt. 14:26). But when Peter realized it was the Lord, he asked, "Bid me come unto thee" (v. 28). The Lord told him to come, and now Peter stepped over the side of the boat and walked on the water. Think of how much faith that took! But then he looked at the storm and "he was afraid" and began to sink (v. 30). The Lord saved him, but rebuked him: "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" (v. 31). Don't we see ourselves in that event? We believe, but do we really have a strong faith? Maybe we should all learn to pray, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief" (Mk. 9:24).

We are to "walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7), for "The righteous shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). Putting our trust in the God

who saved Noah, who prospered Abraham, who delivered Israel, who loved sinners enough to send His Son to die on the cross—we can have assurance that He “is able to deliver thee” (Psa. 50:15; Dan. 6:20). When we walk “hand in hand” with the Lord, we can have assurance that things will be right, for His “King of kings and Lord of Lords” (1 Tim. 6:15). He is in control: “Let us draw near in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22). Victory over doubt and fear is ours, for we walk with Christ.

Christ Gives Us Victory Over Death

“If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14) has been the constant concern of man, from Adam until now. All of the tracks at the grave were pointing in one direction, until Christ. But He arose! The grip of death was broken for those who trust in Him, for He died to “deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:15): And He arose, “The firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). The assurance of the believer is aptly stated by Paul, “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (1 Thes. 4:14). His resurrection is a pledge of our own. As firmly as we believe that He arose, we believe that He will raise us and take us to be with Him.

We read, “It is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. 9:27), but death has no terror for the Christian. As Paul expressed it, “For me to live is Christ, to die is gain” (Phill. 1:21). With the assurance that Christ has gone to prepare a wonderful place for us (Jno. 14:1-3), why should we be afraid of death? The Christian should live this life to the fullest, as a gift from God, to be used for Him. And death at the end of such a life will be a blessing (Rev. 14:13). Notice how Paul described it: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:54-57),

You can be a winner, But only in Christ. When your faith leads you to a commitment of your life to Him, He gives you the victory over sin, over death. Victory is yours, because Christ is the victor.