

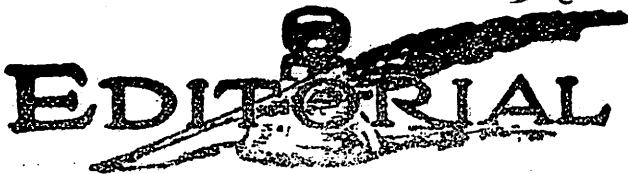
# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## Things Baptism Does

Some time people ask, why do we write and teach so much about baptism through The Bible Teacher? May I say, in the first place, we do not write and teach on the subject of baptism more than the Bible itself teaches. Secondly, according to the Bible, God has joined together baptism and salvation, and, therefore, if we are going to teach people how to be saved through Christ and His blood, we must preach baptism. Since the Bible says, "...What God has joined together let not man separate." (Matthew 19: 6). Also, a third reason, why we do write so frequently about baptism, would be, because most religious groups, denominational and sectarian, have deviated from God's plan of salvation and have left out baptism from God's plan of salvation. Regardless of what man says, the Bible still teaches that one must be baptized to be saved from sin. Here is what the Bible teaches about baptism:

Christ, after his death on the cross for sinners, and after His burial and resurrection from the dead; and just a few minutes before His ascension into heaven, commanded His disciples to:

**“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”** And then, notice, He said: **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”** (Mark 16: 15, 16). One must both believe in Christ and be baptized, according to the Saviour, to be saved.

Note again, when the disciples of Christ had preached their first gospel sermon to a large crowd of more than three thousand people in the city of Jerusalem, and when their listeners were touched in their hearts by the message of the cross of Christ, and when they had asked those preachers: **“Men and brethren, What shall we do?”** This is what one of them, namely the Apostle Peter, had told them to do: **“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”** (Acts 2: 38). They were told to repent or turn from sins and be baptized. What for? For the remission of sins or to receive the forgiveness of sins.

After Saul or Paul had spent three days in the city of Damascus where he was fasting and praying to show his repentance, the Bible says that one Ananias, a preacher of the gospel of Christ, came to him and exhorted him with these words: **“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord!”** (Acts 22:16). According to Acts 9:18, **“... and he arose and was baptized.”** What for? To have his sins washed away. How? I don't know. But this is what the Bible says.

When Philip, a preacher of the gospel, went to a place called Samaria, the record at Acts 8:12 states: **“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”** What did Philip Preach? He preached things concerning kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. But what did men and women do? They were baptized? Why didn't they do something else? Why were they baptized immediately? The answer is, because Christ has said, **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”**

Then, in his epistle to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul wrote: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27). In other words those who were not baptized scripturally were not in Christ, they had not put on Christ. Simply, Paul was saying, one gets into Christ by being baptized into Him. There is no other way.

The same Apostle Paul wrote to Christians at Rome and said: "Or do you not know that as many of us were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life." (Romans 6:3 & 4). From this we learn that baptism puts one into Christ's death and thus the individual meets the saving blood of Christ which was shed in His death, that baptism is a burial or immersion and not sprinkling of water, and that one walks in the newness of life after one has been baptized into Christ.

Now, after reading such statements from the pages of the Bible who is able to contend and say that baptism is not necessary for salvation. As confirmed from already cited Scriptural statements: if one needs to be baptized to be saved from sins; to have the forgiveness of sins; to have sins washed away; to put on Christ; and to come in contact with the saving blood of Jesus Christ. Then what will be the condition of those who refuse to be baptized or those who have never been baptized for the reasons mentioned above? Obviously, such will be unsaved; they are yet in their sins; their sins are not washed away; they are not in Christ, and they have yet to contact the saving blood of Christ which is possible only by being baptized into His death.

Who should then be baptized? Men and women, as we have noticed from Acts 8:12, and those who have already believed in Christ, as Christ said in Mark 16:16. The command of baptism was never given for little children, because they are already safe, they need no forgiveness, because they have never sinned. In fact Christ said about little children that of such is the kingdom of God, and that one must become like a little child to go to heaven. (Matthew 18:3; 19:14; 2 Samuel 12:23). According to Matthew

28:19, one must become a disciple of Christ first and then should be baptized. There are any number of people who think they are already baptized, when in fact they have never been Scripturally baptised. A majority of them were "baptized" when they were infant, when they didn't need to be baptized, and they were never buried or immersed in water as the Bible commands. (Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38, 39; 10:47). Such need to ask, as eunuch did, "What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Can we help you in this regard? Let us know

Peter in his epistle, after mentioning how Noah and his family members were saved through water in the ark, said: "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1Peter 3:21).

## Not Liking What Is Said

J.C. Choate

Although Jesus came from God himself, and taught only the truth, still there were many who did not like that which they heard. His home town people could not believe that the son of a carpenter could be a messenger of God. Therefore they were offended in him. (Matthew 13:57). Others of that day did not follow him because they loved the praises of men more than the praises of God. (John 12:42, 43). Some even accused him of doing his works by the power of Beelzebub. (Matthew 12:22-30).

Jesus referred to Isaiah's prophecy which said, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they shall see: and your ears, for they shall

hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (Isaiah 6:9; Matthew 13:14-17).

Even many of the disciples, after hearing what Jesus had to say about his flesh and blood, when in reality he was referring to the time that they would remember his body and blood in partaking of the Lord's Supper considered these things to be hard sayings. (John 6:53-65). Others misunderstood him, thinking that he had come to deliver physical Israel and to restore it to its past glory. (Acts 1:6). Others of course were envious and jealous of the Lord.

It wasn't easy then to even tell the truth. Jesus said of the people of his day that they were the children of those who had killed the prophets. (Matthew 23:31). He continued by saying, "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matthew 23:34-39).

We know that Jesus was eventually crucified because the people of his day rejected his teachings, even the leading religious people at [that. All of the Apostles, except for John, died as martyrs for Christ, as well as untold others of that time and thereafter.

Even in our day, many things go on that perhaps we are not

informed about. Most of the opposition to the Lord and his word is of a milder form, but it is perhaps even more cunning and deadly. The majority flagrantly reject the Lord's teachings in favour of man's teaching. Everything that the Lord is and teaches has been counterfeited and passed off as being more desirable. Do such people actually believe that they will be able to escape the judgment of God? (1 Peter 4:17, 18). Christ says, "He that rejected me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48).

Sometime our own brethren don't like to be reminded of their duties and responsibilities. They complain that the preacher talks too much about attending Bible classes or giving. Some don't like to hear lessons on being worldly, divorce and adultery, and other sins that are common to man. Don't they realize that in complaining they are letting it be known that they are most likely the ones that are guilty. Those who are complying with these teachings, and others, would probably be the last ones to be critical because they know that these are truths that need to be taught.

But why should we pretend? The truth is the truth regardless of whether accepted or rejected. We are either for the Lord or we are against him. (Matthew 22:32). We are either faithful, or we are unfaithful. Most people know that already, and most certainly the Lord does. Jesus said that no man can serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24). He also asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

## Real Christianity Is Rare

Harvey Porter

We have often heard people refer to someone who is an average citizen and well-liked as a "good Christian." The person may know little about Jesus, never go to church, never study the

Bible or pray; but since he is an "all-around guy," he is referred to as a "Christian."

Our standards are far different from the Lord's. And I might add, even in the church the standards are different. We have a mental picture of a "good Christian" too. He is one who is friendly and congenial, worships regularly, comes to classes, gives generously, etc.

Notice what Jesus said about the nature of his followers. It is disturbing. In fact, I think that all of us would have to say that we do not often see this kind of person.

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:27-31, N.I.V.).

In the church we are still working on trying to learn to love our physical family (husband, wife, children, parents, etc.). Jesus said that this was done even by the unbelievers. One should expect this much. And in the church, we are still working on loving each other, God's family; the one Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another" (John 13:34-35).

Level one is treating our own family with love and kindness and respect. It is expected in all of God's creation; and some who do not know Christ do treat their family right. It is also true that some who are Christians do not do so, even though they know better.

Level two is harder to do. It demands loving and caring for those who have obeyed the same Lord, who seek to serve the same God. It is a fellowship, a body, a family in a spiritual way. Here we find some who are hard to get to know. Some who do not respond as they should. Some who do not love us back,

who are unfriendly. How do we respond? Some quit the church because the church is not what it ought to be. Some respond in kind—treat the unfriendly the same, etc. Jesus is disappointed with us. He expects more.

Level three is the hardest of all. It is loving those you do not know very well and those who have treated you with hatred, meanness, and have even cursed you and hit you. Jesus said we should pray for them, give to them, and turn the other cheek when they strike us. We all know (?) that the Lord did not understand! That is not the way this world works! When someone hurts us, we have the right to hurt him back! Everybody lives that way even in the home—and in the church! We would call the person a coward who turned the other cheek. People would always walk over us if we did that. Wouldn't they?

Have we missed the heart of Christian living in personal relations? Do we really try to practice: "Do to others as you would have them do to you."? We all know that the vast majority of the world and even the church does not obey this simple command. It is not because we do not understand it. It is because it is hard—extremely hard! Jesus did it—and it took him to the cross, but his act saved the whole world!

Let's try it!

## "I Have A Few Things Against Thee"

Ron Harper

When the Lord addressed the church at Thyatira he addressed a church that had grown in "charity, service, faith and patience" (Revelation 2:19). They had grown in these areas in the face of strong opposition from Satan. By our standards they were one of the great churches in existence. To a degree, this would be correct.



We see, however, that the Lord was not fully pleased with the situation in Thyatira. "I have a few things against thee." The problem was: "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." The New American Standard uses, correctly, so the word "tolerate" instead of the word "sufferest."

What was the problem? A person in the church was teaching error, and the church was tolerating it. As a result of their toleration of her false teaching, people were being led into a life of immorality. The same thing will happen today when we tolerate error, people will be led into a life of immorality. I find it easy to overlook error. I like to think about the good things taking place in a congregation. I like to preach lessons with a positive thrust. When things are going well in the area of "charity, service, faith and patience," and when we are growing, we do not want to deal with error—lest we be perceived as negative.

It is then that I must stop and look at the results of giving place to error. In Thyatira, Jezebel had seduced saints to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. She was successful because she was tolerated. When we overlook any error, whatever ground we gain in other areas is lost as people fall into immorality. There is a lesson for the church of today!

We are fishers of men. When I go fishing I do not travel around the lake looking for snakes. If, however, a snake gets into the boat. I kill it because it endangers those who are in the boat.

We do not go around looking for error. At the same time when it is taught, we oppose it because it endangers those who are in the boat.

May God give us the courage to oppose error when it rears its head in the church. May he give us the wisdom to know that fighting error is not all there is to Christian growth. There are also such matters as "charity, service, faith and patience."

# **“In The Land Of Fadeless Day...”**

**Tim Orbison**

In the Revelation, John recorded great words of hope for eternity. The new Christians were facing tremendous persecution by the civil government toward the end of the first century and they desperately needed hope. Their very lives were threatened and they needed assurance that their reward was worth the effort.

What John described in Revelation 21 is a beautiful city where God will live with the saints. There was never any place like it before nor will there be again. A more beautiful place than what is described in verses 10-25 could hardly be: a city made of gold, garnished with jewels, with gates of pearl and lit by the presence of God! Such a home for eternity would be worth any price, wouldn't it?

Yet the beauty of the city is made even more of an attraction to me by what is missing. John said there will be no more death. There will be no more pain. There will be no more sorrow or crying for “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

How many times as a father have I held a tender, sobbing body close to my own while pain or sorrow pushed out hot tears from tiny red-rimmed eyes! How often have I longed for the ability to wipe them away so that they would never come again! But they come. As long as we are in this world we must face pain, sorrow and death.

If as weak and human parents we can yearn to ease the pain of our own children, imagine the boundless love and compassion borne for us by the Father of Lights! Yes, Heaven must be a beautiful place! May God grant to us a safe journey to his eternal home.

## **The Fog**

**Bob Plunket**

**Few things are more devastating than dense fog. One thing**

that makes it so devastating is that we do not fear the fog as we fear wind and lightning. It looks so innocent and harmless, yet it can be so deadly. I was on the river the other day when visibility was no more than fifty to seventy-five yards. It reminded me of the universe before God said, "Let there be light." I thought of the nuclear winter that scientist talk about should there be a war. It reminded me of the millions and millions in the world without Christ.

But I guess it reminded me most of the work of Satan. Like the fog, he covers the landmarks. These are so important as we travel through life. They let us know where we are, how much progress we have made, and how to find our way home. Satan, like the fog, brings distortions. Even that which we see, is distorted. Satan, like the fog, brings frustration and confusion. Satan, like the fog, can put us in harm's way.

I was hopelessly lost on the river, and became very concerned that I was in the barge channel. I finally dropped my anchor, found that I was in about eight feet of water, and I stayed there until the sun came out. Fog can cause us to run over each other. Satan, like the fog, isolates us, and disorients us. It can render us helpless. One may have a motor and know the river: but in the fog it is no help. Satan, like the fog, brings cold and dampness and gloom to our world. Paul says in II Corinthians 4:4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not..."

It was so beautiful when the sun broke through. The fog was dissipated. The sky overhead was blue. The leaves were red and gold and I was no more than three hundred yards from home. In this world of fog and darkness, confusion, God let his Son shine and he brought love and light and life and beauty and grace and hope and peace and fellowship and vision! No wonder Paul would say, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift," John would say, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Our world today is in a spiritual fog, confusion, frustration,

isolation, suspicion, rain. Our great country is in a spiritual and moral fog.

How desperately we need his Son.

## Some Very Popular "Lies"

W.A. Holley

God "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2). In fact, it is "impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18). All men are warned, "Glory not and lie not against the truth" (James 3:14; John 8:32; 17:17). "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:6-10)).

We want our readers to understand that the foregoing quotation was addressed to children of God—Christians—not to alien sinners (Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38, 41-42, 47).

Contrary to many, a lie can be believed (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). An old prophet's lie was responsible for the unfortunate death of "a man of God" (I Kings 13:1-18). Actually, the truth of God can be turned into a lie (Romans 1:25). It is possible for one to lie, even unto God (Acts 5:4) The father of lies is none other than Satan himself (John 8:44).

What are some of the more popular lies? We shall discuss this question under two categories;

### The First Category

(A) "Join the church of your choice." Does Jesus Christ

have no church? and no choice? We suggest that the following scriptures be read Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4-6; 5:23-32; Acts 2:47. According to your Bible, no one ever "joined" the Lord's church!!

(B) "One is saved the moment he believes." Where does your Bible so teach? Sinners are saved by a faith that obeys God's commands (John 3:16, 36; James 2:14-26; Acts 10:34-35). Thus FAITH is classified as "a work of God" (John 6:28-29).

(C) "Let the Lord speak peace to your soul and take the Lord as your personal Saviour." These are very popular statements, coming from the lips of many preachers; but, where does your Bible make any such statements?? If you know where the Bible so teaches, please send us the scripture references. (Please read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:3-4, 17-18).

(D) "Sprinkling and pouring are acceptable 'modes' of baptism." Many honest and sincere people believe this statement; but where does your Bible so teach? Baptism is an immersion in water (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

(E) "One should be baptized because one is already saved." According to the New Testament, baptism, as commanded by Jesus, is necessary to be saved (Mark 16:16). Acts 2:38 teaches that baptism is in order to be saved, "unto" (eis) or "for the remission of sins." Bible baptism is never administered "because of remission of sins," according to Holy Writ.

(F) It is asserted, "A piano or an organ is not so bad when used in the Lord's assembly." But, where does the Lord command its use? One pianist, when asked why the piano was used in their worship, replied, saying, "Because we like it." But does the LORD like it? He never authorized its use in Christian worship. (Cf. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15).

### **The Second Category:**

(A) Many excuses are really lies; we simply do not wish to face duty's demands, and so we offer excuses (Luke 14:15-24). One church member who had gone fishing on Sunday morning, when reminded that he should be in worship at that very hour,

said, "Well If I were at home I could not attend services, because my dear wife is ill and I couldn't leave her!" It does not require much effort to manufacture excuses - they are ever available!

(B) Another, says, "I know I drink; but that's not so bad; everybody else does it too." One can rationalize almost any situation. Many try to find Biblical support for social drinking; but, if there were no social drinkers, there would be no alcoholics. Social drinking is a sin before God, and one reason is because it encourages others to drink. No Christian can afford to set a poor example before others (Revelation 21:8; Galatians 5:19-21; Proverbs 23:29-35). It is just as sinful to entice one to drink as it is to entice one to commit adultery.

(C) "Falsehood concerning absenteeism isn't so bad; it doesn't hurt anyone!" one tells himself. Satan often deceives thousands with such thoughts. Remember, God has something to say with regard to such action (Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10). One sure way to destroy your interest and enthusiasm in the Lord's Cause is to simply stay away.

(D) Many contend that they "have the right to live as they please." They "can choose their own lifestyle", they say. This includes marrying and divorcing as many times as they please. Such an attitude destroys the moral foundations upon which our nation was founded. Once a famous woman was expressing her concern for the future of the home; but at that very moment, she had been married to four men and the one with whom she was then living, she had never married. What a bad example to set before others!! We suggest that Genesis 2:24-26; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12, be carefully read and applied to your life.

(E) What about those church members who try to soothe their conscience, claiming they "are unable to give to support the work of the Lord's church?" (Acts 5:1-11). There are three New Testament words which regulate giving: Ability, prosperity, and purpose (Acts 11:29; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-7). Many can purchase the most expensive house, the biggest car, wear the finest clothes, and eat at the most expensive

restaurants but make token contributions to the Lord.  
**SHAME!!**

## “And Be Ye Thankful”

Yarbrough Leigh

To the Colossians, the apostle Paul wrote, saying: “Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies kindness, humbleness of mind, 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 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).

As you can see, Paul was admonishing the Colossian brethren to build within themselves such attitudes and dispositions as would bind them together for the Lord in peace and happiness. Notice, particularly, the last four words in the quotation above: “And be ye thankful”. Nothing more ennobles and beautifies the spirit of a person than does a thankful heart: a heart that is filled with gratitude to both God and man for the benefits received in life.

Did you ever pause to reflect upon the difference between the thankful heart and the unthankful heart? I invite you to reflect on this difference, for just a moment.

The UNthankful heart, is an Unhappy heart. It cannot be otherwise. Can happiness dwell with bitterness? Can inward joy live with selfishness? Can contentment co-exist with covetousness? To ask these questions is to answer them—and the UNthankful heart possesses all of these characteristics.

The UNthankful heart looks on all of its possessions as being for it, alone. It says, “All of this I have by my own labour. It is

**MINE.** Keep your greedy hands and eyes off!" And, because selfishness is always covetousness, the UNthankful heart is always UNSatisfied; therefore, it is always bitter. There are not enough possessions in the world to satisfy the UNthakful soul. Its perpetual cry is: "MORE! MORE! MORE!" Whenever and wherever it sees another in possession of what it wants but does not have, covetousness will consume whatever measure of joy might otherwise have been present. The UNthankful heart will be always complaining, and considering itself deprived of its rightful joy.

But, look at the thankful heart! It is happy heart. It is always at peace within itself. It is a contented heart. It is a cheerful-heart. It is a loving heart. And, if (I said, if) it be properly instructed in the word of God, it will be an obedient heart. It will posses these happy characteristics because it recognizes its debt to both God and fellowman: never feeling selfsufficient, but always acknowledging its dependence upon others. It will demonstrate this awareness by sharing rather than by grasping; by rejoicing rather than by envy; by love rather than resentment; by giving thanks rather than by complaining.

Think about it, beloved brethren: Our world is filled with frustrations and fears. If we are UNthankful, we are defeated before we start ! But a genuine spirit of thanksgiving can lead us to greater heights of joy. Let us read again the things Paul wrote to the Colossians, follow them, and, in all things, "be ye thankful!"

### **Give Me A Thankful Heart**

For all that God in mercy sends —  
For health and children, home and friends;  
For comforts in the time of need,  
For every kindly word and deed,  
For happy talks and holy thoughts,  
For guidance in our daily walk-

In everything give thanks.  
For the sweet sleep which comes with the night,



For the returning morning light,  
For the bright sun that shines on high,  
For the stars glittering in the sky-  
For these, and everything we see,  
O Lord, our hearts we lift to thee:

In everything give thanks!

## The Plan Of Salvation

T. Pierce Brown

Most of my life I have heard preachers of the gospel make the following statement (and probably have made it myself): "God could have chosen to save man without the plan of salvation he provided if he had wanted to, but as he chose that plan, we had better stick with it!"

I believe there are some false implications in that statement, although the last phrase is hard to beat! Let me try to explain.

It is assumed that God could save a man on any basis, but this is not so! When we speak of God's omnipotence, or his ability to do anything, we must realize that this means "He can do anything consistent with himself!" The Bible says, "It is impossible for God to lie." (Hebrews 6:18). In fact, it is impossible for God to do anything wrong or sinful or unjust.

So, if we start with the basic understanding that the Bible teaches that God can do only that which is just, good and proper, then we have a basis for discussing the plan of salvation in more detail.

The first thing of which we need to be aware is that "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23). That is, in order to act in a just fashion, God cannot overlook sin, disregard it, or imply that it is not bad. If he arbitrarily forgave sins without any payment being made, he would be contradicting himself, which he cannot do. If you and I paid for our own sins, we must suffer

spiritual death—eternal separation from God. So, since God is love (1 John 4:8), he had to provide another way for our sins to be paid for.

If you think that he could have done it by any method, try to name any method except the one he used that would solve the problem! Suppose he had said to Gabriel, "I am going to send you to suffer for mankind." That would not only be unfair to Gabriel to make him suffer unwillingly, it would be impossible for an archangel to be a proper substitute for mankind. One could go on suggesting and guessing for the rest of his life and he could find no plan other than the one God used that perfectly meets the demands of the case including the necessity that God be loving, just, etc.

To put it in the simplest way we know: 1. God is love, so he wanted to forgive mankind. 2. God is just, so he had to demand punishment for sin. 3. Jesus was sinless, so he could choose to pay the penalty for another. 4. He was God in the flesh, so he could properly intercede with God. 5. He became mankind, so he could properly represent and substitute for mankind. 6. He was not forced to do it, but freely chose to lay down his life for us. 7. For it to be done properly, man has to freely accept that plan, for it would be unjust for God to force man to be saved against his own will. 8. It involved faith, for "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God." (Hebrews 11:6). 9. It involved repentance, for it would be wrong for God to force a man into heaven to live with him, perfected saints, and angels if the man loved sin more than he loved God. This is why Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish" (Luke 13:3)—not because he arbitrarily decided on this as a part of the plan, but because his nature and the nature of the case demanded it! 10. It involved confessing faith in the Christ, for it would be a contradiction in terms for a person to have the proper faith in Christ, and be ashamed to confess him. 11. It involved baptism for the remission of sins, not because this was a "step of salvation which God arbitrarily chose when he could as easily have chosen something else," but because in the infinite wisdom of God it is the only act which could properly demonstrate what the sinner has to demonstrate in order to be saved in the confor-

mighty with the nature of God.

Many do not understand that for God to be just, he has to demand a living faith. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:17, 20), not because God arbitrarily said so, but God said so because that simply is the nature of the case! So he has to demand a faith which demonstrates itself in obedience. But it has to be a faith, not only in the person of Christ, but in the actions of Christ by which he paid for our sins! That is, Christ died for you. If you do not believe that, it would be unjust and improper for God to forgive you of your sins, for it would imply that the death of Christ was unnecessary. You demonstrate faith in that fact when you repent and die to the love and practice of sins. (1 John 2:15, 3:8.) You cannot die to the guilt of sin until you are baptized into the death of Christ. (Romans 6:3, 4). Christ was buried. If you do not believe that, you cannot believe that he was resurrected from the grave. You demonstrate faith in that fundamental fact when you are buried with him by baptism into his death. If you think God could have chosen another way to have us do that properly, suggest one! Christ was raised from the grave. We are raised from the water of baptism to walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4). These were not arbitrary steps, accidentally chosen simply because nothing better suggested itself at the moment! These are all steps chosen by an infinitely wise and loving God because nothing else can properly do what needs to be done to secure our salvation and adequately meet the demands of justice, mercy propriety, love and all the other attributes of God!

Just think, friends, if you are willing to humbly submit to God's ordained plan for your redemption, you conform to the nature of God and become a partaker of that Divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4). You participate in a plan that was chosen and foreordained before the foundations of the world—not an arbitrary or accidental one—but one designed with all the wisdom, power and love of an infinitely great God!

Do not neglect that plan, nor even imply that it was one among many that God might have chosen. Could one thoughtfully say, "God could have saved us without having his Son go

through the anguish of the cross, but he just arbitrarily chose to allow his Son to suffer that?" Surely not! The whole plan goes together. God's love offered his Son. God's justice demands that you accept it on his terms! There is no other way! Will you accept it?

## Who Cares?

W.C. Anderson

These words are written: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." (Psalm 142:4). Apparently there had been a time when David had felt that no one cared for him. It would make us very sad if we felt that no one cared for us. But somebody does care for us.

### God Cares

Paul wrote: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3, 4.) It is also written: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9).

Paul told Timothy that God "will have all men to be saved," which means that God cares for everyone. He wants to save all the souls of mankind from the fires of hell. He wants to give everyone mansion in heaven. Yes, he cares about you. He loves you. (John 3:16).

### Jesus Christ Cares

He said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30.) You cannot read this quotation without seeing that Jesus cares for you.

He cared for people in Jerusalem who did not care for him. He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (Matthew 23:37).

### **The Holy Spirit Cares**

A disciple named Stephen was being stoned to death when he said, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts 7:51.) Mankind resists the Holy Spirit by rejecting the word that he teaches. The people who were killing Stephen had rather believe the false teachings of man than to accept the truth taught by Holy Spirit. They accused Stephen of setting up false witnesses against God. They said, "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous word against this holy place, and the law." (Acts 6:13.) However they were the ones who were wrong.

They caused the Holy Ghost some grief when they rejected the preaching of Stephen. Paul admonished the Christians at Ephesus to: "... grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30.) The Holy Spirit says, "Come." Hear him say, "And the Spirit and the bride say Come." (Revelation 22:17).

### **The Church Cares**

Note the word "bride" in the above passage. The bride is the church. (2 Corinthians 11:2) The true church cares. The church conducts meetings in which the gospel is preached because it cares about your soul. The members of the church want to guide souls to the truth which saves. Members of the church publish **The Bible Teacher** to teach you the truth because they care about you. The church meets on the first day of the week and admonishes every member to "cleave unto the Lord". (Acts 11:23.) This is done because the church cares.

### **A Man Cared For his Brothers**

A rich man died without having prepared for a home in heaven. He was suffering in hell. It is written of him: "... in

hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom." (Luke 16:23.). Lazarus was a poor begger who had prepared for a home in heaven. He was comforted after he died, but the rich man who had fared sumptuously every day, "was tormented in the abode of the departed.

He suffered so much that he hoped his five brothers would not been sent there. My friend, it could be that some relative of yours is in Hades now pleading with Abraham to send Lazarus that he may testify to you about how bad it will be for you if you don't obey the gospel. Yes, if you have relatives or friends in hell, they could be caring for you. Heed the invitation of Jesus (Matthew 11:29-30) and the persuading of Paul. (2 Corinthians 10, 11).

They care, and we care.

## Pillar of Truth

James M. Benson

Benevolence, helping others is an essential and attractive characteristic of New Testament Christianity. Jesus, our example, went about doing good. (Acts 10:38).

However, the greatest obligation resting upon the church is preaching the gospel. Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4).

Regardless of how much we may do for those in need, it has no eternal value to them unless they "receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save their souls." (James 1:21).

As God is greater than man, as heaven is higher than the earth; as eternity is longer than time; as the soul is of more value than the body; as the spirit is more enduring than the flesh, so, preaching the word, teaching the truth, planting the good seed of the kingdom—the truth that makes men free—is more important, more beneficial, than merely feeding the hungry or helping the

needy in a material way, without ministering also to their spiritual needs. Charity work that does not tend to influence people to obey Christ is sorely disappointing. Jesus fed the 5,000 with loaves that he might interest them in the bread of life.

"When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world." Later Christ condemned some of them for seeking him merely because they "ate of the loaves and were filled." (John 6:14-26). They cared nothing for the great message!

Possibly the most solemn charge in the Bible is God's command through Paul: "Preach the word!" (2 Timothy 4:1, 2.) The solemn last words of Christ before ascending back to heaven, gave the marching orders of his people. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16.) "Teach all nations!" (Matthew 28:19).

"The gospel" is God's power to save. (Romans 1:16.) The New Testament church is the "pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15.) It is that which supports and upholds the truth of the gospel. The church is designed and organized to proclaim the living message of hope—to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ! The church is the divine missionary or evangelist supporting society: "holding forth the word of life." (Philippians 2:16.) Such will bring the greatest joy in the day of Christ. (1 Thessalonians 2:16-19).

The above, of course, cannot be done successfully unless the church assembles faithfully, worships devoutly, visits the "fatherless and widows in their affliction" and keeps itself unspotted from the world. (Ephesians 5:25-27; Galatians 1:2; 6:10; James 1:27.) Then will its divine message be respected and souls redeemed!

Paul was "ready to spend and be spent" in gospel service. (2 Corinthians 12:15). He said, "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier." (2 Timothy 2:3.) "Be ye imitators of me," (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17, 4:9).

A challenging thought for all Christians: Could we be among those forever doomed at the Judgment because we did not break the bread of life to the world?

## Things

Tom Kelton

One of the greatest needs Christians have today is to be delivered from things. We live in a world structured with things. How easy it is to get attached to things and be controlled by things.

It is not wrong to own things for several reasons.

First, God made things and said everything he made was good. "And God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31).

Second, God knows that we need things. "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matthew 6:32).

Third, God wants us to enjoy things. First Timothy 6:17 says, "Charge them that are rich in this age, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

Finally, God wants us to use things. In 1 Timothy 6:18 Paul said that we should do good, be rich in good works, be ready to distribute and be willing to share our things.

Our Lord gave us a second truth: It is wrong for things to own us. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Your heart can start to love things. The word for this is "covetousness." Covetousness means that we must have more things, bigger things, greater things. Then we start to measure life by things.

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and money." (Matthew



6:24.) A divided life is a destroyed life. If you start living for things, things will become your master, and this will destroy your life.

God must be the master of everything in our lives. The secret is Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." In other words, take things out of the centre of your life, and let God put things where they really belong.

## The Restoration Of Israel

T.W. Hartle

Do the scriptures teach that the Jewish people will be restored as a nation to Palestine during the Christian age? More specifically, do the 'scriptures teach that all of those of the Jewish heritage will be saved by God?

Let us examine several scriptures which apply to the two questions. The Jewish nation was given certain laws and conditions which had to be observed. In Deuteronomy 28:58-64. God clearly states: "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God," then God warned them of a very sad consequence as a recompense to continued disobedience. "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from one end of the earth even unto the other and there thou shalt serve gods which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone."

This promise to the Israelites without doubt is fulfilled up to the present day! God has been faithful to his promise and to his people even to the extent of punishing. . . . disobedience. God cannot lie, nor can he make an idle threat. Various prophets predicted that they would seek after the Lord and find him even though they were not of Israel. (see Isaiah 65:1, and Isaiah 60:3 in which Gentiles are mentioned.) However, the command and promise noted from Deuteronomy applied to the Jews.

The prophet Isaiah again in Isaiah 9:6-7, and Isaiah 7:14 told of the Messiah to come; his suffering, his birth, how he would grow up, and his death. See Isaiah 53.

Later when Christ did come and had chosen the twelve men to preach the word of the kingdom, he instructed them "Go not on the way of the Gentiles . . . but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5-6). This message was to the Jew first. It was not as yet the appointed time for the Gentiles to be brought in as indicated in Isaiah 65:1; 60:2, 3. That was to be in the future, the appointed fulness of time.

And yet, though the message of salvation through Christ was for all, the Holy Spirit recorded for us Paul's words in Acts 13:46-47, "It was necessary that the word of God should have first been spoken to you but seeing you put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." This is a confirmation of Isaiah 60:3, 65:1, 42:1-6.

The apostle Paul was specifically chosen to preach to the Gentiles according to Acts 26:16-18, "Unto whom now I send thee." Continuing in Romans 2:4-7 are the words, "A remnant according to the election of grace."

Without doubt, the whole Jewish nation was to receive the message of the gospel regarding the Messiah, but it was going to be only a remnant to be saved through the obedience to the gospel. In physical terms a remnant means a portion only and so it is in the Spiritual. The scripture says, "A remnant shall be saved," and remnant it must be. In Romans 9:24, the apostle Paul states, "Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" He continues in verse 27 quoting Isaiah "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." Will the whole nation be saved? No! A remnant only will be saved. In this statement the apostle Paul was referring to the prophecy of Isaiah 10. A remnant of them shall return . . ." (Micah 5:3.) Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth then the remnant of his brethren shall return. The "bringing forth" refers to the coming of Christ. The apostle

Paul says, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (Romans 9 6). They of fleshly Israel, although having the Old Testament law as a heritage, have like the Gentiles, heard the gospel, believed, repented, confessed Christ, and have been immersed into Christ. They and they only fall into the category of the "Spiritual Israel."

The passage used by many of those who affirm that the Jewish nation shall return to Palestine reads; "And so all Israel shall be saved." (Romans 11:26). Does this verse really teach that all physical Jews will be saved, especially in the light of what we have already said? The religious groups who hold this as a platform for their theory, seem to deliberately forget the continuation of verse 26. "There shall come out of Zion a deliverer, and shall turn away all ungodliness from Jacob." In other words, Paul was referring to the promised Messiah to Israel.

Did Jesus not come to Jerusalem (Zion)? But those for whom he had come rejected him and in a lawless manner condemned him to be crucified. Then in Romans 11:25, we read, "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Yes, when God considered it the proper time to save the Gentiles, to be partakers of that which the nation of Israel had despised and defiled, Jesus came. Further, the "in part" simply means that as a nation, they would not accept this deliverer, but the individuals, who did so would be saved. Compare "in part" to "a remnant according to the election of grace."

We can thus say that both the Gentile and the Jew are called to salvation by the preaching of the gospel. Yet, not all Gentiles anymore than all Jews will be saved, because they too suffer with the same malady of unbelief. The Eternal City of God, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-2) will be populated with those that "do his commandments, that they might have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city." (Revelation 22:14).

It is clear that neither all of the Gentile world, nor all of the Jewish nation will be saved unless they pledge full and complete allegiance, individually to Christ the Son of God in obedience to

the gospel. In this obedience they both become "spiritual Israel." The scriptures nowhere even hint at a future in which all of Israel will be physically or nationally saved.

For many reasons, many Jews have and are migrating to Palestine. The Jewish nation may endeavour to rebuild Palestine in anticipation of their king to come. But this is a false security and a false hope. Properly rebuilding the nostalgic nation of bliss would involve the rebuilding of the temple, forming of tribal units, establishment of a priesthood etc., etc. The promised Messiah will have to be born, could all of this be possible in the light of what has already been cited?

No book in the Bible confirms such a possibility of the whole Jewish nation being saved or returning to Palestine. Those who hold this theory, like many other religious groups holding distinctive beliefs, use one or two quotations out of context to confirm the stated position. We are taught to rightly divide the word of truth, comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual. We can then rest assured that the question, "Do the scriptures teach that the Jewish nation shall be restored to Palestine, or all be saved?" The emphatic answer from God's word is, No!

"Let us then endeavour to be silent where the Bible is silent, speak where the Bible speaks, Do things in Bible ways, and call things by Bible Names."

## The Speckled AX

Benjamin Franklin, in his autobiography, tells of the man who bought an ax from the local blacksmith. The purchaser wanted the whole of its surface as bright as its edge and this the smith said he would do, provided the man would turn the wheel while he ground it. It was a hard, wearisome job and often the man stopped to see how the ax was getting on. "Turn on, turn on," said the smith; as yet it is only quite speckled," said the man, "but I think that I like a speckled ax best!"

Is this not the case with too many of God's children? Rather than going all the way into the full consecrated and victorious Christian life, they become satisfied with a "speckled ax" type of religion. Surely, there is more to Christianity than a superficial wax and shine being applied to the edges of our lives. The dedicated Christian will keep the wheel turning daily!