

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## EDITORIAL

### ***What Does the Bible Say About Ash Wednesday, Lent, Good Friday, And Easter?***

Millions of people all over the world during this time of the year will be observing Ash Wednesday, Lent, Good Friday and Easter. What does the Bible say about them?

Ash Wednesday is observed as the first day of lent, that is, the lent period of forty days begin with the observance of Ash Wednesday. The name is derived from the Roman Catholic custom of sprinkling ashes on penitents' heads.

Lent is observed for forty days, which are devoted to fasting and penitence in commemoration of Christ in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry. The name lent is derived from the old English word "Lenten", which actually meant "spring time." many denominational bodies observe this forty days season beginning Ash Wednesday and ending Easter with special religious services.

Good Friday is observed to commemorate Christ's crucifixion. Christ was crucified on a Friday. Two days before Easter, which always falls on Sunday, Good Friday is observed by many denominational sects as a day of mourning. Special religious services are held in remembrance of Christ's vicarious death on the cross.

After His death on the cross, Christ's body was placed in a tomb.

But on the third day, Sunday morning, when some women, according to the Jewish custom, came to the tomb of Christ to anoint the body, they were amazed to find that the large stone that was placed at the opening of the tomb was already rolled away and the body of Christ was missing. As they stood astounded, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe, who told them that Christ who was crucified and whose body they were looking for was not there, but is risen! (Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8). What is called Easter is observed on the Sunday after Good Friday as the festival of Christ's resurrection, corresponding to Jewish passover, and is observed on first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21st. The word Easter is taken from Eoster, a pagan goddess, whose festival was held at the spring equinox, about the same time when Easter is celebrated.

But what does the Bible say about these observances? There is NO Bible authority for the observance of any of these special days. In fact, words Ash Wednesday, Lent, Good Friday and Easter are not even once found written in the Bible. Christians of the first century, about whom we read in our New Testament books of the Bible, never observed any such days. Any religious significance attached to such man-made days is deeply rooted in the traditions of uninspired men.

Those who follow such doctrines are ignorant of what the Bible teaches. Most observe such special days because they have learned about them from their parents or from their religious groups. The truth of the matter is that if God wanted Christians to observe such days in any special ways then He must have revealed about them in His book, the Bible. Since God hasn't said anything about them, these necessarily become vain worship. Hear Christ, what he says at Matthew 15:9, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Christians have always come together, as they do now, for worship on each first day of the week, Sunday, and as they assemble they sing spiritual songs, pray, study from the Bible, give their offerings and also partake of the Lord's Supper which was instituted by Christ Himself just prior to His death for sinners. (Acts 20:7) The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's vicarious sacrifice of the cross. The apostle Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians wrote: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same manner He also took the

cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." No man can be a true follower of Christ and yet faithless with regard to observance of the Lord's Supper. Yet men through the centuries have tried to glorify days which the scriptures do not authorise, while deliberately neglecting the commandments of the Saviour, and the one before whom all of us will stand in judgment one day. Isn't it sad?

## *The Answer is Jesus Christ*

**J.C. Choate**

Man is faced with many problems. He turns to many sources for answers, but instead of finding solutions, he often times ends up with more problems. The reason for this is because he goes to the wrong ones for help.

I would like to suggest to you that whatever your question, your problem, or your need, that you should go to Jesus Christ for the answer. You might not agree with that, but it is true nevertheless. You see, he knows your nature, your thoughts, your motives, and your sins. He knows your friends, your weaknesses, your temptations, and your problems. So, why wouldn't he be able to help you? If anyone can help you then he can, and he can if you will but give him the opportunity to do so. You see, he loves you and he died for you because of that love. He did all of that in order that it might be possible for you to be saved in this world and in the world to come.

First of all, there are many temptations in this world, that is, where you are tempted to give in and to do something that you shouldn't. How would anyone be able to help you with that problem? The answer is Jesus Christ. The Hebrew writer said "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16). Paul offered these assuring words, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to

man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13). Peter added to that, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." (2 Peter 2:9). Will he keep his promise? Again, Peter says that the Lord is not slack to keep his promises. (2 Peter 3:9). That which he says, he will do.

Do you have problems with money and the material things of this world? Most people do. What about your wants, your needs, your debts? There is a yourself to think about, your family, and trying to keep up with the world, and that means pride and a host of other problems. To begin with, you need to get your priorities right, but even with that, you will need help. The answer is Jesus Christ. If you will but look to him, listen to him, and trust him, he can help you to get all of this worked out. You can't expect him to help you though unless you are willing to cooperate and follow his advice. Listen to what Jesus says: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matthew 6:19-21). He continues, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matthew 6:25-34). Now what do you say to all of that?. That's not the answer for you? In that case, the Lord can't help you. But you can mark it down that you will not be able to solve your money and material

problems apart from the advice given here. Even if you gain all of the material things that you want, that will not solve your problem because those material things will not satisfy and besides they will only bring more problems. As mentioned earlier, the Lord can help you solve your problems only if you are willing to accept the solutions that he offers.

Do you have a problem in getting along with others? Many do, but we must realize that we cannot always have our way about everything and run over those who are around us. Jesus Christ has the answer, when he said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matthew 7:12). If we would follow this advice in relation to our families, our businesses, and other relationships in life, then that within itself would solve many of our problems. Christ also taught that we should judge not, that we be not judged (Matthew 7:1) and that we should forgive one another if we expect the Father to forgive us. (Matthew 6:14,15).

But the biggest problem that man has is with sin, obtaining forgiveness, and saving his soul. Man is in sin and that is why he has all of his problems. Even with forgiveness, he will continue to have problems to the extent that he allows sin to re-enter his life. While man most often goes to man for his salvation, this is not the answer since man cannot save himself or anyone else. Man, following man, only multiplies the problem. That is why you have divided churches, ways of worship, and different practices, and in the name of Jesus Christ, except it is not of the Lord, and is therefore false and wrong. If you want the true answer to salvation, then hear the words of Jesus: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). After you have obeyed Christ and he saves you then he adds you to his church. (Acts 2:47). Now you are a child of God, a Christian, and as such you are prepared to live the Christian life. By looking to the Lord for help and guidance, and by being faithful to him unto death, then the Lord has promised to give you eternal life. You can't go to heaven or reach heaven on your own or through any one else except through Christ.

Naturally, we have just touched on a few of man's problems and needs, and we may have not gotten to the one that bothers you most. But be assured that Christ is the answer to your problems, regardless of what it is, as he gives you instructions in his word as to the course you should take in dealing with it. Some comforting and reassuring words of Jesus would be these: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; For every one that asketh

receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matthew 7:7,8).

What is your problem? Remember that the answer is Jesus Christ.

*Especially For Women*

## **"The Woman and Worship"**

**Betty Burton Choate**

Especially in the cities where distances are great and transportation can be a problem, the tendency too often is for the man of the family to attend worship services while the wife and children stay at home.

This practice may seem to make sense. The reasoning may be that the children are too young to learn spiritual matters anyway, so to struggle with getting them on and off buses and to pay out useless money in bus fares for them are unnecessary things. So they stay at home, which means that the mother stays at home also.

What is the result of this practice? Can strong Christian families be developed when only the husband is assembling with others for worship? Can the family learn Biblical truths from this? Can they become involved in spiritual activities of the church in this way? Can they develop a love and closeness with other Christians when they seldom see them? Can proper classes be planned and taught for the children when they cannot be depended on to be there?

Can we as Christians not realize that if only the husband worships God, eventually all others will grow weak spiritually and the whole family will fall from the truth? The only way we can ensure that this generation of Christians remains strong and that the children grow up to be the church of the future is to involve the whole family regularly in worship and in the activities of the church. Again, I repeat: Our families will be lost unless we train them spiritually. We must be aware of this danger to them and do everything in our power to guard against it.

The woman has a soul. She knows that she needs to worship

God. She needs to hear lessons of guidance and encouragement from His word. She needs to learn to love others in the church, to feel a real closeness with her sisters in Christ so that they can share in her happiness or sorrows. She needs to find work to do in helping the church to grow, so that she can also grow spiritually through her efforts for God.

Even though the children may not be able to understand spiritual truths on an adult level, they can certainly understand when they are taught on their own level. That is why it is so very important for parents to go to what ever effort they must in order to take the children to worship each Lord's Day. And there must be classes for them so that they can be trained and will grow up with a full knowledge of God's truths.

Not only must the woman and the children be regular in their public worship, but it is of great importance that the family have a period of devotion and Bible study each day in the home. Not enough can be learned in two hours on Sunday to nourish our souls all week. We must pray regularly and we must study at home. Only in this way can the whole family grow in spiritual strength.

Somehow, within our families we as Christians must realize that all of our achievements, successes, struggles, and goals in this life will be of less importance than dust and ashes if, after all, we lose our souls. All that we work to do for our children, and to give them, will be nothing if we fail to give them spiritual training and if they are lost eternally. We must set our priorities straight. "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

## ***Do You Pay Your Bills?***

**Ronnie A. Missildine**

Honesty is a very strong biblical virtue, but one which is fast fading in our society. "Shady" business dealings, lies, breach of contracts, petty stealing, and shoplifting have become commonplace; and business "plan" for such things in their budgets and inventory.

But such ought not to be the case, ESPECIALLY IN THE CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN. The Bible is very clear in its teaching

against such: "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour. . . Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good. . ." (Ephesians 4:25, 28). One thing I want specifically to address is the responsibility to PAY OUR DEBTS! This is just pure honesty. To fail to do so is DISHONEST! When we sign the loan or charge account documents, we are promising to make the payment of a certain amount by a certain date. To fail to do so is a breach of promise, a failure to be honest, a lie.

Now, I am aware that sometimes extenuating circumstances arise, such as emergency expenditures, etc. But even then honesty and responsibility would demand that we contact our creditors and make arrangements. Too often, however, the problem is not in emergencies, but rather that we over expend ourselves. We over spend on the things we want and/or think we need; and we find ourselves in a financial bind. We ought to be wise in our decisions.

To fail to pay our bills is a direct reflection on the church of God and his way. People form opinions of God, the church, and all Christians, by the way they see US live. If there is anything in the world that is a shame and reproach on the church, it is dishonesty on the part of some of its members--a failure to meet our obligations. God is glorified in our obligations. God is glorified in our righteousness, not in our unrighteous dishonesty!" Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Romans 13:8).

## ***Reconciliation is in Christ Jesus!***

**Dillard Thurman**

After God had created Adam, and placed him in the Garden of Eden, there was perfect agreement and accord between them. God walked and talked with Adam as a friend. But this fellowship was suddenly disrupted, not by what God did, but because of man's sin. God had told Adam and Eve: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17). Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and reaped the sentence of death



for their sin! From the day they ate of that fruit, death began to work in their members! It was their action that impaired the fellowship with God. Until the time of their transgression, nothing was taught in regard to reconciliation, for there had been no estrangement, and nothing had impaired the perfect harmony between God and man.

### **THE DEATH SENTENCE PASSED ON ALL!**

All the hurt, pain, sickness, destruction and death of our time has been inflicted because of man's sin! Though it began with Adam, tragic results of sin fall upon us because of our personal iniquities. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save: neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isa 59:1-2). It is man's own sin that separate from God, and brings on him the results of his evil deeds. Yes, sin was introduced by Adam, but its penalty now affects all! "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12).

Others are not charged with Adam's sin, but each individual pays the price of his own iniquity. It does disservice to God to argue that He would place penalties on those as yet unborn because Adam sinned! Justice and judgment must be meted out to the individual: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10). Long ago the prophet clarified this: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4, 20). It was shown that the son does not bear the guilt of his father's misdeeds. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), but this penalty is placed on the one who sins!

### **MAN BECAME ESTRANGED FROM GOD**

God did not change the relationship toward man; and He did not alter His position! It was man who sinned, and thus departed from God! Man was the aggressor, having aggrieved God by his disobedience! And since man caused the breach, it is for man to make amends and return. Since God was the aggrieved One, it remained for Him to set forth terms of reconciliation that are acceptable to Him! Man was in no position to dictate terms on which he will return! man must be reconciled

to God, but on God's terms of reconciliation! If God became reconciled to man, then man would have remained in his state of sin and degradation. No, God was not to meet man in a degenerate condition. His plan was to lift man from his fallen state, and set him on a plane of justification again. To do this, God gave terms by which man could be reconciled unto Him!

## **"BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD"**

Often it is stated, "What we lost in Adam, we have regained in Jesus Christ." This is so plainly shown in this passage: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22). This reiterates what we have read: "Death is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." This must include the human race: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). While yet sinners, and with enmity toward God, He gave His Son that we may enjoy that divine fellowship again.

God's desire for our reconciliation motivated His sending forth a Saviour! "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." (Col. 1:19-22). Here is specified the place where reconciliation is to be had: "in the body of his flesh through death." Thus it is forcefully shown that reconciliation is not possible out of Christ and out of His body!

## **WHERE IS RECONCILIATION TO BE FOUND?**

This is a most important question, and on the answer hangs the destiny of souls! The Discipline of a most popular religious body states of Christ that He "suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile the Father to us." This presents the picture of God being reconciled to our terms, and not man to His will! Did Christ die to reconcile God to us? or us to God? "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Cor. 5:19). The world had forsaken God, and had to be reconciled to God again! Christ died to bring us back to God: not bring God to us! Thus you see that the Discipline teaches just the opposite to what God's word declares! The "mourners' Bench" system of religion

was predicated on the idea that God must be reconciled to man! Therefore many prayers were offered, and many folk groveled in the saw-dust trails, beseeching God to come down and be reconciled to sinners! How far from what God has revealed about reconciliation!

Whose sin brought about the breach in this friendship with God? Who was responsible for the estrangement? Surely God was not to blame, for it was due to man's sin! Since man caused the separation, man must return; he must be reconciled to God! Yes, He has made reconciliation possible, but with specific stipulations! Man is to be reconciled on God's terms, and in His prescribed place. Study this Scripture closely:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given, unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:18-21). Note what we are told:

1. God reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.
2. He gave to man the ministry of reconciliation (which is the gospel of Christ).
3. The apostles were the ambassadors of Christ (ambassadors are highest foreign ministers).
4. Word of reconciliation has been committed unto us (and all are to use it--Mt. 28:20).
5. We are to beseech all men to be reconciled to God (for only therein is salvation and peace).

This accurately portrays how reconciliation is achieved. Men must hear the gospel, believe that Christ came as God's Son to reconcile us to God, and obey the requirements God stipulates.

### **FURTHER STUDY OF OUR RECONCILIATION**

Before the giving of the law of Moses at Sinai, there was need of reconciliation between God and man. But there was not a great cleavage between the families of earth. But at Sinai, God gave the Law, which effectively separated the Jew and the Gentile and developed

enmity between them. God had fenced in His people (Israel) till the promised seed should come (Gal. 3:19), that all might know His promise had been kept. But the law separated the Jew and Gentile, and enmity and bitterness grew. The Jews and Gentiles had to be reconciled, even as they were reconciled to God.

Notice: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinance; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh." (Eph. 2:11-17). Here is the true basis of reconciliation!

1. Gentiles were called Uncircumcision by Jews.
2. Gentiles were without Christ (no promise).
3. They were strangers from Israel's hope!
4. Were far off, but were made nigh in Christ.
5. Christ made both [Jew & Gentile] one (a new man, a Christian—2 Cor. 5:17).
6. Middle wall of partition [Law of Moses] was broken down that of twain one new man exists!
7. This was done that all might be reconciled to God in one body by the cross!

## **HOW WE OBTAIN RECONCILIATION**

Paul shows how all enmity is done away in the body of Christ. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12: 13). This reconciliation is obtained by being baptized into the one body, which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23;

Col. 1:18). It is there that the final distinction is destroyed, and a new creature lives! "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17). With this induction we find ourselves in Christ, in His body, the church, and in His kingdom. We have become reconciled to God, and are in His spiritual family!

## ***Are One's Feelings Evidence Of Salvation?***

**W.A. Holley**

The Lord God Almighty has a law of pardon. God is always ready to pardon all sinners who will yield to his will (Nehemiah 9:17; Isaiah 55:7).

For one to be "pardoned" is equal to his being saved (Mark 16:16). When one's sins have been remitted, he has been pardoned (Acts 2:36-38). Those who have heard, believed, and have obeyed Christ have been pardoned (Hebrews 5:8-9; Acts 3:19; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

Feelings can be deceptive. Nadab and Abihu may have "felt" like they were doing the right thing when they "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Leviticus 10:1-2). Moses might have "felt" justified in smiting the rock, but his rashness cost him his entrance into Canaan (Numbers 20:7-13; Psalm 106:32-33).

Pardon is an executive act. It takes place in heaven, in the mind of God--not in the heart of man. A man cannot know he is pardoned by the way he feels. Have you heard it said, "I know I am saved because I feel like I am saved." Where is the proof? One can prove (?) any things by subjective feelings. Such subjective feelings nullify the teaching of the word of God, and make every man "right in his own eyes." (Cf. Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The Atheist, and many others, et al. set aside God's holy word and claim they are right because they "feel" they are right (Mark 7:6-13; II Timothy 3:15-17; 4:1-5).

Again, we state: Pardon is an executive act. Just suppose that a man in prison demands to be released because he "feels" like he has been pardoned. Do you suppose he would be released? Not at all! Why? Because pardon takes place in the mind of the Governor, and not

in the mind of the prisoner. The prisoner cannot "feel" the Governor pardon him. Similarly, forgiveness of sin (on the conditions set forth in holy scripture) takes place in the mind of God. The sinner cannot "feel" God pardon him (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). Who wants to purchase a gallon of gasoline, or a yard of cloth, or a pound of bacon, on the basis that the merchant "feels" like he is giving the correct measure?? Do we not have correct standards of measurements? Thirtysix inches equal one yard; four quarts equal one gallon; 5,280 feet equal one mile; sixteen ounces equal one pound. We care little about how the merchant "feels;" we want and demand correct measurements. These formulas are explicit, specific, definite, and categorical.

God's word is God's rule (II Corinthians 10:13, 15; Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:16). Mankind, before the Judge of all the earth, in the Great Judgment to come, will be judged by the word of God (John 12:47-48; Revelation 20:11-15)--not by "feelings"! Of this conclusion we can be sure.

One can know that one has heard, believed and obeyed the truth. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Notice, the Spirit bears witness "with," not "to," our spirit. What does Romans 8:16 mean? The Holy Spirit, through his word, as revealed in the New Testament, has given testimony as to what one must do to become a child of God; and our spirit testifies that we have done those things. Thus the two witnesses "bear witness" together, that we are the children of God. How can one know that he is a child of God? In answer, we quote: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3-4). If the sinner will but do his part--believe repent, confess Jesus' name, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins--(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4)--the sinner can rest assured that God Almighty will not fail to do his part in saving him (Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:20-21; Titus 2:11-12). God always keeps his promises; he "can not lie" (Hebrews 6:18-19).

Trust in God to keep his word; but do not trust in your own heart, for, to do so is to become a "fool" in the sight of God (Cf. Proverbs 3:5; 28:26).

# *The Correct Attitude in Worshipping God*

**Howell Bigham**

The Bible clearly teaches that we are to worship God. Jesus states that "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Therefore, we are to (1) worship God; (2) worship God "in spirit," that is, rationally and sincerely; and (3) worship God "in truth" as the Bible teaches (Colossians 3:17; John 17:17). Therefore, we must possess the proper attitude in worshipping God Almighty.

There are those who display their irreverence and lack of respect for the heavenly Father by their actions. Some, when in the midst of the invitation song, become amused by someone, or some thing, and begin to chuckle. Instead of studying what they sing (I Corinthians 14:15) and "singing with grace" in their hearts (Colossians 3:16), they have their thoughts on something else. Others display their indifference while the evangelist is "preaching the word" (II Timothy 4:2). Rather than listening attentively to God's eternal truths, they have their minds attentively on events planned after the worship service.

Friends, we are to have an attitude of reverence, sincerity, and thankfulness in worshipping God as his word directs! May we possess the blessed attitude of the Psalmist of long ago who uttered "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). Are we eager to assemble with those of "like precious faith" (II Peter 1:1)? or, is the assembly for worship something we dread? do we become bored with hearing God's word preached? or, do we desire to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18)? Are we among those who have their minds centered on the sacrifice of Christ's body and his blood during the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-26)? or, is the communion just commonplace with us (I Corinthians 11:29)? where are our minds during prayer? are we concentrating on the contents of the prayer? or on something else? what is our attitude concerning giving "as God has prospered" us (I Corinthians 16:2) on the first day of the week?

Friends, when we come to worship God on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7) we are to have the right attitude in worshipping God. Those who do not have the correct attitude and who are not willing to

change, would be better off doing something else. Their worship is unacceptable to the Father. In the Bible we read of some whose worship was not acceptable unto the Creator. While Christ was on earth he spoke of the Pharisees: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9). The Bible vividly teaches that our worship will be in vain if we do not worship God as his pattern directs; but our worship can be just as unacceptable if we do not have the proper attitude in worshipping. May we centre our thoughts, not on the things of this world, but on God, Christ, and his word when in worship.

## ***Thoughts on Forgiveness***

**Steve Miller**

As our Saviour Jesus Christ hung on the cross he showed compassion. At a time when anybody else would have cursed or rebuked people, our Master showed and asked for forgiveness for the people because of what they had done. "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." (Luke 23:33-34.)

It is amazing how the Son of God hung on a cross with nail pierced hands and feet and still had a forgiving spirit. This incident alone shows how God loved man enough to send his only Son with a forgiving spirit toward man.

Forgiveness is an important act performed by God to relieve people from their sins. Everyone can have forgiveness of sins if they make the right choice. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:12.) Jesus Christ gives us the "power" or right to become a part of God's family. We have to be in Christ, in his blood, to receive forgiveness of sins. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7). Through the precious blood of Christ we have our sins



forgiven. How do we get into Christ and his blood to receive this? "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. (Galatians 3:27.) Baptism is the act of faith that completes the Gospel Plan of Salvation and brings forgiveness of sins.

After we are cleansed by Christ's blood and have forgiveness of sins, how do we maintain forgiveness? As long as 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." (1 John 1:7.) If we continually strive to love the Lord, keep his commandments (John 14:15), and live a pure life for Christ we are walking in the light.

Trying to live a Christian life and walk in the light is difficult to do sometimes. It would be very easy to adopt a belief of "once saved always saved" and gradually drift away from Christ thinking we are all right. When we look around at many in the church, it seems that they believe this because they practice it. We know from scripture that a child of God can fall from grace (Galatians 5:4; 2 Peter 2:20-22) and not enter the heavenly home prepared for the righteous.

There is only one thing that can stand between man and God. There is only one thing that can keep people from going to heaven when they leave this earth. The Bible teaches that sin that is unforgiven will send a person to eternal hell. Jesus said if one dies in his sins, "Where I go ye cannot come." (John 8:21.)

Forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus is essential to having a home in heaven when this life is over. Obeying the simple gospel of Christ removes our sin, adds us to the one body of believers (Acts 2:47) and gives us assurance of our future destiny if we are faithful to our Creator. (Revelation 2:10).

## ***It Is Fatal To Trifle With The Conscience***

**Edsel Burleson**

An old man was asked to explain his conscience. Placing his hand over his heart he said, "My conscience is a little triangular thing in here

which stands perfectly still when I do what is right, but when I do what is wrong, it turns slowly and it causes much pain. And, if I keep on doing wrong for a long time, by and by the sharp corners wear down and it doesn't hurt any more."

There are those, void of conscience, who can steal or murder without any regret. There are some who can do much evil with what they call a good conscience. Far too many confuse Conscience with personal preference--they reckon, or allow, the inward feeling to agree with what they want to do.

Conscience is inward testimony expressed by pain or pleasure concerning personal judgment on ideas or experiences that have come within the consciousness of the human senses. The mind determines whether or not a position or happening is right or wrong, while the conscience testifies to the personal reaction toward that position or happening whether right or wrong.

Conscience is a distinct, innate human faculty. Its office is not to ascertain the truthfulness of things, but to see that its owner is true to himself and follows his convictions. In violating his conscience, a man so destroys his moral integrity as to make moral spiritual living impossible. the most deadly thing any man can do is to trifle with his conscience, for in so doing he is tampering with the compass of his soul.

A man's conscience can either be set by divine standards or by human standards. If by human standards, then a man's conscience will encourage him to do that which is human. But, if by divine standards, then the conscience will encourage man to live by that which is divine. A man's conscience will not encourage him to do right if his sense of right has been set by human standards. Paul emphasized the importance of the divine standard when he said, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 9:1).

Conscience does not surface until man acts. When man violates his concept of right, or what he supposes to be right, he is condemned by conscience. Where there is no conception of right or wrong, there can be no conscience. It may be safely said that man can never afford to violate his conscience. But one may possess a good conscience and stand condemned.

Let us determine that the divine standard, the word of God, will shape and guide our lives. Someone has written:

I sat alone with my conscience  
In a Place where time had ceased.  
And we talked with my former living  
In the land where the years increased.  
The ghosts of forgotten action  
Came floating before my sight,  
And things that I thought were dead things  
Were alive with terrible might.  
The vision of all my past life  
Was an awful thing to face,  
Alone with my conscience sitting  
In that silent solemn place.

## ***Christian Character***

**W.C. Anderson**

This is written: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see Lord." (Hebrews 12:14.) To follow peace with all men is to be kind and good toward both our friends and our enemies. If we are like this toward everyone we will possess Christian character. To be holy is to be like God. Peter wrote: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15, 16; Leviticus 11:14.)

### **WHAT IS CHARACTER?**

Character is the assemblage of qualities which distinguish one person from another. The twelfth chapter of Romans is filled with qualities or attributes that if practiced by a Christian will distinguish him from a man of the world. There is a list of things that Peter said, ". . .if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:11,12.)

## **CHARACTER DIFFERS FROM REPUTATION**

Our reputation is what is said about us whether it be good or bad. Character is what God knows we are. Jesus was good in character, and he was bad by the reputation of his enemies. God said of Jesus, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him." (Hebrews 5:8,9.)

Jesus knew the nature of mankind. Some will say anything about others if it serves their purpose. What is said may be true or it may be false.

Jesus said, "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil." John ate locusts and wild honey, but the public had not seen this, so they criticized him by accusing him of having a devil.

Jesus came "eating and drinking," so they said, "Behold a man gluttonous, and a Winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." (Matthew 11:18,19.)

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34, 35.) Peter was inspired to say that God does not respect a person just because of what his name is or where he was born. God pays no attention to the colour of his skin. God respects all who do his will.

God respected Abraham when he picked him to head the nation. He told Abraham that he would make of him a great nation and that his name would be great. (Genesis 12:1-3.) How do we know that Abraham was a good character? Because God said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19.)

## **HOW TO BE GOOD**

To be good is to be good in character. This is done by believing that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.) Jesus had said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." (John 8:21.)

When anyone accepts the truth that Jesus is the Christ, he must quit his sins. He does this by repenting. Jesus said, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:2,3.)

A person who believes in Jesus and repents of having lived a disobedient life is a penitent believer. He needs to seek forgiveness of his "sins that are past." (Romans 3:25.) He does this by confessing Christ and submitting to the command to be baptized.

A penitent believer is in a state of being dead in sin. He is guilty of sin and must be delivered from that guilt. When the alien sinner is buried in water baptism he reaches the efficacy of the saving power of Christ's blood. He is raised from the grave alive in Christ. He is then dead to sin. (Romans 6:7.)

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:3, 4.)

Baptism is not only a burial, it is also a resurrection. (Colossians 2:12.) Following the resurrection of scriptural baptism is when the new life of the excellent character begins.

## **Who Will Know**

**Joe Barnett**

A Christian boy away at college was confronted with temptation. He continued to push away from it. Some of his fellow students pressed him to yield. One of them in exasperation said, "Come on and do it! Who will know the difference?"

He answered: "I will know, God will know, my Christian friends will know, and when Christ comes everyone will know. Sorry, fellows, but you'll have to count me out."

**Good answer!!! WHO WILL KNOW?**

**I WILL KNOW.** This is sufficient reason to shun sin even if it's certain no one else will ever know. No one else has to live with my conscience 24 hours a day, but I do. So, I need to conduct myself in such a way that I can lay down at night with a clear conscience and look myself in the mirror in the morning without shame.

**GOD WILL KNOW,** Job, said, "If I sin, then thou markest me. . ." (Job 10:14.) Joseph looked temptation square in the face and refused to yield. He was far away from home, but close to God, He said, ". . . how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9.) I can't do anything that he doesn't see.

**MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS WILL KNOW.** They may not know my particular sin, but they will be aware of my loss of influence. The church is a body-- no member can sin without harming the whole body. When I sin I weaken the church.

**WHEN CHRIST COMES EVERYONE WILL KNOW!** He "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness." (1 Corinthians 4:5). If I sin today I must suffer for it tomorrow.

## ***Why Was Jesus Baptized?***

**Johnny Ramsey**

In Isa. 40 we find a prophetic utterance concerning the forerunner of Jesus. He would "prepare the way for the Lord." In Mal. 3:3, we learn further that he would be a messenger to introduce the Messiah. This one would also come in the spirit of Elijah (Mal. 4:5). John the Immerser fulfilled all of these prophecies. Both Matthew and Mark record such prophecies and show that John fulfilled them (Mk. 1, Matt. 11). Thus, the work of John the baptizer was preparatory to the coming of Christ. But he stated of Jesus, "He must increase; I must decrease" (Jno. 3:30). John's purpose was to get people ready for the kingdom of Christ. His preaching was calculated to bring about repentance on the part of the people. Jesus said later of John, "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11). John's baptism wasn't valid after the death of Christ (Acts 19:1-6), as it was not in Christ's name and the gift of the Holy Spirit did not result therefrom (Acts 2:38).

After John baptized Jesus, it wasn't long until he was imprisoned by Herod and beheaded due to a rash vow the lustful ruler made (Matt. 14:9). Incidentally, John was killed for preaching the truth on the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage. We need more brave preachers today who will speak out against the appalling divorce rate in the world.

Jesus told John why He was to be baptized. "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). We read that "all of God's commandments are righteousness" (Pso 119:172). Thus, Jesus was immersed to fulfill the commandments of God. If He had refused to submit to this divine appointment He would not have been perfect. Jas. 4:17 teaches us, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Jesus, the perfect and spotless Son of God, felt the necessity of baptism. How inconsistent this apparent Bible truth is with the preaching of some today! Shame on the preachers who teach that baptism is non-essential! Acts 22:16 forever proves that immersion in water stands between the sinner and salvation from past sins. Peter wrote, "Baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). How can anyone believe that it has nothing to do with redemption? The purpose or design of baptism for us today is: "to put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27), to receive "remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), to have "a good conscience before God" (1 Pet. 3:21; Heb. 10:22). Have YOU attended to this spiritual command?

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