

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

Editor :  
J. C. CHOATE

Associate Editor  
SUNNY DAVID

•••                      •••                      •••

Published by Church of Christ, Box 3815,  
New Delhi-110049

*Pleading For The Restoration Of Pure New Testament Christianity*

---

Vol. 17

November 1986

No. 7

---

## EDITORIAL



### The Blessings of Forgiveness

How blessed we are indeed to live in a world where there is forgiveness. Christ made it all possible when he died on the cross for the sins of the world. (Romans 5:8). That doesn't mean that all will be saved because of the shedding of his blood, but it means that all people have the opportunity to be saved because of him. Not only that, but all who will believe in him and obey him, will be saved. (Mark 16:15, 16).

Let us now notice some verses of scripture that refer to forgiveness or some similar meaning :

1. Forgiveness. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7). Also read Colossians 1:14.

2. **Remission of sins.** "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38).
  
3. **Saved.** "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16). "The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3 : 21).
  
4. **Salvation.** "Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Titus 2:10,11).
  
5. **Wash Away Thy Sins.** "And now why tarriest thou ? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16).
  
6. **Deliverance.** "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:13, 14). "And to wait for his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thessaalonians 1:10).

7. Freedom. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32). "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:6, 7).
8. Purified. "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently : Being born again, not of corruptible, but by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1:22, 23).
9. Redemption. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place: having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Hebrews 9:11, 12). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree : That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Galatians 3:13, 14).
10. Sins Blotted Out. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19).
11. Sins Covered. "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves : for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8). Also, see James 5:20.
12. Cleansed From Sin. "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." (1 John 1:7).

13. **Born Again.** "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3). "Jesus answered, Verily verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17).

These verses, and many others, tells us of the salvation, forgiveness, and the remission of our sins that we receive when we become believers in Christ and obey his commands. Regardless of what the Lord requires of us, it is little in comparison to what he gives. All that we do to obey him could never pay the Lord for our salvation, since it is by grace that we are saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8,9), but surely we cannot expect to be saved if we are unwilling to comply with his wishes.

How blessed we are to know that the Lord can and will forgive us of all of our past sins as we humble ourselves before him and obey his teaching. Not only so, but as we live for him and remain faithful to him, his blood continues to cleanse us of all of our sins (1 John 1:7), and then to finally receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10), where we shall dwell with the Lord for all eternity.



**associate  
editorial**

## What is the Gospel ?

( 2 )

Have you ever considered what God had to give up to give us the Gospel ? Not only Christ died for our sins, and was, buried and rose again, but there are many many more things involved which made the gospel possible. For instance, before He came and died on

the cross for our sins, where was Christ? This is very important to understand the gospel. According to the Bible, He was with God. When God in the beginning created heavens and the earth, and then spoke, "Let us make man in our own image, according to our likeness," (Genesis 1:26), Christ was there with God. He was a Person in the Godhead. In the New Testament, in the book of John, the record says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without him nothing was made that was made. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1-13,14). The "Word" here clearly refers to Jesus Christ before He was conceived and born of the virgin Mary. Logos, the Greek "Word" was used here by John for Christ, since the Greeks used it to express both reason and speech, and thought and expression. Notice, it says the Word was in the beginning, that is, at the time of creation and through all eternity He was present; and that He was with God, and the Word Himself was God. Christ, before His birth on earth, existed as one of the members in the Godhead. (Romans 1:20). But to accomplish our salvation He voluntarily left His place and glory in heaven and came on earth to live as a man among men. Think about it.

And not only so, but in Philippians 2:6-8 we are told that Christ, "being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of cross." Even though He was in the form of God, a person in the Godhead, but He "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped." And notice, also, what the Scriptures say about Him, in Hebrews 1:3, "who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of his person. . . ." In Colossians 1:15. "He is the image of the invisible God the first born of all creation."

Yet, He made Himself of no reputation, He emptied Himself of all glories that belonged to Him. He laid aside the honours of His Father's throne, and took upon himself the form of a man.

He was not only made in the likeness of men, but He partook of their nature also. Notice, Romans 8:3 says, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh." Hebrews 2:17, 18 says, "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." And again, in Hebrews 4:15 we read, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." It would have been a great humiliation for him to have assumed humanity, even in unique and visible glory, but Christ went beyond this. He became one only of the multitude. He was a commoner. He surely took upon Him the form of a servant. He was the servant of all. He served the needy, the poor, the sick, the hungry, and all, whoever needed His service. And since He served and went to all, He was commonly known as a "Friend of sinners" and one who sits and eat with sinners. And that was not all, but, He still further humbled Himself and became subject to death even the most shameful of all deaths, the death of the cross. "For it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." (Galatians 3:13). He took our curse on Himself and suffered in our stead. He knew no sin (1 Peter 2:22), but yet He was made sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. According to 2 Corinthians 8:9, "though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich."

Then, also think of the fact that being a Person in the Godhead He had all power and all authority from the beginning. But He, "emptied Himself" and "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of man" Christ left all; even the power and the authority, to become man and to die on the cross as a man and to identify Himself with men. Therefore, after His death and resurrection from the dead, when He appeared to his disciples He told them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 20:18). The word "is given" denotes the source from whence He obtained the power and implies that it was not inherent in the Son. Philippians 2:9

indicates that it was given to Him after, and in consequence of, His voluntary humiliation on the cross. It reads, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name." and 1 Corinthians 15:27 shows that it is held in subjection to the Father, and the next verse says that after the general resurrection and judgment the Son Himself will be subjected to Him who put all things under Him that God may be all in all. Let me quote these two verse also to make the matter clear, "For He (God) has put all things under His (Christ) feet, But when He (God) says, all things are put Under Him (Christ), it is evident that He, (God) who put all thing under Him (Christ) is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, (God, the Father), then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him (The Father who put all things under Him (The Son), That God may be all in all."

Think about this, and about all the other things that Christ had to surrender, not only His physical life, which was very little in comparison to other things which He sacrificed to pay for our sins and to save us from the eternal consequences of sin.

I believe the early Christians had really understood the true meaning of the Gospel, they understood what all was involved in the Gospel. Because they were so much eager to share the gospel with others that even when a great prsecution arose against them and they had to leave their houses to be scattered, they "went every where preaching the Word." (Acts 8:4).

## Powers, Signs, Wonders ...what of these things ?

Dan McVey

A certain man fell sick. He prayed to God to heal him, but he still remained sick. Finally, he went to a fetish priest who told him to bring certain gifts to the gods, and who said many strange things. The man recovered. Now whom should this man worship ?

A certain woman had suffered many years with an illness. So many doctors could not give her relief. She went to a spiritualist prophet. He told her to do certain things and bring certain

money for the "Lord". She recovered. Now, should she listen to everything this prophet says? Must she obey the prophet in everything?

We live in a world of many wonders. There are many things we cannot explain, many events that are strange and wonderful. We are surrounded by so many powers that would influence us to follow the gods, the prophets, and miracle workers. Everything from a Fakir on the pathway to long-robed prophets in the streets, these powers, signs, and wonders are there to face us. What do we do?

First, the Bible says we must stay away from witchcraft and idolatry. Galatians 5:20 mentions idolatry and witchcrafts as works of the flesh—evil things that we must avoid. In the Old Testament days, witches and idolaters among God's people were to be killed. God was warning us to stay away from these evil things. (Exodus 22:18; 22:20).

But what of these powers and wonders we see people doing in the name of God or in the name of evil powers? When a sign is performed, is it not from God? Surely only God can do such marvelous works, correct? No. Let's see what the Bible says.

(1) "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder come to pass where of he spake unto thee saying, 'Let us go unto other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them,' thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

You can see how God was warning the Israelite people of false prophets. Some of the false prophets would be able to perform signs and wonders, but what was the test? If the prophet was teaching something different than God's word, even with some power, the people were not to believe him. Power is not always from God.

(2) Jesus said, "For there shall arise false Christs and false



prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive even the elect." (Matthew 24:24).

This warning was to the early disciples during a time of persecution and trouble. In such difficult times, Jesus said false teachers would come and try to deceive the brethren. They would even show great signs and wonders. So even false teachers can show power ! Not all power is from God.

(3) Paul said this about a false teacher : "Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion; that they should believe a lie : that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

Please note that Paul said this false teacher would have power, signs and lying wonders. Also, see that God will allow us to believe these lies if we choose. If we do not love the truth and believe the truth, Satan can and will allow us to believe these lies if we choose. If we do not love the truth and believe the truth, Satan can and will deceive us even with lying wonders. If you are looking for powers and signs, you will find them, but they may not be from God.

(4) The Holy Bible says : "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1). Jesus praised the Christians at Ephesus : "I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not and hast found them liars." (Revelation 2:2).

The Bible tells us to test prophets and self-proclaimed apostles because they may be liar—even with wonderful powers. If a prophet refuses to be tested, he is a false prophet. So many false prophets are telling lies. This is not the way of salvation.

My friends, you can see that God has warned us against believing wonders and signs because not all power comes from God—Satan has power and he uses it to deceive. If you are looking for powers and signs, you will find a world full of them, but not all from God. How do we know the false miracle workers? How do we know the true teachers? Test their teaching—do they agree with the Bible? Are they teaching only the Bible? Are they teaching truth? You must study to know. Do not believe every man or woman just because they say they are from God. Test the spirits. Power is not always a sign of God, but truth is always God's message.

What are you looking for? Truth or powers? The Gospel is God's power (Romans 1:16). Do you believe it? Will you obey Christ? Will you surrender to him in Love?

## The Evils Of Partyism

**Roger Jackson**

A multitude of people in this country, and around the world, are tired of partyism. They have seen its divisive effects and the misery it leaves in its path. But these same people are exasperated because they do not know where to turn. On every hand they hear conflicting claims about soundness and the Lord's approval that range from faulty exegesis of the Bible to fakery in the field of the supposed miraculous. After being repeatedly beguiled into joining a few of these groups, people tend to become defensive and rather reluctant to believe anyone.

The consequences of joining one of these humanly derived institutions or parties are extremely serious. One's soul literally hangs in the balance as well as his peace of mind and temporal happiness. Even to make the right choice is to cause some strife according to the Master's own words (Matthew 10:34). This would not be so if it were not for the rival institutions of men's devising. These institutions thrive because men preach that which is not to be found in the Bible, and build these parties around that teaching (Romans 16:17, 18; Matthew 15:9-15). Paul marked "seditions" ("parties") as one of the works of the flesh (Galatians

5:19-20). And yet, with all the problems of partyism, the Bible requires that we make the right decision (Ephesians 4:14). Then, it must be the case that God has given us enough simple, understandable information to avoid partyism and make the right choice.

Partyism in our confusing world can be avoided because Jesus said that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand (Mark 3:25). The correct division in the religious world is not a matter to be applauded by the masses, but a situation to be avoided and eliminated.

You do not have to be a part of any man's party in order to be a faithful Christian. Jesus told us what his will is in the matter in John 10:16: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." The "other sheep" of whom Jesus spoke were the Gentiles. The "one fold" is the church that you read about on the pages of the New Testament, also called the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:16-19; Colossians 1:18). It was the will of the Lord, and still is, that all his followers be one (John 17:20, 21). While so many men today are praying that this prayer of the Lord will be answered some day, it is a fact that it was answered in the first century. They came about many centuries later.

Concerning the church of the first century we learn that they were "... together, and had all things common" (Acts 2:44). Is that the situation today in the denominational world? Is that what we call "together?" "Denomination" means division. As long as one denomination exists on the face of the earth there will be division. Acts 2:47 expressly states that the Lord adds every Christian to the church. "Which church" you ask? Well, how could it be any single one of the denominations since not a one of them existed? The church that has nothing to do with partyism is no part of denominationalism and goes far behind it for its origin. If you are one of those souls who is tired of partyism, you should know that it IS possible to find that church today and avoid partyism.

The search for the ancient congregation of God's people is

not an easy one, but not because God has made it so. Men are to blame! Neither those who founded these parties, nor those whose livelihood is derived from their existence, will soon surrender. They have become professionals at defending their institutions. Paul described men like them as those who are self-serving and silver-tongued (Romans 16:18). While he said there is simplicity in Christ, he warned that the devil transforms himself into an angel of light in order to deceive people (II Corinthians 11:3, 11). Peter added that there were men even in his own lifetime who "wrested" (or, twisted) the Scriptures (II Peter 3:16). The great and expensive temples and cathedrals of our world do not exist because of some accident, but are monuments to the success of deceptive men.

The solution to partyism is a simple one, and yet it is by no means an easy one. It is the solution that has been proposed by the church of Christ as long as it has existed (Romans 16:16), because it is found on the pages of the Bible (II Timothy 3:16, 17). If we will be simple New Testament Christians to the exclusion of any and all party names, we will have taken the first step (Acts 11:26). That name is not only authorized in the Scriptures, but it has no divisive features. It is unlike the names attached to it by men, or worn as substitutes for it. It glorifies no man but Christ, no human system of theology at all and no party of man's genus. In the divided "Christian" world, are men feuding over the name "Christian?" or over party names? Then would it not go a long way to eliminate much of the problem if we eliminated one of the chief causes?

A second part of the solution to partyism is for all of us to be members of only one church. Before one gasps in unbelief that anyone would make such a proposal, just ask yourself how many churches you read about in the Bible (Matthew 16:18). When Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus he wrote to only one and all the saints in Ephesus were in it (Ephesians 1:1). The same was true at Philippi (Philippians 1:1). If it is incredible (and it is not!) to think that all men can be members of one church today, and yet they were in the first century, who has changed man's thinking? When one obeys the gospel, the Lord takes care of his church membership (Acts 2:47). You don't have to worry about

which church to join; God has taken the guesswork out of that. If the church of Christ identifies with that church, that is it to which you have been added. We confidently affirm that such is the case.

A third part of the solution to partyism is for all of us to worship one God and acknowledge one Messiah, Jesus Christ. We will never eliminate partyism as long as some seek the favor of men. Partyism will live and thrive as long as Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, or the Pope and such like share a throne of authority in men's hearts. The Bible makes no room for any of these, from the giving of the ten commandments to Jesus' pronouncement, "All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth . . ." (Matthew 28:18). It is he who has given us the only confession of faith, the Bible (John 16:13-15), and sealed it with the warning not to add to or take from it (Revelation 22:18, 19). In its pages is not only the word of life, but the one form of church government that pleases God. (Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23).

Finally, we suggest that partyism can be avoided if we expel those, and only those, from our fellowship who break divine law and refuse to repent (II Thessalonians 3:6-11). We have no right to devise laws that men are to bow to, and limit our fellowship only to those who submit to our wills. Neither must we accept those who violate the Divine will (II John 9-11). Those are the limits prescribed in the Bible.

There is no need for you to be a member of any party. If you are among those good souls who deplore partyism, take new courage! You don't have to be a part of it. The churches of Christ solicit your earnest investigation. We humbly ask that you join hands with us on the Bible and the Bible alone, in our efforts to be simple New Testament Christians.

## A Payday For Sin

Raymond Allen Hagood

There is, on the part of some, a type of thinking which excludes the possibility of punishment for the sins one commits. It is as if some believe that they can sin with impunity. While this

rationale is extremely comforting, it has no support from the scriptures. In fact, the Bible teaches exactly the opposite.

Paul has this to say concerning the matter : "Be not deceived; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

The inspired writer assures us that we are not to deceive ourselves into believing that there is not a payday for sin. Paul says that we reap what we sow. If then we have sown the seeds of sin, we will also reap the perdition of sin. King David discovered this great truth in the long ago (II Samuel 11 through 18).

After David had sinned with Bathsheba and after he had brought about the death of Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) to cover up his sin, he took Bathsheba as his own wife. David perhaps thought, at least at that point in his life, that he could commit adultery and murder with full exemption from any penalty of payment for sin. He soon learned that such thinking is the grossest kind of folly.

God sent Nathan the prophet unto David. Nathan told the king a story of two men in one city. One of the men was rich and the other, very poor. The rich man had vast flocks and herds; the poor man had but one little ewe lamb. He viewed the house of the rich man. The rich man wished to feed the traveller but instead of taking one of his many lambs, he went and stole the poor man's only ewe lamb and killed it for the wayfarer.

When David heard this story, his sense of equity was stirred, and he said unto Nathan : "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die : and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity" (II Samuel 12:5-6).

Nathan responded to David's pronouncement of penalty by saying, "Thou art the man." (II Samuel 12:7). David, who had been beside himself for so long, was now awakened to the fact that he was the rich man who had many wives and yet who had entered into a poor man's house and stolen the only wife the poor man had.

David repented of his sin (Psalms 51), and the Lord put away

his sin so that he would not die. That putting away, however, did not set aside the immutable law of God that we reap what we sow. David had sown grievous sin, and now the payday had come. Nathan told David that the sword would never depart from his house. His own family would fight and kill each other. He was also told that the baby born of Bathsheba would die. Further, he was informed that one of his own house would lie with David's wives and that all Israel would know of the shameful deed.

David learned that day that there is truly a payday for sin. Before this tragic episode was over, a baby died; Tamar, David's daughter, was shamed for life; Absalom, David's son, killed his brother Amnon; Absalom incited an insurrection against his father David; and, finally, Absalom was killed by the forces of David.

Truly David learned that there is a payday for sin when news came to him that Absalom, the son he loved so dearly, had been killed. David cried, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Samuel 18:33).

We would prosper if we could be convinced that, even though sin promises great things, it can only bring heartache and tragedy to all our lives. Truly, there is no such thing as sinning with impunity.

## What Are The Rules ?

**Bobby Liddell**

"What are the rules?" That was always the first question that was asked whenever we would start one of our childhood games. Such a query stemmed from the blessing of having parents that demanded honesty and fair play. It was of utmost importance that the rules be clearly stated at the beginning for harmonious play and the correct and quick settlement of any dispute. Occasionally, there would be one who, because of pride or bad sportsmanship, would want to ignore the rules, or even worse, to change the rules in the middle of the game. Such an attitude

always brought problems, and when the offending party was reminded of the rules, often there would be an angry outburst, or tears and the threat of not coming to play anymore.

“What are the rules?” Should that not be the first question that man asks about life? A clear understanding of the rules would prevent many problems, and would settle others. To God man must go with the question, “What are the rules?” God replies by directing man to hear the word of the Lord (Luke 11:28), keep his commandments (I John 5:3), and thus receive the promise of victory. (I John 5:4). The rules of life are clear, understandable, and unchangeable. They have even been written down that man might not be unwise, but upon reading might understand what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:17; 3:3, 4).

Sadly, some folks, for one reason or another, want to ignore the rules of life or change them in the middle of the game. Not only those outside of Christ, but saints, even bishops, deacons, and gospel preachers, fall to this temptation. The world ignores God’s rule that demands obedience in order to obtain eternal life. (Hebrews 5:8, 9). Some disciples who have lived faithfully for many years in accordance with God’s rule (Galatians 6:16), have a loved one involved in an unscriptural divorce and remarriage: and to them, that calls for a change in the rules. An elder or an eldership, under pressure (whether real or imagined), decides social drinking, dancing, and such like are all right, and that the strict morality demanded by God’s rule is out of date. A gospel preacher preaches fervently and faithfully against immodesty for many years in keeping with God’s rule (I Timothy 2:9), until his daughter reaches the teen years; and suddenly there is a call for a change in the rules.

“What are the rules?” Equally important, “Who makes the rules?” The New Testament of Christ is the rulebook of life (John 6:68), and God is its author. (Hebrews 1:1, 2). The rules have not changed since given nearly two thousand years ago, and they will not change so long as this earth stands. (Matthew 24:35). By them, our lives shall be judged (John 12:48), and by them, we must live if we shall live.

All accountable ones have broken the rules, for “all have



sinned" (Romans 3:23). What shall be our attitude when confronted with that transgression? Shall we become angry? Shall we feel offended and mistreated? Shall we leave to look for someone with the same disregard for the rule as we? Or, shall we know the peace and harmony that comes with adherence to the will of God, living by his rules?

As we contemplate life, should not the very **FIRST** question we ask be, "What are the rules?"

## A New Wrinkle

Ray Hawk

A new "wrinkle?" Are we talking about growing old? No. There are some who have introduced a new way of trying to justify mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the New Testament church.

These brethren agree that mechanical instruments of music are **NOT** found in the New Testament. They agree that the church in the first century used **ONLY** vocal singing. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). They agree that mechanical instruments of music were **NOT USED FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AFTER** the first century. They agree that mechanical instruments of music are an **ADDITION** to the worship; and that additions are **FORBIDDEN** by the Lord. (Revelation 22:18, 19; II John 9). They will tell you mechanical instruments of music are **WRONG**, and that they cannot use them in good conscience. **HOWEVER**, they do not believe there are sufficient grounds to make the practice a test of fellowship—in spite of the above!

Here is their argument: All of us sin. No one is sinlessly perfect. All depend upon God's **GRACE** to save. Since those brethren who use mechanical instruments of music are honest and sincere in their use of them, God's grace will cover their imperfect practice, just as his grace will cover our imperfect ways. Even the Corinthian church is used to illustrate this new wrinkle. We are told these brethren had all kinds of sin, yet Paul did not withdraw from them. This may be true; but he **DID NOT** tell them to **REMAIN** in their error! In fact, he told the brethren to

withdraw from one man who was living with his father's wife, and from those who were practicing several other categories of sin. (I Corinthians 5:1-11). This they did. (II Corinthians 2:5-11). He also instructed them concerning their error, and how to get out of it. One may not remain in sin, continue to practice it, and expect God's favor (grace)—unless he believes in the doctrine of once saved, always saved! I do not. (I Corinthians 10:12).

What bothers me about this new wrinkle is that brethren who ADMIT that mechanical instruments of music are an ADDITION to the word of God, are NOT AUTHORIZED by scripture, are FOREIGN to New Testament teaching, and A SIN for us to practice—are trying to JUSTIFY it for others! Those who are using it are not giving it up. They think WE are the weaker brethren and that we need to give up our OBJECTIONS to the practice, and allow them to use their mechanical instruments.

### Conclusion

Mechanical instruments of music were used under Old Testament worship. (Psalms 150). They were not carried over into New Testament worship. God's authorized instrument on which to make melody today is the human heart (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). To ADD any other KIND is to ADD to the word of God, and to be guilty of preaching another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). To continue in a practice that is FORBIDDEN by the Lord is to place oneself in a position of being cut off from God's fellowship (II John 9). Are those who are our brethren who use mechanical instruments of music in worship, who try to justify their practice, who are unwilling to give it up for the sake of unity, and who insist that we stop objecting to their unscriptural practice, really trying to remain in God's grace?

## Do This In Remembrance Of Me

Francis K. Nartey

Many religious groups celebrate many feasts like Christmas, Easter, Ash-Wednesdays and many others in remembrance of Christ. What does the Bible say about these celebrations? Let us

find out from the scriptures.

From Genesis through Malachi, nothing is said to be done in remembrance of Christ, but in the books of the Gospel and in the Epistles a feast is instituted to be done in Christ's remembrance and that is the Lord's Supper.

God sent Christ to die and deliver us from our sins. (Romans 5:8). Before His death, He commanded His disciples to partake of the supper in His remembrance. (Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-19). "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And He took the cup, and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" (Matthew 26:26-28). NOTE: All the four books of the gospel give the same account, and in Luke 22:19, Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." Also, the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth concerning the Lord's Supper, when he heard they were partaking of it improperly. (1 Corinthians 11:20-34). In verse 23 it reads: "For I have received from the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus Christ the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which was broken for you. THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.' "

From this, we can see that Paul quoted what was already recorded in the gospel and is exactly what Christ told His disciples. In fact, apart from this supper, nothing else is said in the Bible to be done in Christ's remembrance. Neither Christmas nor Easter is mentioned anywhere in the Bible as a memorial of our Lord. Any one or group of people who do this is/are pleasing men and not Jesus Christ.

Now for those who do these things and claim they are doing the will of God, the question is: "Whose doctrine are they following?" Why don't we search the Scriptures and do what is authorised?

## What Day Should It Be Partaken?

In the Old Testament, we can see that the Levite priests ate shew-bread every Saturday in the house of God. (Leviticus 24:8-9). And in the New Testament—all Christians being priests (1 Peter 2:9)—are to partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine which represent Christ's body and blood, instead of the shew-bread, and on Sunday instead of Saturday. In Acts 20:5-7, we can see that Paul and some of the brethren went to Troas and stayed there for six days. They waited until the 7th day (first day of the week, which is Sunday) before they met and brake the bread.

The Bible makes it clear that the early Christians met on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1,2). Also, when they met, all of them partook of the supper. (Acts 2:42). What about members of some religious groups who refuse to partake of the supper? Let's do it as it is authorised. It is weekly—not quarterly, monthly, annually, or when the priest comes.

The Word of God says, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9). Please, friend, follow not the blind leaders—follow, rather, the doctrines of Christ so that you might be saved. (Matthew 7:25). There is no indication in the Bible that Christ Himself ever celebrated His birthday anywhere as he lived on earth for about 33 years. Why try to do so? Why did God not tell us in the Scriptures when Christ's birthday was? God is wise—His life was before the foundation of the world. By celebrating Christmas as a birthday of Christ, are you not telling God that He is forgetful and that you want to remind Him of His Son's birthday? Remember, Christ's life did not begin on the earth that we should give a date for it. We must obey God by observing that Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ. The warning is still in effect: "If ye love me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15).

## Restoring the Erring

Johnny Ramsey

The last verses in the book of James challenge Christians to

be deeply concerned about brethren who have fallen away from the Lord's service. If we hated sin properly and valued the precious souls of those who have gone astray, we would never cease to strive to restore the wayward to the cause of the Master. So much potential power is drained from the kingdom of God because thousands live beneath their privileges by giving Satan the talents that rightly belong to Christ. When we allow scores of church members to remain delinquent in their spiritual endeavors, we partake of the problem by our own indifference. As the prophet said, "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezek. 3:18). A failure to warn will surely rise up to haunt us in the day of Judgment: "Exhort one another while it is called Today, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).

Brotherly love (1 Pet. 2:17) demands that we restore weaker members of the body "and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1-2). Why are we so slack in these exceedingly vital matters? Let me suggest three major contributions to our negligence in this top priority situation.

**1. We do not esteem spiritual values.** Even in our prayers, we pray much more for those who are ill physically than for those who are lost in sin. We borrow money from the bank in huge amounts for temporal buildings while ignoring the "house not made with hands" (2 Cor. 5:1). We provide clothes, food and shelter for those impoverished folk in our midst, while we are slothful indeed to provide for people who are perishing without Jesus!

Down in the human heart,  
Crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried  
That grace can restore.

As long as we allow our materialistic society to overwhelm our emphasis in life, we will be slow to reach out to lost humanity to

ransom their sin-sick souls. Nothing should compel our days more than the pursuit of those who have wandered back to the beggarly elements of the world. (2 Pet. 2:21).

**2. We are selfish with the joys of salvation.** If we truly love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matt. 22), we desire for them the very things that bring us happiness. Since Christianity is the zenith of all blessings, we ought to share such resplendent joys with all mankind. There could be no greater selfishness than to keep the gospel away from lost humanity. When we know that brethren have left the service of the Savior, and we let them continue in lethargy and shame without any rebuke or exhortation, we manifest a calloused heart of unconcern.

While the souls of men are dying,  
And the Master calls for you,  
Let no one hear you idly saying  
There is nothing I can do.

King Saul informed David of a noble purpose in the realm of godliness and concern for others: "My soul was precious in thine eyes this day" (1 Sam. 26:21). Solomon reminds us, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). When we become so overwhelmed in comfort and ease that we care not for the happiness of others, we are closer to Satan's grasp than we think.

**3. We must not realize the sorrow of being lost.** Many once obsessed with alcohol work feverishly with neighbors with the same weakness because they are aware of the tragedy of such affliction. Those of us who remember the pangs of iniquity and the sorrow of wandering in the dark corridors of the world ought to reach out to the teeming millions of earth who have allowed the brilliant light of truth to elude them. It is sad to hear of a child who is lost away from family and home, in an unfriendly world. But sadder by far is the plight of accountable beings lost beyond recall in an eternity without end!

Careless soul, why will you linger,  
Wandering from the fold of God?

When we really believe the lost will go to hell, we will restore the erring.

## Advantages of Daily Bible Reading

Harshel Dyer

**It Leads to a Greater Knowledge of God's Word** Apart from the individual study of the Bible there can be no real knowledge of God's Word. Geologists can tell us much about the formation of rock, clay, minerals, etc., that lie beneath the surface of the earth. Their knowledge has been acquired through digging, drilling, mining and close observation. Much time and effort are likewise required of those who would come to know the Word of God. But when gained, their knowledge will not only benefit its possessors; it will also enable such a one to help others who need light and instruction.

**It Leads to a Closer Walk With God.** It has been said, "When we pray, we talk to God; when we read the Bible, God talks to us." Some make their conversation with God too one-sided; they are often telling God their wants of Him, but they spend little time in finding out what He wants of them. Saturate your mind daily with God's Word and you will find your life being molded and made into the likeness of God. Life will grow richer and more meaningful. It will take on real purpose, for no man can walk with God and feel that he is living in vain.

**It Leads to an Open And Manifest Life of Faithfulness.** "Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on the stand and it shineth unto all that are in the house" (Matt. 5:15). The daily reading of the Bible makes one want to share his information and inspiration with others. He is anxious to attend the Bible classes; he relishes sermons that draw from the deep things of God; his heart soars to lofty heights during the solemn prayers and with the melodies of the sweet, sacred songs. He would fain weep while he rejoices each time he approaches the Lord's Table. His liberal hand gives readily of such as God has

first given to him. We do not believe daily Bible readers are commonly absent from the meetings of the church. Daily Bible reading cultivates the spiritual mind and prepares it for the appreciation of worship, both private and public. We believe there is an inseparable link between daily Bible reading and regular attendance at public worship. The last may exist apart from the first but we think the first is rarely found apart from the last.

Have you come to know the fruits of daily Bible study in your own life? Truly, your joy and usefulness can be greatly increased thereby. Try it and see!

## The Grace of Golgotha!

Royce Fredrick

Jesus was suffering the agony and humiliation of public execution at "a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull" (Matthew 27:33). The religious leaders had labeled him an enemy of Moses. The civil government, by consenting to the crucifixion, had labeled him an enemy of Rome. After the nails had been driven through his flesh and he had been raised high above the crowd, Jesus pleaded: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34).

If Jesus of Nazareth had been an imposter, the crucifixion would surely have exposed that fact. The agony of the cross revealed his true character and grace. Instead of retaliating, he appealed to his Father to pardon his murderers. The execution, which his enemies had hoped would end his influence, became the very means by which he draws men unto himself.

In the early days of his ministry, Jesus had preached a sermon in which he had said, "Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44). Through the cross, we can see that those were not empty words. The message he had preached on that mountain in Galilee, he practiced on mount Calvary.

If our Lord could forgive his persecutors in the very midst of



his agony, can we be excused for bearing grudges and bitterness over the small abuses which come our way ?

## Victory In This World

Ronnie Lowe

Doubtless, everyone wants to be a winner, for nobody enjoys being on a losing team. We each want to feel as though we are getting the most out of life. But how is this possible ? Men have searched for the answer in power, wealth, prestige, self-indulgence, and worldly possessions, only to conclude, as did Solomon, that "all is vanity [emptiness] and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 2:1-17).

After exploring all the possibilities, the wise man concluded that the full life was to be found only in fearing God and keeping his commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Christianity is not a life merely to be endured in view of future reward, but rather it is an abundant and victorious life to be enjoyed even in this world. Christ said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10). Paul wrote, "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8).

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength : they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Following God is not a weight, but wings. It lifts us up and carries us over the rough and hard places and gives us renewed strength. To whom is this type of life promised ? To those who follow the Lord!

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting O grave, where is thy victory ? . . . But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). Death is the final struggle of mankind, but we can be victorious even over this. How? Only through Christ ! For only those who have followed him through this life can walk with him, through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4) and into his eternal home.

# A Man's Greatest Possession

Roger Shiflet

Most people are not at all rich with material riches. And yet the most precious possession which a person can have is something which every one has, but which most people neglect. That greatest of all possessions is an eternal soul.

Each person's soul is **unique**. God gives each person an individual soul. God "formeth the spirit of man within him" "(Zechariah 12:1).

The soul is precious because it is **everlasting**. As we live our bodies grow old and weak. Some are ravaged by disease, and all will eventually turn back into dust. "And the Lord God formed man of the **dust of the ground**, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). "All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:15). Though our bodies last only few years, souls are eternal. Paul spoke of this when he said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle [the human body] were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (11 Corinthians 5:1). Within every person, regardless of skin, color, rich or poor, powerful or weak, there is an eternal soul.

Because there is within each of us that eternal soul, the greatest decision we must make in this life is "Where will be the eternal dwelling place of my soul?" Jesus said in Matthew 16:26, For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? There are only two possible destinies for each person's soul, and by the way we live, we choose one destiny and reject the other. "Enter ye in at the strait [tight] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Reve-

lation 22-12). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

No man can save himself by himself. But Christ Jesus died on the cross, paying the penalty for our sin, so that, through faith in his cleansing blood and obedience to his will we can choose eternal life. Thus, Paul speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God and our Fathers." (Galatians 1:4). Yes, man's only hope of salvation is Christ. Therefore I endure all things for elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (11 Timothy 2:10).

Because salvation is in Christ, we must do whatever the Bible says must be done to enter Christ. We must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: "for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24). But belief is not the final step which puts us into Christ. We must also repent of our sins: "God . . . now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). repentance does not put a person into Christ. We must also confess our faith in Christ: With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). But confession does not put us into Christ. The step that will put a person into Christ, into salvation, is **baptism**: "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." (Romans 6:3). "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27). Thus, when a person has believed, repented, confessed Christ, and "put on" Christ in baptism, he is a Christian, a child of God, a citizen in God's great spiritual kingdom, the church.

But that is not the end of a person's responsibility. He must continue to live, day by day, in obedience to the will of God. This is what the apostle John meant when he said, "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." (I John 1:7).

If we would choose to dwell forever with God in heaven, we must "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily

beset [surround, beseege] us" (Hebrews 12:1). We must "eschew [turn away from] evil and do good" (I Peter 3:11). In Galatians 5, the apostle Paul speaks of the battle which rages within each individual. A part of each person wants to do that which is evil (Paul calls this the lust [strong desire] of the flesh. And another part of each person wants to do what is good (Paul calls this the fruit of the Spirit). The apostle explains that if we desire to inherit the kingdom of God (go to Heaven), we must hold back the lusts of the flesh : "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (indecent behavior), idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance [quarreling], emulations [jealousies], wrath, strife, seditions [divisions], heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings [lustful merry-making], and such like" (Galatians 5:19-21). Also we must produce the fruit of the Spirit : "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23). When a Christian does this, he is walking in the light.

Even the poorest man in the world has the greatest possession anyone can have—his eternal soul. Will you neglect your soul? Or, will you become a member of Christ's church by obeying the gospel and then try to grow in Christ every day? Peter wrote, "add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Peter 1:5-7). Christ said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). You are making your decision day by day. What will you do with your soul?

□ + □