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EDITORIAL

The Christian And The World

There are so many different things being practiced in our world today that a Christian just cannot participate in them and be acceptable to God. A follower of Christ is daily tempted to conform to the world's standards, and especially a young Christian faces an increasingly immoral world by what he sees and hear and reads every day. People's thinking and conduct are largely influenced by the society they live in. Then there are movies and literature, in most cases very worldly, and television to influence the lives of people. Yet the Christian is told to "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12 : 2). Its a great challenge for a Christian to live in the present generation !

The Christian must accept the fact that he is now a changed and a converted person, who is going to exemplify Christ and His teaching in his life, and not what the world says or practices. Peter wrote Christians and, said, "For to this you were called .." (1 Peter 2 : 21). Writing to Christian women he said : "Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." (1 Peter 3 : 3, 4). Also Paul said, in his epistle to Timothy, in 1

Timothy 2 : 9-10, concerning Christian women : "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." The point is made here that everything that a Christian does must be done to glorify and please God. A Christian should not dress or live or do anything to impress people, but everything the Christian must do to impress God. (Matthew 5 : 16).

Likewise, the Christian must accept the fact that his body belongs to God, it is the temple of God, where the Spirit of God through His living word dwells, and God warns His people by saying, "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him, For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." (1 Corinthians 3 : 17). The Christian's body is not his own, because he was bought at a price, both body and soul. Therefore the Christian ought to glorify God both in his body and in his spirit. (1 Corinthians 6 : 20). Knowing that his body is the temple of God, a Christian therefore cannot defile God's temple by thinking evil, or by using bad language. He would not drink strong drink, neither would he smoke or take drugs or do any thing that is bad; which would destroy his influence and health. As a matter of fact he would abstain from all works of the flesh as mentioned in Galatians 5 : 19-21, because he wants to live by God's standard and not by world's standard.

The world is putting more emphasis on materialism, which means blindness to the spiritual and excessive devotion to bodily wants or financial success. Making money is the only goal of most people today. Man can go to any extent for making a few extra rupees. Just as the rich young ruler of the Bible, who realized that there was an eternal life in heaven, and even desired to possess it, but was not willing to give up his worldly riches to gain the spiritual. Many are endangering their souls' destiny, for the love of money. Paul, in colossians 3 : 5, said to Christians, "Put to death therefore your members which are upon earth...and covetousness which is idolatry." Many today are worshipping at the shrine of idolatry because of covetousness. The Christian, however, ought to remember what Christ taught in Luke 12 : 15; He said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in

the abundance of the things he possesses." Instead of seeking earthly pleasures and going after money to become rich in this present world, the Christian should so live and conduct himself that he might become rich toward God by seeking His will and by doing those things that He expects from His people. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6: 19,20). He also taught: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6: 33). And finally, the Apostle of love wrote to his fellow Christians and said: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2: 15-17). The Christian lives and that is the differences in the world, but he is not of the world.

Begin The Church Where You Are

J.C. Choate

There are no doubt many Christians in this country that are living in cities and villages where the church does not exist. Perhaps you have heard gospel broadcasts, taken a Bible correspondence course, or both, but you learned the truth, and obeyed it, and there you are all alone. There may be others of you that lived in a city where you had the opportunity to hear the gospel, to obey it, and to worship for some time with a congregation of the church of Christ. But then you departed from that place and moved to your present location where there is not a congregation of the Lord's people. This may be your situation, but others of you may have other stories that you could tell. Regardless,

though, whether it came about in one way or the other, if you are in an isolated area, by yourself, with no other Christians to have fellowship with and with which to worship, then you need help. So what can you do in a case like this ?

First, if you really know God's will, understand that Christ has but one church, and you are a member of it, then even if there are other churches (denominational) where you are, you know that you cannot worship with them. It is not that you are proud and feel that you are better than they are. Neither is it that you want to be mean and ugly. Although you may have some things in common with them, in that you all believe in Christ, still there are many differences. They are members of churches that you cannot read about in the Bible, wear man-made names and titles, and worship different to the teaching of the New Testament. In this case, you must remember the words of the Apostle John, when he said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed : For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 9-11).

Second, you can't just forget that you are a Christian and a member of Christ's church. If you do, you will die spiritually, and so that is not the solution to the problem. So again, what can you do ?

Third, you can begin a congregation of the Lord's church where you are. Whether you are a man, woman, or young adult, you can still take the lead in this. But how ? Let me tell you.

On the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, or Sunday, set aside a period of time that you are going to worship. You would probably begin in your own home, and if you have family members and friends, invite them to join you. If you are a man, or a young man, you should take the lead. Select some portions of scripture in the Bible or New Testament and read them to yourself or to those that may be present. Follow that with a prayer. You can thank God for his blessings, ask for guidance in the worship and work you are beginning, request him to forgive you of your sins,

and say whatever else to him that you want to say, and then close your prayer to the Father in the name of Christ. Then if you have one or more song books, or know some choruses, then choose one or more, and take the lead in singing a song or two or even more. This should be without any mechanical accompaniment. Paul says that we are to sing and the melody is to be made in our heart to the Lord. (Ephesians 5 : 19). Then one of the main purposes for gathering to worship is to remember the body and blood of Christ by partaking of the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 26 : 26-28; 1 Corinthians 11 : 23-29). The bread (unleavened) is to be partaken of in remembrance of the body of Christ and the suffering that he went through on our behalf as he died on the cross. The cup (fruit of the vine or grape juice) is to be partaken of in remembrance of the blood of Christ, that blood that was shed that we might have the remission of our sins. A word of thanks should be said for the bread before it is partaken of and likewise thanks is to be offered before you partake of the cup. These may be passed to those present in case they would like to partake of it, but only those who are members of the church should be encouraged to partake of it.

Before going further, let me give you a recipe for Communion Bread.

1 cup of plain flour.

3 tablespoons of olive oil.

Dash of salt,

Cut oil into flour.

Add approximately 2 tablespoons of cold water.

Mix together lightly and roll out on a floured surface.

Score into small squares with a seamstress' tracing wheel or with a knife.

Bake in 450 degrees oven until lightly browned.

The amount may be increased or decreased according to the need.

The bread should probably be prepared the night before so that it will be ready when needed.

For the fruit of the vine, you may be able to buy a bottle of grape juice.

If you are where none is available, then you can buy some raisins or dried grapes, boil them, and take the juice from them, and put in small cups or glasses for serving. Or you can buy some grapes and squeeze the juice from them for the cup.

And finally, a collection should be taken to enable you, and others that may want to give, to have the opportunity to give of your means. Paul said that we should give as we have been prospered and that we should do that cheerfully and as we have purposed in our hearts. (1 Corinthians 16 : 2; 2 Corinthians 9 : 7). That which is given then should be set aside for the Lord's work. It can be used to buy Bibles, song books, or other needs, and likewise to preach the gospel, and to help those who are in need.

During such a meeting, you may want to have a period of Bible Study. At the close, you can have a prayer.

Now if you are a man or a young man, and the only member of the church there, then you of course would have to take the lead and do all of these things. If there is another man present that is a member of the church, then you can request that he help you with the worship. If you are a woman, and the only member of the church there, then you will have to worship by yourself or with the women and children that might be willing to gather with you for worship. In this case, men should not be asked to attend until one or more men obey the Lord and then they would be the ones to take the lead in conducting worship. As a woman, you can privately teach both men and women and publicly teach ladies and children.

But if you are the only member of the church there, how are you going to have other members, and thus a congregation? Of course there might be one or more members of the church living in your city or village. You should spread the word that you are going to have worship on Sunday and that if there are other members of the church of Christ there that they should contact you. But if there are no other members there, then you

will have to try to teach your family members and friends and encourage them to obey the Lord. Once they do that, whether men or women, or young people, there will be two or more of you, and you will have the beginning of a congregation of the Lord's church. Christ said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18 : 20). Then once you begin to meet on Sunday for worship, you should do that every Sunday. The Hebrew writer said, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10 : 25).

Remember, too, that your worship must be directed to God and it is to be done by the authority of Christ. Jesus said himself, "God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4 : 24). That is, the worship, or praise and honor, must be done with the proper attitude, understanding, and reverence, and according to the teaching of the Lord.

As you continue to meet for worship, if the attendance grows, then you may want to meet in a hall, school building, or some larger meeting place.

But you might say that you are not a leader and that you cannot do something like this. Of course you can, if you love Jesus and you want to. Remember that he will bless you and help you. Also, you may know of some gospel preacher that you might invite to come to help by conducting some meetings. You may also write to us for literature and advice if you have problems.

Please realize that you may be in a very unique position. The church may not be there, but through your efforts the church can be established. This can be the means of acquainting the people of your area with the gospel of Christ and the church of our Lord. Once the church has been established then no doubt it will grow, and in time the congregation can put forth an effort to preach the gospel and establish congregations in other cities and villages in your part of the country. If you fail to do this then you will not only deprive yourself of many wonderful blessings, and perhaps your own salvation, but you will also

deprive many other people of that whole vicinity of hearing the gospel of Christ and being members of the church of Christ. You wouldn't want to do that, would you ?

May God bless you right there where you are as you put forth an effort to begin the church. It is our prayer that many of you reading this will do just that and as a result the church of Christ can exist in many cities and villages where it does not presently meet for worship. Think of what this can mean to you, and to others, and to the cause of Christ through out this country. We would be happy to hear of the good news of your effort.

Integrity And Truth

Yarbrough Leigh

Are you—am I—characterized by “integrity ?” What does it mean ? Note what is found in WEBSTER'S NEW INTERNATIONAL UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY :

(From the Latin, *Integritas* : wholeness, soundness; from *interger* : untouched, whole, entire.) 1. The quality or state of being complete; wholeness; entireness; unbroken state. 2. The entire, unimpaired state or quality of anything; perfect condition; soundness. 3. The quality or state of being of sound moral principle; uprightness; honesty and sincerity.

It is obvious to all that “integrity” must be based upon sincerity and “truth.” There can be no integrity in the absence of truth. What is truth ? We have recourse, again, to WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY in which, to give an abbreviated statement : “that which conforms to fact, to reality, to the recognized reality of proven fact; rule of action; or required norms...”

WE TRUST GOD EXPLICITLY BECAUSE OF HIS ABSOLUTE INTEGRITY

If God were ever proven false, either in the truthfulness of his Message or in keeping His Word, we could not trust our souls to

Him so as to suffer death rather than to disobey Him, or to be unfaithful in His service.

Jesus could tell His disciples that "all must be fulfilled that was written concerning me in the law, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms" (Luke 24 : 44-45). Why did He say that all **MUST** be fulfilled? Because God had written through His inspired prophets that these things would come to pass; and His integrity; His righteousness and holiness, demanded that His Word be true !

AREAS IN WHICH OUR INTEGRITY MUST BE DEMONSTRATED

In the **HEART** : Only the pure in heart shall see God (Matthew 5 : 8). "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12 : 34).

In the **TONGUE** : "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1 : 26).

In our **DEEDS** : "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7 : 21).

In **GENUINENESS, SINCERITY** : David wrote of the guile; the hypocrisy of insincerity which characterized his pretended friend who was his enemy : "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart : his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" (Psalm 55 : 21); and Solomon wrote these words of warning. "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats : for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he : eat and drink, he saith to thee; but his heart is far from thee" (Proverbs 23 : 6-7).

SOME STERN TESTS OF GENUINE INTEGRITY

It has been said of Thomas Jefferson that, as he and another gentleman met a poor man in the road as they travelled along together, Mr. Jefferson spoke to the poor man with the same courtesy he might have shown to one of noble estate. When his

visitor asked Mr. Jafferson why he had spoken to the poor man as though he, too, were a gentleman, Mr. Jefferson responded: "I did not speak to him with courtesy because he is a gentleman, but because I am." Beyond question, this anecdote, whether fiction or fact, very well illustrates a vital principle of truth concerning personal integrity; namely: integrity is never subject to circumstances, but is always subject solely to the rule of what is right, what is honorable, what is according to truth, and what is honest, both in the sight of God and in the sight of man!

Integrity does not ask, "Who is right?—but—what is right?" It does not ask, "Who is honest and deserving of courtesy?"—but "What is honest and courteous?" regardless of with whom I am dealing. It does not ask, "What kind of behavior does this person deserve from me?"—but "What kind of behavior does righteousness demand of me in response to God's righteousness toward me?" It never asks, "What kind of person am I dealing with?"—but, always, "What kind of person am I?"

CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH TRY MEN'S SOULS

When, quite by accident, and without intent on my part, opportunity arises for me to profit by a mistake made in my favor, and which would probably never come to light unless I should reveal it.

When opportunity arises for me to wrongfully profit at the expense of one who has deliberately wronged me in the past.

When my enemy, one who has always worked against me in the past, falls into great distress and want.

When my loyalty to the truth would injure me, and lying would profit me.

When none other than I knows that I have wronged someone.

When the way of truth and righteousness in some current issue is extremely unpopular, and is highly emotionally charged: When support of the right would be extremely costly to me, and opposition to it would greatly exalt me in the eyes of my peers.

OUR LORD'S STANDARD OF INTEGRITY

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" (Matthew 5 : 44-47). "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men...If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink : be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12 : 17; 19-21).

Integrity is not from the outside in—but flows from the inside out !

Toward Sodom

John D. Henson

The Lord called Abraham out of the Ur of Chaldees to a journey of more than twelve hundred miles (the approximate distance between the Tennessee valley and Albuquerque, New Mexico) ! Abraham made this journey just on God's say so ! Accompanying him was his nephew, Lot.

Strife came between Abraham's herdsmen and those of Lot.

The land had been plagued by drought and Abraham's plan to stay in Egypt had been thwarted by his own mistake in lying to Pharaoh about Sarah. We read of the strife at Bethel in Genesis 13.

Abraham had a solution to the problem. He proposed to solve it by having Lot go from him. Abraham offered Lot the choice of directions in which to take his people to settle. We are told that

“Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and journeyed east” (Genesis 13 : 11), and that he then “pitched his tent toward Sodom” (Genesis 13 : 12). With the choice of the well-watered plain, went the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gommorah.

Why did Lot make this decision ? What did Lot consider when he chose the plain ? What were the consequences of his decision ?

LOT'S CHOICE

In making his decision, it is clear that Lot was thinking of his own material circumstances and welfare. The Bible tells us that Lot “lifted his eyes and beheld all the plain of the Jordan” (Genesis 13 : 10). In other words, he took time to consider his options and make a decision based upon that consideration.

Lot's priorities were clear. He noticed how the plain of Jordan would benefit his needs. The area looked like a paradise to Lot, even so much so, the Bible says that he thought it much like the paradise of God, “even as the garden of the Lord” (Genesis 13 : 10). Lot was an advocate of taking care of “number one” first.

Lot failed to consider two major things. First, he did not consider Abraham who was the head of the family. Just because Abraham had made this offer of the choice of direction did not mean that Lot was forced to take advantage of his uncle. Lot should have respected Abraham enough to give HIM first choice. After all, Lot knew that the promises of God rested with Abraham. Lot should have respected God's will above all !

Secondly, Lot did not think of his own spiritual welfare. He was quick to take care of the physical needs and the material wants, but denied his spiritual needs. He denied the needs of his soul ! Sodom had a well-known reputation for evil, and the Scripture indicates that Lot knew about it (Genesis 13 : 13). Why would a righteous man like Lot even want to take one step toward Sodom ? Lot also had forgotten how important Abram was in his own spiritual life. God spoke to Abraham. God's word resided with the Patriarch. In leaving Abraham for the plain of Jordan, Lot was effectively cutting himself off from God's

Word and thus he was putting his soul in jeopardy. In taking his first step toward Sodom and away from Abraham, he was placing himself at great risk.

Lot's immediate destination was not Sodom. Lot did not begin his journey by going directly to Sodom. The Bible tells us that he only "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Genesis 13 : 12). Lot's final destination became Sodom. The eternal truth taught here is that the journey toward evil is a gradual one which begins with a single step in evil's direction.

A similar example of the journey of evil which begins with a single step is that of King Saul. Saul started out as a pure, good young man. But, Saul took a step away from God when he assured for himself the priestly office (I Samuel 13 : 8-13). The next step in Saul's journey was his disobedience in the matter of Amelek (I Samuel 15). He took more steps in hating David so much that he tried to kill him. Finally, at the end of his life, Saul was a twisted, bitter old man who was frightened of the fate that God had promised him. Because of Saul's steps toward evil, there would be tragic consequences.

THE PRICE FOR STEPPING TOWARD SODOM

Lot eventually arrived and lived in Sodom, but he was never happy there. II Peter 2 : 7-8 tells us that he was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" and that their conduct "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds."

Being surrounded by such an evil people had to have an impact upon Lot and his family. As Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15 : 33, "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good morals." Remember that Peter denied the Lord when he was surrounded by the sinners of the Sanhedrin court !

The price for Lot's mistake was indeed heavy, and is three-fold : (1). He suffered the loss of his family except for his two daughters. (Even they were threatened while they lived in Sodom). (2). The last recorded incident of Lot's life was one of drunken incest. (3). The daughters of Lot, as a result of their incestuous relationship, bore two sons who would become the

progenitors of the destroyed nations of Moab and Ammon. After observing all of the sorrow which attended Lot's decision to go into the direction of the cities of the plain, one wonders if Lot would again choose the well-watered Jordan plain !

IS YOUR DIRECTION TOWARD SODOM ?

Lot's number one priority was "number one." What is your first level of responsibility ? Is it to self, too ? Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it : but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall find it. For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself or be cast away ?" (Luke 9 : 23-25). Look at the end of Lot who made the decision of self first instead of God.

Are you considering your spiritual welfare, or have you decided to take steps toward Sodom ? Remember, you have an eternal soul that you must save. There is a greater concern in life than just that of material and physical needs. The greatest need in all the world is the saving of the soul. Lot decided to depart from the Word of God to strike out on his own and the resulting mistake cost him dearly. Would you purposely absent yourself from the services of the church and from daily study of the Bible to go in your own direction ? God wants you to reconsider, "Stand Ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6 : 16). The writer of Proverbs has written, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14 : 12). If you have your feet on any path but God's path, you are "headed toward Sodom" just as surely as was Lot.

Why would a person who wants to please God even want to take a single step toward Sodom ? The only happiness is in God's way. The only peace is in God's way. Why be unhappy because of your sin and the sinfulness of others, when you can forsake the way toward Sodom and follow God ? Live God's way ! Surround yourself with God's people who are interested in the salvation of souls and in walking the walk of the Christ !

You need not continue in any decision toward Sodom. Lot could have moved out of Sodom any time he wanted. He was not forced to live there. He was free to choose any life he wanted. You do not have to continue in your direction of sin. Through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, you can make your choice to walk God's way; if you only will. In the invitation of Revelation 22 : 17, the Spirit and the bride say, "whosoever will." "Whosoever will" means you ! Stop your journey toward Sodom by obeying Christ now !

Preach The Word

J. Roy Vaughan

During Paul's second imprisonment in Rome, and at a time when he realized that his days were about numbered, he wrote his second letter to Timothy. The fourth chapter opens with this solemn charge : "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom : preach the Word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke; exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching."

When the Lord gave the great commission to the apostles. He also charged to "preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16 : 15-16). It is God's plan to save man by the preaching of the gospel. "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God," said Paul, "it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1 : 21). Some men depend upon a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to convict and convert the sinner. Others resort to fangled methods of all sorts to draw men unto the Lord. But, it is still God's pleasure to save man by the preaching of the gospel.

God did not allow the Holy Spirit to go directly to the man from Ethiopia to convert him as he rode along the way to Gaza,

but He directed Philip, an evangelist to preach "unto him Jesus" (Acts 8 : 35). Nor did the Lord allow an angel to tell Cornelius, the centurion, what to do to be saved, but the angel told Cornelius to send for Peter, "who shall speak unto thee words whereby thou shalt be saved" (Acts 11 : 14). Even the Lord Jesus did not tell Saul of Tarsus what to do to be saved, when He appeared to him on the road to Damascus. But He said to him, "Arise and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do" (Acts 22 : 10). Paul said, "We have this treasure (the gospel) in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves" (II Corinthians 4 : 7). Paul was simply saying that God had entrusted the preaching of the gospel to men, that men might know that the power is in the message and not in the messenger.

Since it pleases God to save man by the preaching of the gospel by man, God therefore needs men to preach the gospel. He needs dedicated men who are willing to sacrifice all if needful that they might go forth and preach the Word. Men who will say as did Paul to the church at Philippi, "Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all" (Philippians 2 : 16). He was saying, if the Emperor Nero has my head cut off because I preached the gospel to you and others, "I joy and rejoice with you all." God needs men who once they put their hands to the plow will not turn back for those who do and not "fit for the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 9 : 62). The Lord does not seek "job seekers" or men seeking the "chief seats in the synagogues" (Mark, 12 : 28, 39). But, the Lord needs men who with Paul will say, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of : for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (I Corinthians 9 : 16). The harvest indeed is plenteous. The fields are white unto harvest. Let us pray "therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest." (Luke 10 : 2).

Things That Never Change

Weldon Langfield

Tennyson wrote, "Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change." Daily experience reminds us of the truth of those words. In the last thirty years, the American economy has peaked and declined, the global influence of our nation has changed, and the moral views which formed the backdrop of the Constitution itself have been swept aside by millions. In this world of constant variation, it is refreshing to remember that God has provided some things that are enduring.

WE HAVE AN UNCHANGING SAVIOUR. We are assured, "Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13 : 8). Unfortunately, some have attempted to rob the great passage of its beauty by misusing it as a "proof text" for present-day miraculous gifts. The sameness of Jesus, however, doesn't compel us to believe that He today is raising the dead any more than it forces us to believe He is still spontaneously creating worlds or humans as in the beginning (John 1 : 3). The Bible here simply states that Christ doesn't change in His dealing with man, His character, or His purpose.

WE HAVE AN UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM. The writer of Hebrews spoke of it as a "kingdom which cannot be moved" (Hebrews 12 : 28). The kingdom does not change because it is founded upon the unchanging gospel, "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). That Word is compared to a seed in holy writ (Luke 8 : 11). A grain of wheat, when planted, will yield wheat every time and anywhere it germinates. Likewise, when the seed of the Word is planted in the hearts and minds of men, it will always yield pure New Testament Christianity.

During His earthly ministry, Christ predicted that the kingdom would come within nearly all of His apostles' lifetimes. He said, "There be some....who shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9 : 1). The kingdom, or church, came with the power of the Holy Spirit

on the Pentecost following Christ's resurrection (Acts 2 : 1-4; 47). Paul later revealed that all Christians have been "translated...in the kingdom" (Colossians 1 : 13).

The unchangeable nature of this domain can be seen in that today, when Christians are willing to remain "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3 : 15), the kingdom can be identified in any community.

WE HAVE AN IMMUTABLE LAW. The "perfect law...of liberty" (James 1 : 25) that will remain in its present form until the end of the world. The most brilliant minds in human history have rallied themselves against the gospel : men like Paine, Hume, and Russell. They're dead, but God's Word lives on. The mighty Roman empire marshalled its considerable power against the truth. Today, the ruins of that once-grand dominion serve only as tourist attractions, yet God's Word endures in the hearts and minds of millions (I Peter 1 : 24-25).

THEREFORE, WE SHOULD REMAIN STEADFAST. Paul commanded the only reasonable response to the unchanging spiritual realm around us when he declared in I Corinthians 15 : 58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The Whole Truth

Trenton McCluskey

There are a number of things being taught in religious circles concerning salvation. Some of these doctrines appear on the surface to be truth. One reason for this is that they take a portion of truth and treat it as the whole. Consider these :

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10 : 13).

At a shallow glance, one might go away saying, "Lord, Lord, Lord" in a sincere belief that this would result in salvation. As the student of God's word pursues his study, he would be hard pressed to explain this concept in the light of other Biblical teachings. For example, one would certainly be pressed to explain Matthew 7 : 21 : "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." If the interpretation of "Call on the name of the Lord" (Romans 10 : 13) is to SPEAK, saying, "Lord, (Lord," and results in salvation, then Matthew 7 : 21 conflicts with this passage.

Another such teaching proposed in religious circles is one based upon the "belief only" doctrine. Those embracing this view turn to John 3 : 16 : "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Another is Acts 16 : 31 : "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Also John 8 : 24 : "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins : for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

As you allow God's word to be your road map from earth to heaven, you will surely look deeply into the texts previously cited.

On the surface, either doctrine seems impressive. I am reminded of the phone call to my parents when my wife, daughter and I had to leave the roadway in order to avoid an oncoming vehicle. The term I used to describe our situation carries several thoughts. When my mother answered the call, I requested to speak to my Dad. I then told him, "We have had a wreck." The term "wreck" was accurate, yet too broad. How bad? Who is hurt? Is the car operatable? None of these questions are answered by the surface information given, that is: "We have had a wreck." In the religious world, we must explore the HOW of obedience.

Remember Romans 10 : 13. Allow the Bible to comment on itself.

“And now why tarriest thou ? arise, and be baptized. . . . calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22 : 16).

This passage explains HOW to call on the Lord. To “call on the name of the Lord is to submit the Lord’s teaching even in the Great Commission. “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28 : 18-20).

This teaching was given by our Lord to Nicodemus : “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. Nicodemus saith unto him. How can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born ? 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 : 3-5). After his resurrection, Jesus plainly taught, “... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16 : 15-16).

One can not deny that a belief in Jesus is essential for salvation. How can one render obedience and submit to a being which he does not believe exists ? In order to believe, one must hear about that in which he would believe.

“So then FAITH cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10 : 17). BELIEF is a must for salvation.

The Philippian jailer “brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16 : 30-31). “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins : for if ye BELIEVE not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8 : 24).

The false teaching on Romans 10 : 13 is that all who believe are saved. But this is seen to be false from the following scriptures : "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2 : 17). To say otherwise is to say that Judas Iscariot was saved. The same theory would save demons : "Thou BELIEVEST that there is one God ; thou doest well : the DEVILS also BELIEVE, and tremble" (James 2 : 19).

In Acts 8 : 37 belief was demonstrated by submitting in obedience to the preaching about Jesus. This was the pattern set forth in Acts 2, as Peter preached Jesus is Lord and Christ. "Therefore let all the house of Israel KNOW ASSUREDLY, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2 : 36). When the word was received, those believing the word AND OBEYING the commands were added to the church : "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2 : 47).

Therefore let us realize when we hear a half truth, it may be the wrong half.

A Contented Life

W.A. Holley

"But godliness with contentment is great gain : for we brought nothing into the world, neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content" (I Timothy 6 : 6-7, A.S.V.).

"Not that I speak in respect of want : for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am therein to be content" (Philippians 4 : 11, A.S.V.).

"Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have : for He Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13 : 5, A.S.V.).

We do not suggest that one should not try to improve one's lot or state in life; but one can bring oneself to the point where he is not disquieted, or disturbed by excessive desires, even though not every wish is gratified or obtained. There is no real reason why a Christian should live a discontented life ! !

Even though man has a built-in desire to excel, to progress, to achieve, man can learn to be contented in whatsoever state he may find himself. Just here the reader should open the book of Philippians and peruse its sacred pages.

One can learn to make the best of one's circumstances, whether in prison, or poverty, or sickness, or whatever one's physical handicaps may be. This is exactly what the great apostle Paul practiced. Do not waste your energy through worry (Philippians 4 : 4-7, 11-13, 19, A.S.V.). A disease that cannot be cured must be endured. Life's shadows will come—we must somehow learn to live with them.

Jesus taught that we must learn to live life a day at a time (Matthew 6 : 9-13). Bread for the day is all the bread you need. A true Application of the lessons taught in Matthew 6 : 31-34 will keep us from borrowing trouble. That makes one miserable ! A little faith, a little trust, a little common sense works wonders ! Forget the past, and look to the future (Philippians 3 : 13-14). It is always, "now", "today !" Abraham Lincoln, of Civil War fame, when asked what he was going to do, said, "I am like the old preacher in a crowded coach, nearing a raging river—I never cross a river till I get to it...And, besides, many rivers are placid; and the lions along the way are chained, anyway."

Christian friend, where is your faith ? The habit of worry needs to be overcome (Matthew 6 : 24-30). One person had become so accustomed to worry that he could not remember what he was worried about. For shame !

One should never be afraid to try. Success often follows failure ! Peter said, "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net" (Luke 5 : 5). Excuses are worth nothing. Jesus said, "Launch out into the deep." They then caught more fish than the net

would hold. Of course, Peter had to do something about it. Nothing ever succeeds if one never tries! You can control the way you think (Proverbs 23 : 7).

If one wants contentment, one must develop the correct view of life. We live in the REAL world, not in the IDEAL world. Life cannot be all fun and leisure. Life is pain, struggle, sorrow, toil and hardship—as well as success and accomplishment. In fact, life is a mixed bag of things good and bad. There is no easy way through our world. Paul stated, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed” (II Corinthians 4 : 8-9; Cf. II Corinthians 11 : 24-28).

One can increase his measure of contentment by taking time to count his blessings. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning” (James 1 : 17). Acts 14 : 17 says, “. . . That he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

You may think you have nothing for which to be thankful; but, just suppose you lost the little you now possess. We sing a song :

“When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed;
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.”
Have you ever had to beg for bread ? (Acts 20 : 35).

Perhaps the greatest contributing factor to real contentment is a deep and abiding faith and trust in Almighty God. Anxiety possesses us when we doubt our beliefs and believe our doubts. Can it be our nerves crack because our faith has already broken ?

Faith in God comes by hearing his word (Romans 10 : 17). Is our faith shattered because we no longer read his word ? Philippians 4 : 19 says : “My God shall supply all your need...”

Do we believe this promise?? Philippians 1 : 12 reads : "The things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." Can we say, "Amen ?"

In Deuteronomy 33 : 25 God promised the Israelites : "... As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The Psalmist wrote, "I will fear no evil : for thou art with me" (Psalm 23 : 4). Jesus declared, "... And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28 : 20).

Prayer

William Jones

"Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5 : 16-17).

Man is commanded to be prayerful in his daily activities. Prayer is man's spiritual communion with God the Creator. Prayer can include confession, petition, adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.

Not only are we commanded to be prayerful, but the Scriptures also give examples of Christ being a prayerful Saviour (John 17). In Christ's petition to the heavenly Father, He prayed for those who would believe on Him through the Word (John 17 : 20).

The Scriptures also teach that there is a right and wrong way to pray. An example is the parable of the Pharisee and publican in Luke 18 :9-14. Disposition and attitude were involved in the prayers of these men. Whether public or private prayers, let us be concerned as to how we pray and for what we pray.

Prayer should be a part of our daily activities. Those who were receptive to the gospel preached by the apostles were obedient and became Christians. Prayer became a part of their

daily lives. "And they continued stedfastly in the aposties doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"

As Christians, we should not pray just to be seen of men. As children of God, we can and should pray to God for guidance, spiritual strength, and forgiveness of sins (James 5 : 15-16).

The apostle Paul wrote to the younger preacher Timothy specific instructions on the subject of prayer. "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (I Timothy 2 : 1). Also, Paul instructed, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Timothy 2 : 8).

As individuals, families, congregations of God's people, let us realize the importance of prayer in our lives.

God Is Able

Tom Kelton

All of us have problems. Many times these problems pile up to such an extent that we feel hopeless. We often wonder why God allowed these trials to come upon us. Sometimes we blame Him to the point that we turn from Him in bitterness.

What we need to realize is that this bitterness is the result of wrong thinking on our part. When we have troubles, we need to turn to God instead of away from Him. If we turn to Him. He is able to solve all of our problems.

There are six "He is able" passages in the New Testament that everyone of us needs to underline in our Bibles, or memorize so we can turn to them for help in time of trouble.

Paul writes : "Now unto Him that is able to do exceedings abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3 : 20). ". for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (II Timothy 1 : 12).

“...He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Philippians 3 : 21).

The author of Hebrews writes, “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2 : 18). “Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7 : 25).

And, Jude writes : “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

Christ is able to give us help beyond our ability to ask or deserve. He is able to help us overcome the problems which threaten to defeat us and to give us strength when we are tempted. And, He is able to forgive all our sins and mistakes and accept us as if we had never failed in the first place.

The Lord has not left us alone in our struggles. He is with us every day of our lives (Matthew 28 : 20). He wants us to know and accept the power He is able to exert in our lives.

Has Sin Become Glorified ?

Mark Posey

In our age, as well as the past, sin has become second nature to many people. They have grown so accustomed to it in their day to day lives that it is seldom called sin anymore. Sin has been disguised behind clever call names that lessen its severity. Guilt has been pushed aside by smooth titles. In all reality, sin has been glorified by many.

No longer do people turn away and blush from pornography, walk away from a filthy joke and frown at the terrible language present in conversations and on television. Rather, fornication is referred to as pre-marital experimentation. Adultery is called

extra-marital activities. Drunkenness is called social drinking. Lasciviousness is called admiring beauty. Hatred is known as opposing personalities. And, immodest apparel is simply expressing oneself. Clever call names and smooth titles make it easier to commit sin.

The message that the Bible says, has said, and will continue to say is : **'SIN IS STILL SIN, AND WILL SEND YOUR SOUL TO TORMENT.'** Just like the old saying, "A snake is still a snake no matter what you call it."

Galatians 5 : 19-21 says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these : Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Do not be taken in by the deceiving tricks of the world. Remember what Paul said in II Corinthians 2 : 11, "Lest satan get an advantage of us : for we are not ignorant of his

glorified sin ?

"Is You Is Or Is You Ain't ?" Who Can Tell ?

Edsel Burleson

We are finding it ever more increasingly difficult to determine where anybody stands on anything. For years, many politicians have been very careful to find which way the majority leaned before expressing an opinion. Sad, indeed is the situation when this same hesitancy characterizes some who claim to be Christians, and, even some who pretend to preach the gospel.

Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me : and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12 : 30). It is not difficult to determine how to be "with" Jesus if we will allow him to say what he means and mean what he says. He assured us. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8 : 32).

The story is told of a hunter who had raised his rifle and had taken careful aim at a large bear. When he was about to pull the trigger, the bear spoke in a soft, soothing voice : "Isn't it better to talk than to shoot ? What do you want ? Let us negotiate the matter."

Lowering the rifle, the hunter replied, "I want a fur coat". The bear replied, "Good, that is a negotiable question. I want a full stomach, so let us negotiate a compromise."

They sat down to negotiate and after a time the bear went away alone. The negotiations had been successful—the bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had a fur coat.

This is Satan's method exactly ! He succeeds in getting us to compromise, and does so to the destruction of every one who listens to him.

During the Civil War, in America, it is said that there was a man who was sympathetic to both sides. He lived in a border line state. Finally, he decided that he would effect a compromise. He put on a mixed uniform, wearing the Confederate grey coat and the Union blue trousers.

It seems all went well until he became engaged in a battle; fought battle; the Federals shot him in the coat, and the Confederates shot him in the trousers !

Take a stand on truth, and let others know where you stand. Paul said, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6 : 11, 13, 14).