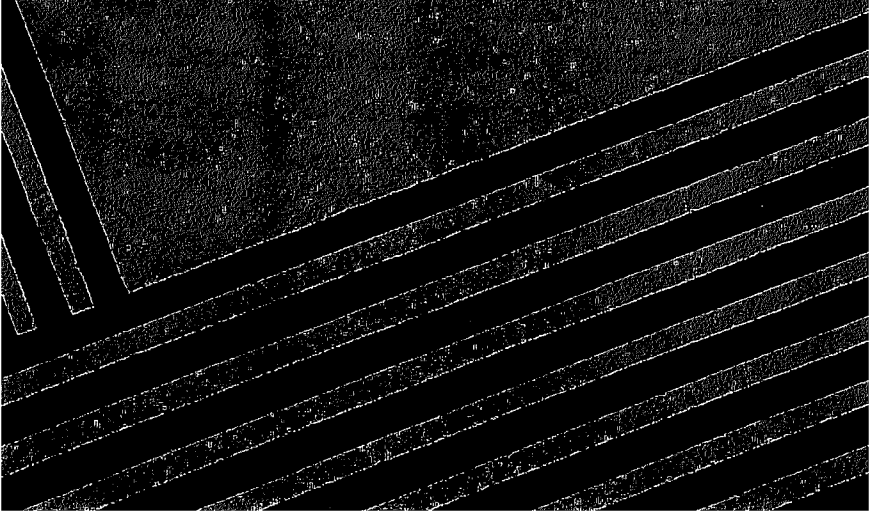


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# THE BIBLE TEACHER

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## What Kind of Christians Are These?

The world uses the name "Christian" in a loose way. Any one who believes in Christ in any sense of the word is said to be a Christian. This would include Catholics, Protestants and those of the different denominational groups. It would also incorporate those who claim to be independent.

There are others who have obeyed God as the Bible teaches, and in every sense of the word they have become Christians. But it is one thing to become a Christian and another thing to remain a Christian. For example, how many of the services of the church must one attend? How often must one attend? How much must one give? To what extent must one participate in the work of the church?

How can one claim to be a Christian when he attends worship only occasionally? What about the one who gives just enough to say that he has given something? Then there are those who never attend Bible Study, do not take their children to Bible

Class, and who do not support the church in meetings, and such like. Others do not visit the sick or ever try to convert anyone. There are those who are dishonest, use bad language, smoke, drink, and have other bad habits. Yet, these people call themselves Christians. What kind of Christians are these kind of people? Certainly they are not Christians as the Bible teaches.

Have you ever noticed how that there are always a certain percentage of members of the church who always take their place on the side of that which is questionable and wrong? It doesn't matter what comes up, but when godly people, those who are faithful Christians, take their stand for the truth, and oppose error and that which is bad and wrong, then there are others who always take the opposite side? They are the disgruntled, the ones who are always unhappy and dissatisfied with every thing that is done. They don't like the sermons. They feel that they are not called on enough to take a part in the services of the church. They are quick to find fault, to criticize, and to go around and talk to certain ones in an effort to encourage them to rebel against the other members. What kind of Christians are these? They are the ones who do not know what the Bible teaches. They are the ones who do not attend the assemblies as they should. They do not support the church with their contributions. They are weak and it is easy for the enemy to lead them astray.

What kind of Christian are you? Are you a Christian in name only? Sometimes these kind of so called Christians think that they are strong. They resent the idea that they are weak. But just look at their lives. Look at their spiritual condition. Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:16), In other words, you can tell what they are by the way they live.

It is important to be a Christian in name since the scriptures refer to disciples as having been called Christians first at Antioch. (Acts 11:26). When Paul preached to King Agrippa, he confessed that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. (Acts 26:28). Peter said, "yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this behalf." (1 Peter 4:16). James said that there were those who were blaspheming that

worthy name by which the disciples were called. (James 2:7). Wonder what name that was? I'll give you one guess. Christ said to the Christians at Smyrna that they had held fast to his name. (Revelation 2:13). Again, he said to the Christians at Ephesus that they had laboured for his name's sake. (Revelation 2:3). In Acts 4:12 we are told that salvation is in the name of Christ and in Matthew 20:18 Christ said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Now a question: How could we expect Christ to be with an individual, or a group of individuals, as the church, if that one, or that church, does not even respect him enough to wear his name? Another question: How can one wear the names of men and think for a minute that the Lord will be pleased with such? Therefore, we must conclude that it is of utmost importance that one wear the name of Christ.

Not only must one wear the name of Christ but he must also prove that he is a Christian by the way that he lives. Anyone can say that he is a Christian, but actions speak louder than words as the old saying goes. It has also been said, "I would rather see a sermon any day than to hear one." A lot of people will not read the scriptures but they read our lives daily. Are we therefore obeying Christ? Are we following him? Can Christ be seen in our lives? Are we faithful to him? It is not how little I can do and still be a Christian, but my desire should be that I want to see how much I can do for Christ.

My friend, you need to be a Christian, but you need to be the kind of Christian that we read about in the scriptures. That means that you must obey the Lord and wear his name to honor him and to glorify him in all that you say and do. Paul said, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17). Some wear the name of Christ but do not live for Christ. Others strive to be like Christ in their lives but do not wear his name. There is something missing in both cases. The Lord wants us to be Christians in both name and in the way we live. Then we are not hypocrites but we are real and genuine Christians as the scriptures teach and as the Lord wants us to be,



**associate  
editorial**

## The Distinctiveness of the Church of Christ

NO. 1

Christ had promised to build his church. "I will build my church", (Matthew 16-18), were his words to the apostles. The church of Christ did not exist at that time. Christ had promised to build the church and he had added these words to his promise, "And the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." After his death, Christ's body was buried in a tomb and his soul or spirit went into hades, the unseen abode of the departed souls. But in his resurrection God raised his body from the grave and his soul came out from the hades. On the day of Pentecost, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when Peter with other apostles was preaching to a multitude of Jews, he quoted David, their prophet, and said, "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hades, neither his flesh did see corruption." (Acts 2:31). After Christ's resurrection, when Peter and the other apostles preached the first gospel sermon on that day of Pentecost, Christ built his church, as he had promised. Hades could not prevent him from building his church. Therefore at Acts 2:47 we read that after the listeners of the apostles had turned from their sins and had been baptized for the forgiveness of sins, as were commanded, they were "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." What we learn is that they did not join the church of Christ, neither were any of them born into the church physically, none were voted into the church to become member, but the Lord himself added the saved ones into his

church. The Lord has not changed his policy even today. He still adds the saved people to his church himself.

The church of Christ is not a denomination, neither it is an interdenominational organization. The church of Christ is not Catholic or Roman Catholic, and neither it is a protestant church. All Catholic and Protestant churches are much younger than the church of Christ which was established by Christ in Jerusalem around A.D. 33. Of course to-day in the world there are several hundred denominational churches, either Catholic or Protestant. There are also some interdenominational and nondenominational and independent churches. But they are all man-made, because all of them have been established by some man. A man-made church wears man-made name and not the name of Christ. A denominational church has an earthly head and headquarters somewhere on earth. Its worship is according to a creed book which some men have written. But Christ's church wears his name. (Romans 16:16). Christ himself is the head of the church, his church, (Colossians 1:18), and since he is in heaven therefore that could be the only headquarters of the church of Christ. The church of Christ worship God in Spirit and in truth, according to the commands revealed in the New Testament of Christ by his Spirit filled apostles. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

If one want to become a Christian only, not some kind of Christian, and if one want to go to heaven; if one want to be sure that he is in the right way, then he must become a member of the church of Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ is important. But faith must be willing to do what Christ has commanded, if not, then that faith is a dead faith. (James 2:24, 26). As Christ has commanded, one must repent of sins, or leave the former way of life, and confess him the Lord, and must be baptized to be saved. (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:37, 38), Remember, Christ is the saviour, and he is the saviour of them that obey him. (Hebrews 5:8, 9). Then, there are no saved people outside of the church of Christ, because the Lord adds all the saved ones to his church. (Acts 2:47).

# Heal the Handicapped

Raymond Elliott

The slogan "Hire the Handicapped" is very familiar to most people. But what about the statement, "Heal the Handicapped"? Recently, I drove by a church building that had several signs in the parking area which denoted reserved spaces for handicapped people. This, you might conjecture, is not unusual, since the same type of signs can be seen at a large number of public buildings. The strange thing about the reserved parking signs for handicapped people located at the particular church building mentioned previously is that the religious organization which owns the building believes in and teaches modern miraculous healing. I could understand the reserved parking signs for handicapped people if the following statement could be found on the signs: "For The First Time Only." You see, if miraculous healing is actually practiced by this religious organization under consideration, then the handicapped people in attendance would be healed and there would no longer be any necessity of having reserved parking spaces for persons with physical infirmities.

But someone may be ready to say, "You don't believe in divine healing." Oh yes; all healing is divine, but not all divine healing is miraculous. There is a difference. Divine healing comes from the body's being aided by rest, medicine, and care. This takes time. Miraculous healing, as found in the Bible, occurred due to the supernatural power of God, and was immediate. The term miracle is often misunderstood and used very loosely today. Notice these definitions of a miracle. "The miracle is not a greater manifestation of God's power than those ordinary and ever-repeated processes [of natural]: but it is a different manifestation." (*Notes On The Miracles Of Our Lord*, R.C. Trench, p. 10). "The difference in a miracle and a natural occurrence does not lie in the measure of power God exerts, but rather in the fact that in the miracle God operates in an unusual manner." "A miracle is the immediate action of God, as distinguished from his immediate action through natural laws."



Those who teach that miraculous healing occurs in our modern] age present Hebrews 13:8 as proof of such a doctrine. The passage reads : "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." The argument goes something like this : "Jesus healed people when he was on earth. Since he is the same today, he continues to heal the sick now." But, is this true ? Does Jesus continue to feed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fishes ? If Hebrews 13:8 actually teaches what some affirm, let us compare the miraculous healing of Jesus with the claimants of today.

1. Jesus healed all kinds of afflictions, especially the extreme and difficult cases. He cast out demons, healed the blind, the deaf, the leper, and even restored an amputated member (ear). And he raised the dead. In contrast, the usual today would consist of tumors, asthma, abscesses, bronchitis, blood clots, rheumatism, and various other internal problems. There is never the restoring of an amputated member such as an arm or leg. You never read where someone has raised a dead person. Also, Jesus never conducted preliminary interviews in order to "weed out" some candidates for healing. The Bible teaches that Jesus "healed all that were sick." (Matthew 8:16). If Jesus still heals today as he once did, all the sick and afflicted would likewise be healed today. But this is not the case.

2. Jesus never failed in his healings. Had he ever failed, the unbelieving Jews would have used such to expose him and discredit his claim to be the Son of God. His healings were miraculous and produced amazement and wonder in the hearts of those who witnessed the marvelous acts. Matthew recorded that many " marvelled and glorified God." Others "glorified the God of Israel." And "all the people were amazed." (Matthew 9:8; 15:31; 12:23). Mark stated that "the people feared" while others "were beyond measure astonished." (Mark 5:15; 7:37). In contrast, there are multitudes in the various audiences of the modern "faith healers" who leave without really knowing if the candidates are actually healed. It is not uncommon to see the same] still limping and the blind needing assistance. But, if Hebrews 13:8 means that Jesus still heals miraculously as he once did, such would not be the case.

3. Jesus healed all the infirmities of an individual and not just some of them. The man in Mark 7:31-37 was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. The Lord healed the man of both infirmities. This was also true of the individual in Matthew 9:32-34 who was dumb and was possessed by a demon. Jesus cast out the demon and caused the man to speak. In Matthew 12:22-24, a man was dumb, blind, and was possessed of a demon. This presented no problem to Jesus Christ. He made the person to be whole. Yet modern "faith healers" do not always claim that they can heal the individual of all his ailments. Maybe one or two can be cured but not all of them. Yet, if Hebrews 13:8 is correct according to their interpretation, there should not be that discrepancy in miraculous healing today.

4. The miraculous healings of Jesus were always instantaneous. This was a uniform pattern in the 31 recorded cases of healing by our Lord. There were no exceptions to this rule. There is not one example wherein a person was partially healed. Neither was the healing gradual. Miraculous healing by the Lord was immediate. The deaf heard, the blind saw, the lame walked—immediately. Is this the same today? I think not. However, if Hebrews 13:8 teaches what "faith healers" affirm, there should be no difference in healings today from that of the Lord nearly 2000 years ago.

5. Jesus never required faith as a uniform condition for healing. The healings of our Lord were according to divine power and were not dependent upon faith in the hearts of the candidates. Only one time in the 31 cases of healing did Jesus require faith. In Matthew 9:28, the two blind men were asked, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" The men replied, "Yes, Lord." In some cases, faith was present and commended, but not required. Some were healed on the faith of others. This was true with reference to the healing of the Nobleman's son as mentioned in John 4:46-54. In nine cases, faith is not mentioned. An example of such is found in Matthew 4:23-24 where many in Galilee were healed. In four cases, faith was impossible. Jesus raised the son of a widow in Nain wherein faith was not present. (Luke 7:11-17). But today faith is required by "faith healers." In fact, the term "faith healing" is based upon the promise that

faith must exist in the heart of the candidate. This admission can be readily found in the writings of those who believe in modern miraculous healing. "Take notice first that without faith no one can be healed." (*Divine Healing*, Andrew Murray, p. 25). In cases where there is a failure, the candidate is blamed because of the lack of faith. This is totally different from the healings performed by Jesus. The argument is often made by the "faith healer" when there is a failure that he is not Jesus but just a mortal man. However, if Jesus heals today the same as he did "yesterday", based upon an interpretation of Hebrews 13:8, there should never be a failure due to the absence of faith in the heart of a candidate.

## "Why Do You Ask?"

Bob Duncan

Questions are asked for different reasons. Sometimes they are asked to obtain information, and this is likely the most obvious reason. This is the nature of the question asked by Saul of Tarsus, and recorded in Acts 9:5: "Who art thou, Lord?" Saul certainly recognized the one he addressed as a superior being, and so he respectfully called him Lord. But he did not know this being was Jesus of Nazareth until he was thus informed.

Sometimes questions are asked to arrest attention. Such was the case with reference to the question Jesus had asked Saul on this same occasion: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (verse 4). The omniscient Lord was not seeking information from Saul. He was rather asking this question to direct Saul's attention to the matter at hand.

Such was also the nature of the question recorded in Genesis 3:9, where God asked Adam: "Where art thou?" The God who created Adam was not seeking to determine Adam's whereabouts. This he already knew. He was seeking rather to direct Adam's attention to the position he now occupied as a result of his sin.

A question may be asked to direct attention away from one's own guilt. "Am I my brother's keeper?" was asked by Cain for this very purpose. (Genesis 4:9). In this question also we detect a note of rebuke—a rebuke of God himself who had asked Cain about his brother. The implication seems to be that Cain thought God had no right to ask him about the whereabouts of his brother Abel.

Questions may be asked for the purpose of denying affirmations. Elisha told Hazael, who was to become King of Syria: "I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child."

Hazael's reply was: "But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" Asking this question was Hazael's way of denying that he would do the things Elisa had prophesied. It is worthy of note in passing that Hazael likely was sincere in his denial of what the prophet had foretold. He really did not believe himself to be capable of such atrocities, and perhaps he was not at the time. But greed and the lust for power soon led him down the road of degradation until he committed the very crimes Elisha had said he would commit. Is it not a fact that human beings sometimes, through carelessness and the gradual lowering of their moral standards, find themselves in a position of having done evil they never would have dreamed themselves capable of doing only a short time before?

Another purpose for asking questions is to warn of danger. Paul asked the Galatians: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). He did not expect them to answer this question. He rather hoped that by asking it he could cause them to recognize the danger of allowing their prejudices to place them in a position opposite him and the truth.

The question recorded in Hebrews 2:3 is also asked for the purpose of warning against danger. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?" the writer asks. He does not expect his readers to answer; rather he wants them to recognize

the fact that there is absolutely no possibility of escaping punishment for sin for those who neglect the gospel of Christ.

A question may be asked for the purpose of stirring up one's suspicions and causing him to doubt the truth. Perhaps it is significant that the very first question recorded in the Bible was asked for this purpose. The serpent asked Eve: "Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1). We can rest assured this question was not asked for any good reason. It was rather the way the father of lies had of introducing into the heart of Eve questions concerning the goodness and the integrity of God. Perhaps it is significant also that this first question had to do with what God had said. When one begins to call into question what God has said, please rest assured that his motive is anything but holy, and only evil can result therefrom.

## Ritualism

John Waddey

Mankind has always found it easier to offer a ritualistic worship to God instead of living a godly, consecrated life. *Ritual* is defined in the positive sense as "the external body of words and actions by which worship is expressed and exhibited before God and man." (*McClintock and Strong*). In a derogatory sense, it means excessive devotion to prescribed ritual forms in worship.

God ordained a ritual of worship for the *Mosaic System*. It was designed for that primitive age when men were not privileged to the sunlight of Christianity. That God gave it is proof they needed those extensive mechanical forms of worship for their spiritual age.

There is the pomp and pageantry of denominational ritualism, the most spectacular being that of Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Their elaborate systems of ritual are a synthesis of Jewish and pagan practices blended with corrupted forms of Christianity. Though ancient, their human origin is

indisputable. The popularity of ritual is based upon its appeal to man's sensual nature, i.e., the aesthetic forms of beauty rather than upon God's word.

Another form of ritualism is a cold, lifeless participation in proper New Testament worship. There is a kind of worshiper who is very careful for details, loyal to the outer forms of worship and highly critical of any variation. Such folks go through the motions of worship with little or no "heart-involvement" or spiritual zeal. They frequently neglect to implement the intent and message of worship in their daily life.

Yet another variation of ritualism is that addiction to a traditional form of proper worship that does not understand the freedom we have in Christ. This is not the result of meanness, but of lack of teaching. If one has grown up with three songs and a prayer and communion after the sermon, he sincerely thinks that is the only right way of proceeding. He is easily offended at any variation from his traditional way of doing things.

The first of these four was ordained by God for days past and is no longer suitable for his people. (John 4:19-26). The second is the problem of our religious neighbours. Being the tradition of men, it is condemned by Christ. (Matt. 15:8-9). The third and fourth are in our midst and surely demand our attention.

Acceptable worship must be both in *spirit* and in *truth*. (John 4:24). We must obey God from the heart, in worship as well as in salvation. (Rom. 6:17). We are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18); to be "fervent in spirit" (Rom. 12:11), and to "rejoice in the Lord." (Phil. 4:4). We must love and serve the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. (Matt. 22:37). While it is proper so to plan our worship that it is done decently and orderly (I Cor. 14:40), this must never be allowed to choke out the enthusiasm of heartfelt participation.

To offer worship, no matter how stately and profuse, without an accompanying integrity and concern for the poor makes God

sick! In Isaiah's day, God said to Judah, "I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts: And I delight not in the blood of bullocks...when ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my court? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot [stand] away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me: I am weary of bearing them." (Isa. 1:11-14). God rejected their worship because they were violent and had failed to care properly for the widows and orphans. (Is. 1:15-17).

God desires "goodness and not sacrifice: and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hos. 6:6). Sacrifice without common goodness in life and conduct is worthless! Without justice and righteousness, God actually hates our worship. "I hate, I despise your feasts and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies...But let justice roll down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream." (Amos 5:21-24). While carnal men tend to think that God is impressed with large volumes of worship, it is justice, kindness and humility that he wants most of all. (Mic. 6:6-8). It would shock some brethren to know that their worship is so vain and meaningless that God wishes: "Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain!" (Mal. 1:10-11).

In the worship of the denominational world, a few professionals or semi-pros do most of the actual worship, almost as a performance. The audience is cast for a spectator role. The author once worked with a man who was an erstwhile member of the Episcopal church, but sang for the Presbyterian choir for \$5 per week. He was a good bass singer, but a worldly, sinful fellow in his personal habits.

Ritualism substitutes lifeless outer forms of public worship for inner devotion and godly living. Often participation in an elaborate ritual is a covering for a godless life.

Commonly, ritualism reflects an attempt to earn one's righteousness by works of human merit. Such worshippers tend

to think God is impressed with the beauty or degree of their production. Such is flawed at the heart. (Tit. 3:5; Is. 64:6).

It is a continuing challenge for a congregation to avoid the stagnation of ritualism. The subject must be frequently addressed in classes and sermons lest we unwittingly fall into the trap. Be careful not to fall into the trap of change just for the sake of change.

May God grant us wisdom and grace to avoid the stagnation and sin of ritualism. May we worship the Master according to his will with a sincere heart and fervent zeal.

## The Wonderful Power Of The Word

W.A. Holley

“For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12).

There is power in a man's word, whether spoken or written, especially if that man is in a position of authority. Note: “Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him. What doest thou?” (Ecclesiastes 8:4). It is sometimes argued that there is no power in the written word, but such a contention is foolishness indeed; for, when an Internal Revenue Service representative sends you a letter asking you to report for an interview, you report!

God Almighty possesses all power and might. His word is powerful. The sinner is changed and influenced through the power of the gospel to obey the truth and thus be saved. (Romans 1:16; I Peter 1:22-23).

The word of God was given, revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit through inspired men for the exalted purpose of



converting and saving mankind. We shall note some of the things about what the Holy Spirit did :

David declared : "The Spirit . . . spake by me, and his word was in my tongue". (II Samuel 23:2). "This Scripture . . . which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake. (Acts 1:15-16). God for "many years didst . . . forbear them, and testifidest against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets". (Nehemiah 9:30), Again, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying . . ." (Acts 28:25-27). Wherefore as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts . . ." (Hebrews 3:7-11). Furthermore, ". . . Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit". (II Peter 1:20-21).

Those references cited above show beyond doubt that the Holy Spirit speaks to humanity through his word as revealed in the Holy Bible. If you desire to know what the Holy Spirit says to you, read the Bible. Do not depend upon dreams, feelings, human experiences, and doctrines and commandments of men. If you do, you will be misled; go to the Bible, it is an infallible guide from the earth to heaven.

### WHAT THE WONDERFUL WORD HAS POWER TO ACCOMPLISH

(1) The sinner is dead in sin, but the word of God possesses power to quicken him. (Ephesians 2:1-5; Psalm 119:50).

(2) "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." Sinners need converting and the word of God has power to convert them. (Psalm 19:7; Acts 3:19).

(3) "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" but faith comes by hearing the word of God. The sinner cannot become a believer unless he hears the truth of God as revealed in the Bible. (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17; Acts 16:30-34).

(4) The sinner must be begotten and born again by the word of God in order to be saved. (James 1:18, 21; I Corinthians 4:15; I Peter 1:22-23). There is no other way.

(5) The sinner must be saved by the power of the gospel. This is the reason why Jesus commanded it to be preached to every creature throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:16, Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 11:13-14). The Holy Spirit never, never operates on the sinner's heart separate and apart from the Word of God as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures.

(6) The fact that Jesus loved sinners enough to bear their sins for them on the cruel cross is, indeed, powerful. (Romans 5:8; II Corinthians 5:14; I Peter 2:21-25). Surely, the sinner, when he recognizes his lost and undone condition, will be constrained by the truth of God.

(7) The commands of Jesus Christ are powerful because they strike directly to the heart of sinful men. Men know they are sinners and their ways should be changed (Romans 3:23; 6:23). The command of Jesus are supported by all authority in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18-20).

(8) The promises of the word of God offering remission of sins and eternal home in heaven are powerful incentives which draw sinners to obey God. (Hebrews 5:8-9; John 6:44-45; Acts 2:35-38; Romans 6:22).

(9) The threats of the word of God are powerful warnings to sinners who rebell against God's authority.

## Was God A Man ?

George Reed

One of the most ridiculous views that Joseph Smith taught concerning God was that God was once a man, and that men may become gods. He stated as follows :

First, God himself, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens IS A MAN LIKE UNTO ONE OF YOURSELVES, that is the great secret...I am going to tell you HOW GOD CAME TO BE GOD. We have imagined that God was God from all eternity...God himself; the Father of us all dwelt on an

earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did...You have got to LEARN HOW TO BE GODS YOURSELVES; ..No man can learn you more than what I have told you (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, pp. 613-614).

The Mormon church teaches that God the Father had a Father, and his Father had a Father and so on down the line. Somewhat hard to believe? Well here's their proof:

He (God) is our Father—he Father our spirits, and was ONCE A MAN IN MORTAL FLESH as we are, and is now an exalted being.

How many Gods there are, I DO NOT KNOW. But there never was a time when there were not Gods . . . It appears ridiculous to the world, under their darkened and erroneous traditions, that God has once been a FINITE BEING . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, p. 333).

Heber C. Kimball, of the Mormon church, made these observations: “. . . then we shall go back to our Father and God, who is connected with one who is still farther back; and this Father is connected with one still further back, AND SO ON . . . (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 7, p. 19).

Let us see if the book of Mormon matches the teaching of the Bible concerning the doctrine of God. Moses said, “Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah” (Dt. 6:4). Jesus affirmed this statement when he said, “The Lord our God, the Lord is one”. (Mk. 12:29). Moses again states, “. . . there is none else besides him”. (Dt. 4:39).

Joseph Smith needed to read the writings of the prophet Isaiah fought against polytheism in chapters 40 to 50. Isaiah said, “Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour”. (Isa. 43:10, 11). We read again, “I am the first, and I and am the last; and besides me there is no God”. (Isa. 44:6). Again, “I am Jehovah, and there is none else; besides me there is no God”. (Isa. 45:5).

From the above scriptures, we can see there is one God, and only one. Yet, we have positive proof that the Father is God (I Cor. 8:6; Gal. 1:1; Phil. 2:11); the Son is God (Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Phil. 2:6; I Jn. 5:20); and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; Mt. 28:19; I Cor. 2:10-13).

Jesus said "God is a spirit : and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth". (Jn. 4:24). Jesus again said, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having". (Lk. 24:39). The Bible says nothing about God's ever being a man, nor man's ever turning into a god. The question is, "Shall we believe the Bible or the book of Mormon ?"

What shall we conclude ? Was the so-called "revelation" that Joseph Smith had really from God ? If so, why would his "revelation" contradict God's word ? Joseph should have told his "angel" what the apostle Paul told the Galatians. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema". (Gal. 1:8). Truth cannot contradict truth. This is what we have if we accept the book of Mormon. One writer offers this syllogism formulated from Galatians 1:8.

Major premise : The curse of God rests upon any production that contains another gospel.

Minor Premise : But the book of Mormon contains another gospel.

Conclusion : Therefore, the curse of God rests upon the book of Mormon. Please notice that the major and minor premises are both true and valid. Therefore, the conclusion must be true. If not, why not ?

Surely, one can see that the book of Mormon does not match the teaching of the Bible, nor the Bible teachings of the book of Mormon. May we as a people always take the Bible as the supreme source of authority.

# The Tongue

## Dalton Key

The tongue, though small, is surprisingly powerful. Through the power of speech wars have been started, soldiers have become impassioned, and conquests have been insured. Likewise, by the same power of speech, other wars have been brought to an end, and still others avoided. The fevered ravings of a power mad Hitler incensed an entire country to fight and die for racial prejudice. The majestic, moving speeches of Churchill motivated hundreds of thousands to fight and die for social justice and equity. "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3:5).

"And the tongue is a fire." (James 3:6). Though they be powerful, fires may be either beneficial or harmful. One fire may cook your food and keep you warm in winter; another may burn down your house. So it is with the tongue.

The tongue may be used to make friends. But it is also capable of making and keeping enemies. Our words can encourage, edify, and enrich; or they can discourage, damage, and destroy. Our speech has the capacity for both good and evil. This being so, the Lord said, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matthew 12:36,37).

The tongue is both a regulator and a barometer of disposition. Our true colours are seen in what we say and how we say. Our speech can also alter the attitude of those around us. It's hard to remain cheerful with a sourpuss around; likewise, it's difficult to stay gloomy when someone close is bubbling over with joy. Attitudes are as contagious as measles, and they are reflected in our speech! Sour thinking is revealed by sour speech and will result in sour living. Some folks are "wet blankets!" You feel fine until you talk with them, but then they throw mud

on your whole day with their murmuring, complaining, backbiting, gossip, and self-pity! Yes, there is power in the tongue.

Listen to Paul: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Ephesians 4:29). Again, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today." (Hebrews 3:13). And again, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. . . exhorting one another." (Hebrews 10:24,25).

Let's use our tongues for good. Let's use the fire of speech to warm hearts—not burn down and destroy them!

## Beverage Alcohol : Satanic Tool Of Destruction

Rubel Shelly

Those of us who have consistently urged total abstinence as the only real solution to the problems associated with alcohol have traditionally met this response: "The American attitude toward drinking is an extreme one. In other countries of the world, where wine and other alcoholic beverages are socially acceptable and used generally, there is no problem with alcohol."

Ignorance of the facts has caused many people to advance (and many more to find plausibility in) this argument. Because information about alcohol-related social problems are not generally known to people in this country, some have thought those putting forth such an argument have had an unanswerable point for their case. But facts are stubborn, and the truth destroys comfortable false illusions.

Germany, for example has acknowledged its difficulty with alcohol' widespread use in that country. Leading insurance companies in that European nation have begun large-scale advertising campaigns against the dangers of alcohol. One poster says: "Pure alcohol is pure poison, which is why they serve it to

you in small doses." The health department released a study in March of this year saying that 34% of the country's population over age 16 has an alcohol problem; this amounts to over one-third of the total population. Chancellor Schmidt, attempting to be a good example to his fellow countrymen, refuses alcoholic drinks even at official toasts and prefers soft drinks instead.

Even the Russians are taking steps to discourage the free-wheeling use of alcohol. Stepped-up publicity campaigns and price hikes for alcoholic beverages are designed to cut into its use. On any given Monday morning in the Soviet Union, 30%-40% of that nation's work force will be unable to put in a productive day's work because of weekend drinking bouts. The government has special fleets of vehicles marked "Special Medical Aid," which pick up drunks and carry them to state-operated centres for drying out.

### What the Bible Says

The attitude of Scripture toward the use of intoxicating drinks is one of harsh condemnation. "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder". (Prov. 23:29-32). If children of the Living God are prohibited from even looking at and desiring wine with alcoholic content, how can we justify using it? Any use of a product condemned in such stern language is surely an immoderate use!

Someone objects: "But the Bible says Jesus drank wine. Then how could our use of it be wrong, so long as we don't become intoxicated?" This plausible-sounding argument rests on the false premise that the word "wine" refers to intoxicating beverages in all of its biblical occurrences. But such is not the case.

The Greek word most often translated "wine" in the New Testament is oinos. A cursory examination of its usage shows

that it can refer to either grape juice (e.g., the "new wine" being poured into skins, Luke 5:37) or intoxicating wine (e.g., that which can make one drunk, Eph. 5:18). Whether or not the oinos is intoxicating (i.e., has alcoholic content comparable to the beverage we refer to as wine today) is not determined by the occurrence of the word alone. The context and related considerations must decide.

In light of passages like Prov. 23:29-32, and in view of the fact that Jesus observed the Old Testament codes to the letter, it seems reasonable to suspect that the "wine" (i.e., liquid produced from grapes) he drank was nonintoxicating in nature.

For example, when the Saviour turned water into wine at the wedding at Cana, the large quantity of liquid involved supports the contention that the wine he made was not an intoxicating beverage. Six stone jars holding two or three measures (i.e., 20 to 30 gallons) apiece equal approximately 120 to 180 gallons of wine. The large amount involved proves one of two things: (1) Jesus produced a drink which would not intoxicate the wedding party, or (2) it is permissible to drink adequately large amounts of alcohol to become inebriated. In view of the Old Testament's prohibition of giving intoxicating drinks to one's neighbour (Cf. Hab. 2:15), I can only believe that Jesus made nonalcoholic-non-intoxicating wine for the wedding guests at Cana.

It is also interesting to note that the (alcoholic-content) wine of ancient times was quite different from today's wines. The alcohol in such wines did not exceed about 12% by volume and was generally mixed with water before being served. A common ratio of water to wine was three to one; Pliny mentions a ratio of eight parts water to one part wine, and Homer even speaks of a twenty to one mixture of water and wine. Hardly the product or manner of serving for today's wines! (Robert H. Stein, "Wine-Drinking in New Testament Times", Christianity Today 19, June 20, 1975, 9-11).

The attitude of first-century Christians toward drinking wine is likely best reflected in Paul's counsel for Timothy to "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities."



(I Tim. 5:23). The fact that Paul had to order Timothy to use wine for medicinal purposes indicates that Timothy was scrupulously careful not to use it under ordinary circumstances. Surely there are few people today who do not know that alcohol is used in many medicines, and surely there are none who oppose such a legitimate use of it. It is the unjustified and harmful use of alcohol as a "social beverage" that is opposed by Christians. Is the Problem a Serious One?

A government report on alcoholism a couple of years ago showed that three out of four American teen-agers drink and that one of every five gets drunk at least once a month. Adolescent problems with alcohol seem to be in almost epidemic proportions.

But parents seem relatively unconcerned about the fact that their children drink. A public school official recently said that the typical response of a parent to a contact made about his or her child's being drunk at school is this; "Whew, I'm relieved. I was afraid you were going to tell me that my child has been using drugs."

But alcohol is anything but harmless. It is a drug, a powerful depressant drug which is known to have many harmful effects on the human body. It is implicated in cirrhosis of the liver, certain types of cancer, and heart disease.

At least half of each year's automobile deaths can be traced directly to a person "under the influence" of alcohol. The dollar cost of alcohol in terms of lost work, on-the-job injuries, and related considerations is estimated to be some \$ 15 billion a year.

Half of all the murders in the United States each year involve a situation where either the killer or the victim—or both—have been drinking. A third of all suicides are found to have significant amounts of alcohol in their bloodstreams. People who abuse alcohol are seven times more likely to be separated or divorced than the remainder of the population.

You are in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26-27), and God wants you to be "conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom. 8:29).

The use of beverage alcohol harms people, mars the image of God in them, and defeats the will of God for their lives.

You are responsible for the influence you have on other people by the things you do. (Matt. 5:14-16). Suppose you drink, never get drunk, and never suffer any personal consequences of a bad nature from your wine or beer. What if the person who is influenced to begin drinking—maybe your son or daughter—by your example, proves unable to “handle” alcohol, and suffers some of those terrible fruits which alcohol can bring? Would you feel any responsibility? “Let us follow after things . . . whereby we may edify one another . . . It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth”. (Rom. 14:19-21).

Rather than defending the use of alcoholic beverages, the efforts of Christians would be better expended in trying to help put back together some of the lives it has wrecked. And if you ever get close enough to alcohol to see what it really does for people, you will see that total abstinence is the right course to pursue and to recommend to others.

## Some Thoughts On Praising The Lord

Curtis R.L. Dowdy

In looking through a concordance recently I came to the word “praise” and found that the Psalmist wrote of it more than anyone else. He admonishes, “praise ye the Lord” (Psalm 104:35). It was his desire that all would praise the Lord: “Oh that man would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:8).

For some unknown reason, to me at least, we have shunned to use the phrase, “Praise the Lord.” Is it because some other religious group uses the phrase and we are afraid of being identified with them? I do not intend to be run away from any approved scriptural term or terms, notwithstanding the PTL Club.

When I think with the Psalmist of the Lord's goodness, and as he writes at verse 9, "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness," I am to exclaim with him, "Praise the Lord!" In the goodness of God with the satisfying of the longing soul there is the whole story of man's fall and his redemption through the grace and mercy of God.

To appreciate fully this goodness one must climb to Golgotha's brow and there see and hear the contrast between a leering mob and the man on the middle cross, and to understand what is going on and why. Can you hear the insults of the scribes and Pharisees, and so you hear amid the agonizing cries these unforgettable words, "Father, forgive them . . . ?" If so, you have just witnessed the boundless love and goodness of God. That love so beautifully drawn up and out through the gospel story has within the power to "satisfy the longing soul and fill the hungry soul". (Romans 1:16).

I read of a man who made it a practice to praise the Lord aloud. It seems that he was so doing during an assembly and the preacher took him aside to the library where he pulled out a geography book. The preacher instructed him to read, thinking surely this would keep him quiet. However, it was not long until he heard the man shouting, "Praise the Lord!" The preacher was astonished and asked what it was that he was shouting about. The brother replied that he read in the book of a place where the sea was five miles deep and remembered that the Lord said, "I will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea". (Micah 7:19). There, brethren, is something to shout about! Could it be that we preachers have been guilty of discouraging brethren from praising the Lord? In this regard I am reminded of the time that Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a colt. The text says, "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and PRAISE GOD with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke 19:37,38). The Pharisees asked the Lord to rebuke the disciples. "And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (verse 40).

Dear sinner friend, have you obeyed the Christ? If not, today by faith turn from your sins (repentance), by faith confess Christ as Lord (the good confession), and by faith be buried in water for the forgiveness of your sins (baptism). Upon this obedience of faith. (Romans 16:26) you can with Paul proclaim, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God". (Romans 5:1,2).

## Mine Would Never Do That

Barry Fike

"Mine would never do that," is a phrase often repeated by numerous parents in reference to their children. It is so easy, as a parent, to overlook the faults of one's children and emphasize those of others when the situation calls for a realistic approach rather than an idealistic one.

Salome, the mother of James and John, was this type of person. Looking out for her sons, she made a very unrealistic request of Christ when she requested, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom". (Matthew 20:21). If Christ had told her some of the things her sons would do later she might have replied, "Mine would never do that!" Peter said he would never deny Christ. (Matthew 26:31-35), and the rest of the apostles thoughtt he same, but the record bear both them and the wishes of some of their parents wrong.

So what is the point? Simply that the wishes and hopeful considerations of Christians do not get the job done. Hoping that people will not do certain things or that certain tasks will get done does not help the situation. Only action of the church working together will save the plea of the Restoration. Getting back to the Bible can only be done by all "encouraging one another daily" (Hebrews 3:13) in this difficult task, and allow the church to grow and prosper as it should.

# Hands Tell A Story

Winfrey Hennessee

While viewing the body of one who passed away, I have always been able to keep my composure, whether it be a relative, close friend, or just an acquaintance. However, I do become saddened when I look at the dead person's hands, especially if they have cut or bruise on them, or if they look workworn from too many years of hard labour.

Ever since the first sin was committed (Gen. 3:23), hard work has been man's way of life. This is one of our "misfortunes" that I have learned to enjoy very much. When a person does hard honest work to the best of his or her ability, he is glorifying the Lord.

In order to determine what makes a good Christian servant, we must explore many different avenues. Hard work and clean living alone will not suffice, but I hope and pray that when it comes my time to depart from this world, my hands will not be too tender to get me to heaven.

## Religious Sinners

John Stacy

It is possible to be sincere but sincerely in error. It is possible to be honestly mistaken. It is possible to be religious but religiously wrong. Yes, men can be religious and still be sinners. Many people are religious but worship the wrong God. Elijah had to stand against the worshippers of Baal. (I Kings 18:17-40). Paul found the city of Athens full of idols. (Acts 17:22-31). In Ephesus, he found people worshipping Diana. (Acts 19:27). Jesus taught all men that there is only one true and living God and He alone is worthy of worship. (Jno. 4:23-24; Mt. 4:10).

Many people are religious but religiously wrong. Many worship the wrong God. But others worship the right God in the wrong way. The worship example of Cain and Abel illustrates this point. Cain brought of the fruit of the field. But Abel also or in addition to the fruit of the field, brought the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof. (Gen. 4:3-4). See also the examples of Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. 10:1-2). The Pharisees of Jesus' day were transgressing the commandments of God with their traditions. The end result was that their religion was vain. (Mt. 15:3, 8-9). Many in the religious world today worship the right God in many different ways. Does it make any difference how you worship God? Ask Cain, Nadab, Abihu, and the Pharisees on the day of judgment! God MUST be worshipped in SPIRIT and in TRUTH (Jno. 4:24).

Many people are religious but sinners because they worship the wrong God. Others worship the right God but in the wrong way. Yet, there are multitude who worship the true God, as non-Christians. It is interesting to note that most of the conversions in the book of Acts were religious. They worshipped the true God. (The Pentecost 3,000, the Ethiopian eunuch, and Cornelius). Their conversion stories are in Acts two, eight, and ten. It is not enough to worship the true God. We must worship Him right. In the beginning People heard the word of God. They believed that Jesus was the Son of God. They repented of their sins. They confessed the sweet name of Christ. They were all baptized. (Rom. 10:17, Jno. 8:24, Lk. 13:3, Mt. 10:32-33; Mt. 28:19).

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