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EDITORIAL

So What Is Going To Happen Now?

Looking at the political scenario of the recent past, a friend of mine posed the question to me: "So what is going to happen now?" I thought that that was an interesting query. Of course, it was beyond my perception to speak on the matter authoritatively. However, looking at the question from spiritual perspective, we know that Christ had come and lived an exemplary life for us, that He had died on the cross for the sinners by the will of God; was buried and resurrected from the dead by the power of God, and before He had ascended back to heaven, He had commanded His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, since he who will believe and will be baptized will be saved. (John 3:16; 1 Peter 2:21-24; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-16). Now, Christ had come and gone back into heaven. So what is going to happen now? I don't have to speculate or assume any thing about this. Because God has already spoken and revealed through the Bible, as to what is going to happen now.

Through the Holy Spirit, and His Word, who became flesh, the Son, Jesus Christ, God has accomplished the work of man's salvation from sin. Now man has to do his part, believe and obey His commandments to be saved from sin and live the life as Christ taught, and be faithful to Him until death. After death, the Bible says, there is

going to be judgment: (Hebrews 9:27). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10). "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren," says the apostle of Christ, "concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, And the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words. But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 5:1-3). Also, "Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). Again, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." (2 Peter 3:8-10).

So we know, that any day Christ is going to appear up in the air in the clouds. He is not going to come on earth, since its going to be burned up and destroyed at His coming. On that day all the dead will be resurrected, (John 5:28-29), as Christ Himself was made alive after His death, by the power of God. His faithful ones will be caught up in the air to meet Him and to go with Him to live with Him forever in heaven. But

all unrighteous and the wicked will face the sudden destruction, in the lake, hell, which burns with fire and brimstone. (Revelation 21:8). In view of all of this how wonderful sounds the good news of Christ's death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and His reappearance! Thank God that we don't have to wonder as to what is going to happen now about our spiritual state. We know, since God has revealed that to us.

Why I Believe In Christ

J.C. CHOATE

Millions and millions, even hundreds of millions, around the world believe in Christ, and even believe that he is the Son of God, the one who died for man's sins and was resurrected from the grave. They also believe that He now reigns with the Father in Heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords and that some day he will come again to take the righteous to Heaven. But why do all of these people even up to this day continue to believe in Christ? Why should anyone believe in Him? Doesn't the world look at him as being just a man-made myth? Don't the liberals count him as being only a good man and nothing more?

As with any person, or anything, there are always those who believe and those who do not believe, those who accept and those who reject. So it is with Christ. Even when Christ lived in this world almost two thousand years ago there were those who acknowledged him as being the Son of God because of his miracles and teachings, but there were many others who said he was of the devil, that he was a blasphemer, and even went so far as to give him a false trial and to crucify him. And so this controversy has raged down through the centuries and will continue to rage until Christ returns.

Who is right? Who is wrong? In spite of all of the arguments made against Christ, why does he continue to be the most popular figure in all the world? I don't know about others, but let me tell you why I believe in Christ.

I believe in Christ because the Bible says that he was with God in the beginning and by Him all things were made. The record says that God said, "Let us make man in our image." (Genesis 1:26). "Us" included Christ. He is said to be one of the Godhead. (Matthew 28:19,

20). He is also said to be the word that was spoken to man from the beginning. (John 1:1, 2).

I believe in Christ because of all of the prophecies made concerning Him and their fulfillment. There were prophecies having to do with His miraculous birth, where he would be born, of His life, and of His death, burial, and resurrection. (Isaiah 53). Christ said, "These are the word which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24:44).

I believe in Christ because He was born of the virgin Mary. This was prophesied in Isaiah 7:14. In Matthew 1:20-25 an angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph, and said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS."

I believe in Christ because of the many miracles that He was able to do. These miracles were not for show, or even necessarily just to heal people, although he had compassion on the sick, those who had diseases, etc. He also calmed the sea, walked on water, made wine out of water, and did numerous other miraculous things. All of these miracles were done to prove that He was the Son of God. (John 20:30, 31).

I believe in Christ because of His death, burial, and resurrection. When the Jews asked for a sign, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:10). Of course they thought he was talking about the temple there in Jerusalem when he was actually speaking of the temple of His body. The record goes on to say that after the Lord was risen from the grave that the disciples remembered how Jesus said that after three days He would raise the temple. In other words, on the destruction of his temple, or on being crucified on the cross, after three days He would raise that temple, or would come forth from the grave. In Matthew 27 and 28 there

is a record of that very thing taking place. In explaining to the Corinthians the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, He said, "For I have delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). He goes on to tell of more than 500 seeing him at one time after his resurrection, and other eye witnesses included James, all of the apostles, and Paul said he also saw Christ as a resurrected Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:6-8).

I believe in Christ because of all of those who were willing to suffer and give their very lives because of their faith in Christ. Paul is a good example of this. He was an enemy of the Lord, persecuting the church, until Christ appeared to him. (Acts 9). He then obeyed the Lord and literally gave the rest of his life to His cause, and secular history tells us that he finally died as a martyr for Christ, as did the other apostles, except for John. Now why would they, and many others, be willing to die for Him if he was only a man? The fact was, He was the Son of God, and died that man might be saved, and that is why they were willing to give their lives for Him and His cause.

I believe in Christ because of the influence he has had on mankind during the past almost two thousand years. There has been no other person in the history of making that has changed the world like Christ has. Look at history, art, music, and every other aspect of life, and see how Christ has influenced man and all of his endeavours.

I believe in Christ because of the salvation he offers and the hope of eternal life that He gives to all of those who will obey Him and be faithful to him. Sin destroys but Christ saves. (Romans 6:23; Mark 16:15, 16). As we worship him and serve him faithfully, he has promised to give us a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10).

I believe in Christ because we must all die, appear before the judgment bar, and spend eternity somewhere. We will be judged by the Lord's word. (John 12:48). Therefore we must believe in Him, and comply with His will, so that when we are judged by His word, all will be well with our souls.

Do you believe in Christ? The Bible tells us that the unbeliever will be damned. (Mark 16:16). Also, mental acceptance of Christ is not enough. Rather, we must believe in him enough to follow him, to obey his teaching, to worship him, and to serve him faithfully. Only then will our faith save us and give us the hope of eternal life. If you are not a

believer, I pray that you will become one, and above all, be an obedient believer.

Especially For Women

The New Birth

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

It was the evening quiet hour when the family had their Bible study. Anthony brought his Bible and sat down. "I want to ask another question," he said, when Peter and Mary had come. "Today I was telling Elizabeth at school that I want to be baptized, and she said she was baptized when she was just a baby. When we've talked about that before, you said it wasn't right."

"Many people believe that it is, Anthony. The reason they baptize babies is that they think babies are born with sin. They think that when a baby cries, this shows that there is sin inside."

"But babies don't really understand about bad things, do they, Papa?" asked James.

"No, they don't. And do you remember what we learned last night about Peter's sermon to the people the day the church was started? He preached to them. He told them things about Jesus so they would really believe He was the Son of God. When they *heard* those things, what happened?"

Mary read from Acts 2:37: "... they were cut to the heart. . ."

"That means they *understood* that Jesus had come from God, and they also knew that they themselves had shouted out, 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' So those people weren't babies or children, were they? They were grown-up people who could *hear and understand*."

"Now, Anthony, what else did Peter tell those people?"

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized . . ."

"So these people were *old enough* that they understood that they had *done* wrong things, and they understood that they had to *turn around*, to stop doing things that were disobedient to God. And they

were old enough to *decide for themselves* that they wanted to be baptized. So, from this scripture, do you think any babies were baptized that day?"

"I don't think so," answered Anthony. "Then why was Elizabeth baptized?"

"Because they misunderstood a verse of scripture. You remember that in Psalm 51:5, David wrote, 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' Some people say that David was saying that he was born full of sin, and that because all of us die—even babies—that shows that we are born with the sin of Adam and Eve.

"But David didn't say he was born full of sin. He said it was *his mother* who was the sinner, and that he was born into a *world of sin*. That's a different thing. We have to pay attention to what God says in His word, and not create wrong teachings because we didn't read carefully enough."

"Do you remember the place in the book of Ezekiel that talks about sin?" asked Mary. "It is Ezekiel 18:20."

"I'll read it," Aseema volunteered. "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son'."

"So children aren't born with sin. They aren't sinners. They can't understand right from wrong, and they can't understand enough about Jesus to really believe in Him and obey Him. If we have to believe in order to be saved, how terrible it would be if babies are counted by God as being full of sin, because then He would be requiring them to do something they can't possibly do. So, any babies who die would be lost."

Anthony looked puzzled. "But now," he said, "Elizabeth thinks she's already been baptized, so she says she doesn't need to be baptized again. Is she right?"

"No," Peter answered. "She wasn't baptized like the people on the day of Pentecost. She hadn't believed in Jesus, and she hadn't made up her mind to turn around and to stop sinning, and she didn't know anything about being washed in Jesus' blood when she was being sprinkled."

"But what's 'sprinkled'," asked James.

"The priest or preacher takes the baby and sprinkles some drops of water on it: Is that proper baptism?" asked Peter.

"No," answered Aseema. "When I've seen people being baptized, they were covered up with the water."

"Why?" asked Peter. "Do you know? We'll study about that tomorrow night."

The Name of Jesus

KIM ROWELL

When we hear the name of Jesus we are reminded of the words of the apostle Peter in Acts 3:6 Peter healed a lame man that sat by one of the temple gates and begged. He and John were cast into prison the next day. When they were brought before the high priest and the rulers, they were asked "By what power or by what name (authority) have ye done this?" Peter answered. "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead. . ."

When I read this passage, I cannot help but think: "What a wonderful name, what a beautiful name, what a powerful name." It escapes me how some people of our day try to avoid or belittle the name (authority) of Jesus Christ. Some people even argue that there is "nothing of importance in name." Most who take this position do so without realizing that the Bible addresses this subject in a number of places. We would all do well to remind ourselves as well as others of them.

John the beloved apostle tells us that the very reason he wrote his record of the gospel is so that we might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and that believing we might have life through his name. (John 20:31). So it is through Jesus' name that we have life. This is not something about which we could say "there is no importance." Luke tells us that it is the name in which repentance and remission of sins was to be preached. (Luke 24:47). Brother Paul tells us that the name of Jesus is the name which justifies. (1 Corinthians 6:11). What could possibly be of more importance to mankind?

Another facet of the name of Jesus is that we are told it is a name which brings suffering! In Acts 5:41 we read that the apostles who had

been beaten rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Christ himself taught this when he said: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." (Matthew 10:22). We even read of Antipas our brother being murdered because he held fast the name of Jesus and did not deny the faith. All such suffering, however, is not in vain. Paul reminds us that no matter what happens to us because of our faith in Christ, our reward will be great that trivial sufferings cannot even be compared to it. (Romans 8:18).

We also read that the name of Jesus is the name in which we should gather. (Matthew 18:20). His is a name which should not be blasphemed (James 2:7), but rather should be glorified. (Colossians 3:17). We also read that the name of Jesus is highly exalted and his name is above all other names. It is at the name of Jesus that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess his Lordship. (Philippians 2:9-11).

Acts 4:12 tells us it is the name in which we have salvation. Indeed, not only is the name of Jesus important, but there is no other name by which we may be saved! What a privilege to praise his name. What an honour to wear his name. What a blessing to be safe in his name. And what a shame that in our present world over one billion people have never even heard the name of Jesus. May God strengthen us that we may boldly proclaim and glorify his name.

Light Of The World

DAN MURPHY

God places high value on his children. He showed this by the giving of his only Son on the cross. God also revealed the value of his children by using valuable terms to describe them. One such term is *light*.

Think of how valuable a light is in a dark place, or at night. Have you ever lost something in the dark and had no light to help you see, so you searched aimlessly? How difficult is it to unlock the door to your house without a porch light shining? How valuable is a light shining? How valuable is a light to someone walking in a cave or searching through a closet?

Light is essential to sight. Light is of immeasurable value. God said that you are as important as light is to those who want to see, Jesus described you as the light in a world of darkness. *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:14-16).

Your Christian life must be visible to all people. As a Christian you should not confine your light within the walls of the church building. If your light stays in the building, or only among fellow Christians it is of little use to the world which desperately needs light. Your Christianity must be a clear, visible light, not a dim or covered light. It must be visible in all the activities of your life.

It is your light which will make the way clear for those living in the darkness of sin to come to God. Paul encouraged you to be *"blameless, and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. . ."* (Philippians 2:15-16). Those living in darkness need your light. Shine, that all around you may see.

Would You Know A Christian If You Saw One?

SELLERS S. CRAIN

George Bailey is most often credited with the statement, "Sitting in a church house no more makes you a Christian than sitting in a hen house makes you a chicken." Another person responded to this statement by saying, "This is true, but if something, sits in a hen house, looks like a chicken, acts like a chicken, clucks like a chicken, and lays chicken eggs, you can bet it is a chicken." Would you recognize a chicken if you saw one? Why? How?

Many years ago I came across a sermon entitled, "Marks of a Christian." I have used it many times since. It is still a good lesson. Is it possible to tell if a person is a true Christian? How would you know? Jesus said of false teachers; "by their fruits you shall know them."

(Matthew 7:20). Marshall Keeble often said, "We are not supposed to be Judges, but we are supposed to be fruit inspectors." You can know if a person is a true Christian by the fruit he bears. You can compare the characteristics of any person's life with those of Christians mentioned in the New Testament and determine if they are living the same lifestyle.

Jesus said, "Upon this rock, I will build my church. . ." (Matthew 16:18). Luke records that this church he promised to build began on Pentecost. (Acts 2:47). Is it possible to know if a church today is a part of that church? it is popular among some today to say that there are no identifying marks revealed in the New Testament for this church, and that it only existed in the mind of God. If we cannot determine from the inspired Scriptures what this church is to be, then where could you go to find this information? There are churches of Christ described in the New Testament. We can determine what their organization, worship, doctrine and practice was like, and it is possible to recreate (restore) the same thing today. So if a church looks like, acts like, behaves like, and worships like a church of Christ, you can know it belongs to him.

The Offense Of The Cross

DILLARD THURMAN

Paul plaintively asked, "*And I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased*" (Gal. 5:11). God's love and mercy is epitomized by the cross and its true meaning. It is inconceivable, in view of the gift which Christ gave on the cross, that any would become offended. And yet some were.

The "*old rugged cross*" stands as a monumental landmark between two great covenants: sealing the end of the Old Testament and opening the way for the New Testament. It was not an emblem of purity of beauty, but an august and cruel marker with a terrible epitaph of man's inhumanity. On it is emblazoned the suffering, sorrow, shame and sacrifice which was the purchase price of our redemption. Never was it God's design for the cross to be an ornament, or enshrined as an emblem of an heretical and apostate church! To change the picture of the cruel, rugged cross in a desolate place is to change and obliterate its true meaning.

As a jeweler displays his precious gems on a black cloth to show

their advantages by contrast, so Jehovah set forth His only begotten Son to die on a rugged cross in a terrible blackness, that all eyes should be fastened on that scene forever. Our eyes should focus on the suffering Savior, not on the literal cross. The glory of the cross is forever sealed in the sacrifice which He made for us, not in the ornamentation man's vanity may show.

JUDAIZERS OFFENDED BY REMOVAL OF THE LAW

The lovers of the Law of Moses were offended in the cross because on it that Law was repealed. The inferiority of the Law was often shown, *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"* (John 1:17; Gal. 2:21). These truths aroused the Jews who then denied the real meaning of the cross of Christ, and His death, burial and resurrection. The apostle Paul stated clearly of the law of Moses that Christ has *"taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross"* (Col. 2:14).

The apostle Paul also wrote, *"But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby"* (Eph. 2:13-16). Thus, in His death on the cross, Jesus abolished the law, and brought both Jew and Gentile unto God by the cross with no difference in their relation with the Father (Gal. 3:27-29).

It was offensive to many that the law was removed *"because of its weakness and unprofitableness"* (Heb. 7:18-19), and thus they became offended at the cross. But the Scriptures make it plain that they could not return to be justified by that law. *"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace"* (Gal. 5:4). And to those who turned back, the indictment read, *"If they shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame"* (Heb. 6:6). Those who were offended in the cross thus offended God!

THE CIRCUMCISION OFFENDED BY ITS REPEAL

The apostle Paul was often berated and persecuted by Judaizing teachers who were adamant in their demands for circumcision. This group was especially offended at the cross which had erased the merits of circumcision. Their wrath was turned against Paul as he taught, "*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love*" (Gal. 5:6). Paul, recognizing the offense of the cross in this respect, and knowing that persecution was thus prompted against him, argued, "*And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased*" (Gal. 5:11).

To many fully devastate the position of the lovers of circumcision, Paul stated, "*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh*" (Phil. 3:3). Oh, how the Jews were offended by such words from a soldier of the cross. But Paul elaborated on how this was brought about: "*And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead . . . blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross*" (Col. 2:10-14). This offended the Jews. That the true circumcision is spiritual, rather than physical, offended them. But Paul showed that this was effected by being baptized into Christ.

LOVERS OF WISDOM OFFENDED BY SIMPLICITY

Lovers of the wisdom were offended by the simplicity of the gospel. Paul, highly educated that he was, declared the mission which Jesus gave him: "*To preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God*" (1 Cor. 1:17-18). Though Paul could have delved into his scholarly background for his message, he said, "*And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*" (1 Cor. 2:1-2). Yes, Paul taught, "*For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*" (1 Cor. 3:19).

Paul was so afraid of trends toward wisdom of the world that he warned, *"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through this subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"* (2 Cor. 11:3). That same haunting fear confronts every loyal soldier of the cross while viewing the pomp and ceremony, rite and ritual, that attends special days of religious observance—all of which sprang from pagan sources, and not from God.

LOVERS OF WORLD OFFENDED BY ITS PURITY

Worldliness has always had its lure dangling before the eyes of man. And when the cross demanded that folk should die to past sins and *"walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4), then some became offended. Yet it is incompatible to be lovers of the world and followers of Christ at the same time. We are warned, *"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction"* (Phil. 3:18-19). The cross of Christ meant death to the world: *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"* (Gal. 6:14). It was by the cross the one was separated from the world and inducted into the kingdom of Christ.

To show this new relationship, Paul wrote, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God"* (Col. 3:1-3). To all saints came the admonition, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1 John 2:15). It is easy to see why lovers of this present world would become offended at the cross!

SELF-RIGHTEOUS OFFENDED BY ATONEMENT

The self-righteous man was offended in the cross because its whole message is one of man's dependence on God to save. The cross presents the true picture of man's state of degradation in sin. Rom 6:23 declares, *"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* The self-righteous was offended by the idea that he stood in need of someone to die for him that he might be made right with God. Yet Paul declared, *"For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly ... But God*

commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-8). He then developed the picture of God's grace by saying, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (v. 10).

Paul also stated that God *"was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). But this truth was offensive to those who believed they had no guilt. People were offended in the cross because it forced them to face their own sinfulness and their need for the grace of God.*

IMPENITENT OFFENDED BY ITS DEMANDS

Last, of all, the impenitent and willful were offended in the cross because of its demands for obedience to its gospel. Even to this day, this still offends many. *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). The apostle is plainly drawing a parallel between the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (the real meaning of the cross), and our own obedience to the gospel as we die to sin, are buried in baptism from sin, and raised to walk in newness of life. It is this obedience to "that form of doctrine" that makes us "free from sin" (Rom. 6:17-18).*

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Christ suffered on the cross (Phil. 2:8), to the end that we might be saved. But He became the author of eternal salvation only to the obedient! Any who are offended in the cross, and will not obey that form of doctrine, will not be made free from sin. Alas, but their fate is described thus: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 1:7-8).

Sinner friend, you cannot afford to become offended in the cross of Christ, for by it the Lord wants to save you eternally. Don't become offended at the obedience which it demands. But yield yourself unto the will of Christ by doing all He has commanded you.

Men Waste Their Most Precious Commodity

ELWOOD HOLT

"Millions of money for an inch of time!" cried Elizabeth, Queen of England, upon her death-bed. Reclining upon a royal couch, with ten thousand dresses in her wardrobe, and a kingdom on which the sun never sets at her feet, she, who has wasted more than half a century, would now barter her millions for an inch of time. This is the sad conclusion to many a life—neglect, waste, procrastination, unconcern, then the death bed. Time is one of our most valuable possessions. We often say that we do not have time to do this or that, but we have all the time God ever gave us. The person who gets so busy with his stocks and bonds that he cannot think about the Lord's Church, his own salvation, and the salvation of others, will one day wish he could exchange all his earthly treasures for just a bit more time. A renowned infidel cried out on his dying bed, "I will give all that I am worth for six more months of life. Oh God, do not leave me alone. Send even a child to play with me!"

The day will come when nothing else will matter and our thoughts will be either upon anticipated happiness with the Lord's redeemed or the horrors of the long and endless night of eternal punishment. An English proverb said, "Take time while time is, for time will fly away." Do you not often say, I just don't know what went with the time! Oh yes, we all do. But the time went just where it has always gone. Days are the same as they were hundreds of years ago; it still takes 24 hours to make one . . . 60 seconds to make a minute. We have as much time as we ever had. It is just a matter of how we are using it. Things that we want to do, we should do now. Why? Well, the proverb already quoted says that "time will fly away." Another proverb says, "The fool makes up his mind after the market wagon has passed."

Have you ever seen a good housewife run out on the porch and call to the market wagon, only to watch him as he goes on out of sight because her voice was not heard? This is the way time is, too. Often, by the time our minds are made up, our opportunity is gone. In the Lord's word great emphasis is laid upon "today." We are told to "boast not thyself of tomorrow" (Proverbs 23:1). We never know what a day will bring forth, but we can rest assured that it will have its share of happi-

ness and sadness. It is small wonder that Jesus said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." We sing the song, "One step at a time, Dear Saviour," How true this is! We can only take one at a time. Some may be bigger than others, but the fact still remains that we can only step one step at a time. You need not try to take two steps at a time for you can't. Neither can you live two days at a time. You may live a thousand more days . . . or many thousands, but you will live them day by day.

So, if you have something that you need to do, do it today. Don't put it off, for today may be your last day to live. It will be for multiplied thousands. People who have never obeyed the GOSPEL OF CHRIST, who are gambling on not just tomorrow or next week, but "something before they die," would do well to awaken to the fact that they have no perpetual lease on this life. They are gambling, not on just one day, but maybe on ten years or even more. Today is the time to say those kind words we have been intending to say to someone. Today is the time to write our aged parents, if they are alive, a love letter. Today is the day to help struggling youth. Today is the day to speak a word of appreciation to a companion or a neighbour. Today is the day to ask for forgiveness from God and those you have wronged, in word or deed. Today is the day to thatch our spiritual roofs if we have not done so. "Today if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:8).

Friends, don't talk about turning over a new leaf tomorrow. Let me encourage you to turn it over today. And, remember the words of the old sage, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, "it might have been." "

Paul said, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure" Philipians 2:13. Paul also said, "In all things we are more than conquerors through HIM that loved us" Romans 8:37. TODAY YOU LIVE.

Do We Really Love Each Other?

HOLGER NEUBAUER

I Peter 1:22 says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto the unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

The Apostle employs two different words that are both translated "love" in the King James version. In using two different words, Peter instructs us as to how the highest form of love will cause us to live.

First, Peter mentions their souls had been reformed as they had been morally purified by obeying the gospel. The Spirit was received upon the hearing of faith (Galatians 3:2) which is the testimony of God's holy will (Romans 10:17). This testimony led them to obeying the truth which in turn instructed them about love for one another. Peter says, that they were brought through the truth to the "unfeigned love for the brethren." Literally, their love was "unhypocritical." They were not playing a part of an actor in a drama, but sincerely devoted to each other. The words "love of the brethren" are actually translated from one word in the original, "*Philadelphian*," a compound in the Greek, from the words (phileo; love and adelphos; brother). The love that these spiritual brethren displayed for each other was like unto the natural sibling love found in the fleshly family.

Peter had just commended them for their obedience to the gospel that led them to an unhyprocritical love. Why then, does Peter exhort them to love one another? The difficulty disappears in the original language. The love that was openly practiced among the brethren was one of fondness, affection and friendship. But the love that Peter admonishes them to have is now a different love. This love is from the word "agapao" which refers to a higher love, a love dependent upon an intellectual commitment to seek out their highest moral good. This love would not only motivate them to take care of their physical and emotional needs, but would also lead them to try to correct their brethren if necessary. True love of the highest degree demands reproof and instruction as eternity is the ultimate end of each soul and we wish all to be part of that glory land (Proverbs 27:6; I Corinthians 5:1-14).

Let's have the proper love for each other and care enough to correct each other.

Reason To Blaspheme

GLENN COLLEY

Have you considered what Nathan said to David after those penetrating words, "Thou art the man?" II Samuel 12:14 says "Howbeit,

because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

David had given an "occasion" to the Lord's enemies to blaspheme. Blaspheme literally means, "to speak against." The enemies to the Lord, then and now, are always eager to sit in the seat of the scornful (Psalm 1:1) and make light of the things and people of God. They exaggerate the real or imagined inconsistencies between what the righteous teach and practice. They make jest of sacred things. The "fiery darts of the wicked" are the ammunition used to weaken the cause of the Lord, and David had fueled their fire. How did he do it? By preaching one thing and doing just the opposite. He was a liar, a murderer, and adulterer, and a cheat. He had sold his integrity and his faithfulness for a moment's sensual pleasure.

It is sad when God's people sin in such a way as to reinforce and add supposed substance to the cause of the devil.

There was a day when Jonah felt the stinging rebuke of the heathen shipmen: "Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them (Jonah 1:10)."

There was a day when Abraham lied to Abimilech and heard some deserved rebukes from that king of Gerar: "What hast thou done unto us? And what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done" (Genesis 20:9).

Can we today live in such a way as to promote blasphemy in others? Can we "bring reproach on the church?" Certainly so. Romans 2:21-24 says, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you. . ."

Titus 2:3-5 instructs that older women are to teach the younger women to be "discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, *that the word of God be not blasphemed.*" This is an important and needed lesson for today. Feminism, to the degree that it

contradicts these godly characteristics of Christian womanhood, is a sinful agenda. Furthermore, when these tenets of feminism are worn by Christian women, they promote blasphemy against the word of God. The reason? Presumably because those outside of Christ will recognize, just as in David's life, and Abraham's life, and Jonah's life that the principles we claim to believe are not consistently held in our behaviour.

Of course no living Christian is perfect. All Christians however, must strive to consistently practice what they preach. Surely if the world can see when we are gravely missing the mark, and they blaspheme using our life as fuel, then we can also see when we are away from God.

Be faithful, for yourself, and for them who watch you to see how Christians live. Jesus said, "Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matthew 18:7).

Blessings Abound "In God's Sanctuary"

JOHNNY RAMSEY

In the seventy-third Psalm we find the writer perplexed over a very common problem—Why do the wicked prosper? The age old puzzle had almost become an obsession with the Psalmist. In verse seventeen we find him saying: "Until I came into the Sanctuary of God, *then* I understood their end." The inspired penman was simply saying: "I was confused *until* God's presence pervaded my life. Then the dilemma was solved. I understood more clearly his purposes." Brethren, is it not so, with us, today?

The word *Sanctuary* means literally: "A structure made holy by God's presence." Under the law of Moses both the Tabernacle and the Temple qualified as an earthly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:2; 9:1). But today, as Stephen proclaimed in Acts 7:48, "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Jesus stressed that the *place* of worship was inconsequential (John 4:23, 24). The Lord doesn't abide in a special place; we make a special place *for him* in our hearts (1 Peter 3:15). Thus, in the gospel age, Jehovah finds sanctuary in the Christian's life and in the church (1 Corinthians 3 and 6). As members of the royal

priesthood we ought to be found in the presence of God at all times. We should never hide from his holy presence as did Adam and Eve. Nor shall we try to sneak away from it as Saul did at the Witch of Endor's house. It does not strengthen us to warm by the fireside as Peter did or head in the other direction like Jonah when we could wisely place ourselves in the sanctuary of God. Until we yearn for the divine presence and are found therein like Paul, David and Daniel were, we shall wander aimlessly through life. (Philippians 3:8-10; Psalms 42:1; 122:1; 119:164; Daniel 6:10). *Let us notice three great lessons from the text of Psalms 73:17.*

1. God is Accessible

It is a wonderful thing that he who made the world is not very far from each one of us (Acts 17). We can seek the Lord and find him even though he is as far above us as the heavens are from the earth (Isaiah 55:6-9). We don't have to get a prayer card and stand in line like Oral Roberts' followers do. We don't have to wait for an audience with our Father as do the Roman Catholics regarding the "Pope." God is accessible now for each one of his children. We can go directly unto him through Christ Jesus our high priest. One of the most interesting scenes in the Bible is found in I Kings 18 where Elijah taunts the prophets of Baal who were unable to make contract with their pagan god. In Habakkuk, chapter two, the prophet reminds the heathen that his idols of clay, wood and stone just cannot grant a blessing. He then concludes by saying: "But Jehovah is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him." Let us give thanks that it is even so today. God is accessible.

2. We see Things Differently in the Sanctuary of God

The Psalmist had a problem. He came into God's sanctuary. He left with a different perspective altogether. Being in the presence of Deity makes a vast difference. In Exodus 32 we see two men—both servants of Jehovah—Moses and Aaron. One has the tables of stone containing God's Law; the other has fashioned a golden calf to be used in idolatrous worship. What made the difference in Moses and Aaron? One had been in close communion with God! When our lives are filled with pressing problems and trying circumstances we should avail ourselves of the transforming power of the Lord's presence. Once we have been in a covenant relationship with our Maker and then depart our heart is heavy until restitution has been made. We know, better than anyone else, how difficult it is "to sing the Lord's song in a strange land"

(Psalms 137:4). In the sanctuary of God our soul is at home and at peace!

3. Blessings Result from Being in his Divine Presence

In Isaiah, chapter six, we have a graphic picture of the power of worship unto the Almighty. This period of devotion and homage caused the prophet to place himself at God's disposal. The Lord of Hosts was exalted and Isaiah humbled himself to carry out the will of heaven. This is the purpose of assembly worship today. Man is made better by true, spiritual worship. In the gathering of the saints we gain incentive and inspiration to "go about doing good" unto our fellow man. Private worship is also uplifting. In fact, unless we draw nigh unto God when we are all alone our religion is vain. Verily, our professed adoration is just as good as it causes us to be when no one is watching. If our personal godliness is like the Priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan we will be sadly lacking in God's sight. One major reason they "passed by on the other side" was because no one was there to applaud—they were not in the mood and besides their work didn't call for spontaneous sympathy! How about it, brethren? When we are all alone with God does our religion have any reality to it? One of the most powerful scenes in the Bible depicts Jesus all alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. There, in the sublime presence of eternity he was strong enough to humbly say: "Thy will be done." He arose from the rocky soil with strength enough to do the will of the Father. We too can find a blessing from being in the Sanctuary of God.

One day we shall be in the actual presence of the Creator. One day we shall know the resplendent glory of His power. May we so live upon earth in the shadow of divine love that over on the other shore we can pay eternal homage to His name!

Liberality Is Blessed

BOBBY KEY

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Giving is a test of our love for Christ (II Corinthians 8:8). "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:6,7).

The rich young ruler was good at keeping the law, but when the test of liberality was applied, he went away sorrowfully. It takes great love and faith to give up something we really need and want. I'm afraid there is little sacrifice involved in much of our giving today.

Christ himself set the example of liberal giving. Matthew 25 gives a graphic picture of the final judgment. The liberal giver stands at the head of the class. The servant is blessed of the Lord. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and you gave me meat: I was thirst, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came unto me."

God knows how we spend our money. We would all do well to re-examine our giving from time to time.

Making Mistakes

RICK JANELLE

Every person makes mistakes. Even those who will not admit it do so. Sometimes mistakes may be averted by thinking before acting, but I believe it is foolish to postpone action until it is certain no mistakes will be made. In my opinion, it is far better to act decisively with a will to succeed, than to waffle in a state of suspended judgment, getting nothing done.

According to stories we have in the Old Testament, David was a man of action, who made many mistakes. Some of those mistakes included adultery and murder. However, he did not allow the fear of failure to lead to inaction. Could this be one of the reasons God called this one who had done so many evil things, "a man after my own heart?" (Acts 13:22).

In the eighteenth century, there lived a German philosopher named Immanuel Kant. This man wanted to marry, and he almost did so several times. He was afraid that his philosophic work might be harmed

if he married the wrong woman. This fear of making a mistake caused him to never marry.

Risk is always present when reaching for success. There is also a risk in doing nothing because of the fear of failure. In order to be successful in any venture, the fear of making a mistake must be replaced with faith and action. My father used to tell me when I was a teenager, "Son, anyone can sit around and let the world pass them by. In fact, most people do. You will always make mistakes when you try to do something. Be willing to admit your mistakes and make them right, if you can. Just make sure that you do not make the biggest mistake of all—the mistake of doing nothing."

Wang-Yang, the Chinese philosopher said, "The sages do not consider that making no mistakes is a blessing. They believe, rather, that the great virtue of a man lies in his ability to correct his mistakes and continually make a new man out of himself."

Mistakes can be blessings in disguise, if we use them as spurs that drive us on to new and better ways of living. Paul said in Philippians 3:12-15. "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you."

Paul was not perfect, but that did not stop him trying to do what was right. His past failures did not prevent him from trying to become a better person.

If we make mistakes, we should do our best to make them right, but we should also keep pressing onward. If we make a mistake as an employee, we should correct it. If we fail in some area as a parent, child, citizen or Christian, we should try to do better.

Josh Billings said, "It is not failure to be knocked down, but to live there and growl is. A true failure is one who has blundered, but is not able to cash in on the experience."

Be not dismayed nor be surprised

If what you do is criticized.

Mistakes are made, I'll not deny

But only made by those who try.