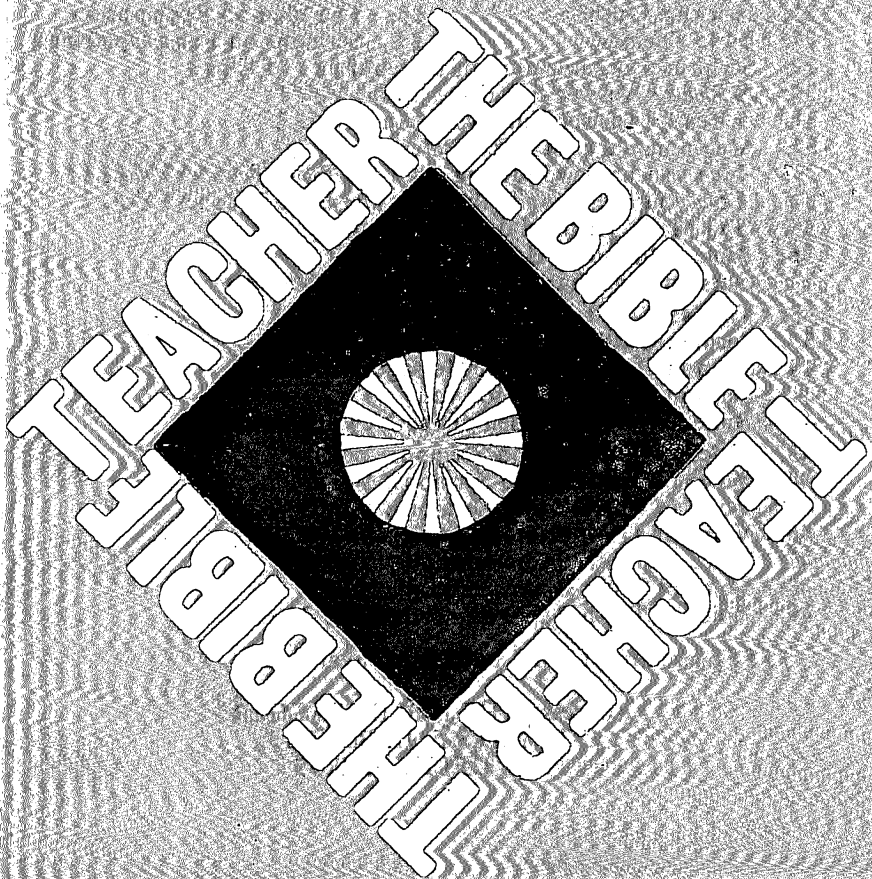


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Not All Believers In Christ Are Christians

It is the general belief in the religious world that all people who accept Christ as being the Son of God are Christians. Since there are many churches, this belief would mean that there are Christians in all of them in spite of the fact that these churches oppose each other, wear man-made names, have different ways to worship, and teach conflicting doctrines.

Since believers in Christ in this part of the world are greatly outnumbered by those of other religions, then they may find comfort in counting themselves among all others who believe in Christ. In so doing they feel a closeness to all believers. They know the preachers and the work being done by the different churches in their area. They think of all of them as Christians even though there are differences. They are willing to fellowship, to cooperate, and even to compromise on many points pertaining to faith.

Although we may feel much closer to those who believe in

Christ than those of other religions, still we must realize that there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one church, and one hope. (Ephesians 4:1-6). Those who obey God according to his teaching are saved and added to the Lord's church. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). They must then wear his name, worship him in spirit and in truth, and remain faithful to him. (Acts 11:26; John 4:24; Revelation 2:10). As such they are different, they are peculiar. (1 Peter 2:9). They cannot fellowship those who are in error. (2 John 9:11). They cannot compromise in faith or practice. (Jude 3; Acts 2:42).

The Lord's way is right. It is strait and narrow. (Matthew 7:13, 14). There can be no other. He condemns division. (1 Corinthians 1:10). We therefore must take our stand with him on his conditions if we are to be accepted by him.

It is true that to take such a stand means that we are small and few in number. We are unable to fellowship many who are believers in Christ. This not only limits our fellowship but makes us unpopular with those of other churches. We are pictured as being those who think they are the only ones going to heaven. Still, God's way is right and we must stay on that one and only way if we are to go to heaven.

All of this is to say that not all believers in Christ are Christians. It takes more than belief, or faith only, in Christ to save one and to take him to heaven. The believer that is pictured in the New Testament is that one who believes in Christ to the point that he is willing to obey the Lord that he might be saved. (Hebrews 5:8, 9). This is the real test of one's belief or faith. If one really believes in the Lord he will obey him. Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16).

As believers in Christ, and those who have obeyed him, we are assured by the Lord himself that he will be with us, bless us, and finally save us. Of course this does not come without a price. Christ tests us through obedience and faithfulness. We may have to stand alone at times, or have only the fellowship of a small

band of Christians in our area, but with Christ we are in the majority. He will never leave us nor forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5). He will help us to overcome every temptation. (2 Peter 2:9) He will shower his blessings upon us. (Ephesians 1:3). He will be with us and through him God will hear and answer our prayers. (1 John 5:14, 15). We should therefore take courage and look up with full confidence and assurance that in the end victory will truly be ours.



**associate
editorial**

Why Should One Be Baptized?

Baptism is one of the definite teachings of the Bible. Just as Christ and his gospel are important in Christianity so is baptism important in the religion of Christ. After his death, burial and resurrection, and just before his ascension into heaven, Jesus commanded his disciples to go every where and preach the Good News of salvation, and to baptize those, who would believe in him, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Then he added, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15, 16). There are governments which recognize a person converted to Christianity on the basis of his baptism. Certificates of baptism are generally accepted as an evidence that one is a Christian. Of course, no one can deny the great importance of baptism in Christianity.

But, why should one be baptized? For many baptism is just a traditional act. They would take their little babies to a church service for baptizing, in fact, sprinkling water. For others it is just a ceremony or an outward religious rite. They believe baptism has nothing to do with one's salvation but one should obey this act just to show that one has already been saved. But

this is not what the Bible says. The Bible teach one cannot be saved without having been baptized. The Bible in so many words shows a definite purpose of baptism. Notice Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). Peter said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS." (Acts 2:38). In 1 Peter 3:21, he says baptism saves us. Saul (Paul) was told to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). Paul in Romans 6: 3-5, said, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." The Apostle, in Galatians 3:27, further said, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." From this we conclude, the Bible teaches that one should be baptized to be saved, for the forgiveness of sins, to wash away sins, to be planted together in the likeness of Christ's death and also to be in the likeness of his resurrection by coming out of the watery grave of baptism, and also to put on Christ.

For the baptism to be scriptural it must not only be a burial in water but it must also be for the definite and the specific purpose, that is, for salvation as the Bible commands. Most times it is easy for those who were sprinkled in place of baptism to see that their baptism was unscriptural. But for those who were immersed in water it becomes very difficult to realise that their baptism too was unscriptural. They would argue and say that their baptism was according to the Bible because they were immersed in water, and the Bible teaches there is one baptism (Ephesian 4:5). But the question is not HOW one should be baptized, but WHY should one be baptized. For what purpose were you baptized? Surely the Bible teaches there is one baptism. But the one baptism of the Bible is not only just an immersion, it must be for the remission of sins. The person being baptized must understand at the time of his baptism that he is being immersed in water for the forgiveness of his sins, for his salvation. Other-

wise it cannot be the one baptism of the Bible. In Acts 19:1-5 we read of a group of disciples who had been baptised (immersed), but the record shows, their immersion (baptism) was wrong, and the Apostle Paul baptized them scripturally, as the Lord had commanded. They were not baptized again the second time, since there is but one baptism, but they were immersed before unscripturally and now Paul baptized them scripturally.

What about you? Have you been baptized as the New Testament of God's book teaches? Were you immersed in water (buried) when you were baptised? Did you know at the time of your baptism (*Think Seriously*) that you were getting baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16), to receive forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38), to get into Christ (Galatians 3:27), to have your sins washed away (Acts 22:16), not because you were doing something, but since the Saviour has commanded? (Luke 6:46). Can we help you in your sincere obedience to the Lord's command?

God In Our Homes

Johnny Ramsey

Any society will soon deteriorate when godliness no longer emanates from its homes. The heart-beat of any nation can best be gauged by the structure of family life. The mighty Roman Empire felt its very foundations sag when God was pushed outside in the confines of the homes of ancient Rome. Jewish historians, Grecian philosophers, English poets and American statesmen have all spoken, through the years, of the power and sanctity and preservation of the home. The most popular plaque ever written on walls and in the human heart is the one that reads so simply :

"HOME, SWEET HOME."

The hardest criminal can weep aloud when thoughts of home return. People who have lost nearly every semblance of emotion

and sentiment can still be nostalgic at the sight of a little house where they were born. Tears form quickly in the eyes of most of us when we are reminded by songs, poems or paintings of our childhood. Most best-selling novels have based their plots upon thoughts that touch the heartstrings of folk who "turn again home." With most of us the sweetest words will always be heaven, home and Mother.

Why have we, therefore, allowed the dearest ingredients of our homes to disintegrate? As we impartially view the crime, corruption and chaos in the world today, we must admit that much of it could be averted through the proper influence of Christianity in our homes. When the bulwark of the nation is crumbling beneath us we cannot expect peace and joy and love in the atmosphere of the world. Unless we quickly restore the beauty of holiness to family life this old earth is due for a much worse fate than nuclear destruction.

The ramparts of righteousness will never be strong until we enthrone God in the homes of the world. While East and West spend billions of dollars in a race to the moon, we ought to be rushing into the loving arms of a gracious heavenly Father!

If I were an artist, the most beautiful portrait within my ability to paint would be a family engaged in worship unto God. The warmth of household Bible studies is one of the richest sources of real character building. Americans, in their maddening pace of activities, seldom find time anymore for such uplifting moments. The vanity of seeking after riches has paved the road of broken homes, delinquency and the moral collapse within our generation. Even within the church of the Lord one can find a definite decline in the basic spirituality of the average member. The dreadful effects of television, pulp magazines and the motion picture industry have developed a compromising attitude among Christians. "We are so busy" has become another way of saying: "This is no home; it is just a dormitory where we sometimes sleep and a cafeteria where we eat in shifts." The problems created by mothers who work outside the home cannot possibly be offset by the luxury her paycheck provides. Children need a mother's love more than

a new car for graduation! Boys crave their Father's concern more than his cash. There will always be some things that money cannot buy! Usually, these are the best things.

Nearly 2,500 years ago Socrates declared :

“Could I climb to the highest place in Athens, I would lift my voice and proclaim : ‘Fellow citizens, why do ye turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth and take so little care of your children to whom one day you must relinquish it all ?’”

There has never been a nation that lived as extravagantly as we do today. But, are our \$40,000 homes, three car families and every luxuriant convenience worth the 400,000 divorces and 20,000 suicides they help to produce annually? Are we truly getting value for our dollars when we create monsters of materialism with which to destroy the fundamental fiber of civilization? Just how much happiness does our libertine existence really provide when half of our hospital beds are occupied by mental cases and when over one million Americans are alcoholics?

The decaying foundations of a once-strong country, built upon spiritual principles, cry out to the noble souls who still care. What can be done to restore sanity and purpose to the vibrant lives of 200 million people in the United States and over three billion in the earth today? There is but one answer. We must put God back into the homes of the world.

“I saw tomorrow look at me
From little children’s eyes,
And thought : How carefully we would teach,
If we were really wise.”

Let us imagine that the world would still exist two hundred years from now. However, there would only be a scant population remaining. In the most populous area of the world—a remote island in the Indian Ocean—two intelligent leaders would be discussing the decline of Western Civilization. Would it not be tragic to hear them say : “History tells us that back in the 1960’s

the citizens of a large Western power were afraid of a big bomb destroying their country. But that never did happen. That powerful nation ruined itself by forsaking the God of heaven." Before you rule out the possibility of this conclusion, please read Hosea 13:9.

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."

May we hasten to give Jehovah first place in our hearts and in our homes. No civilization can long endure without HIM!

Perhaps it is long past time for us to stop and consider the ingredients of a truly great nation. Maybe it is much later than we think. When leading statesmen place weapons of war and symbols of wealth upon the balance-scales of excellency, the whole universe is in danger of international ruin and despair.

Back in 1886, the illustrious James Russell Lowell spoke the following words at Harvard University :

"I am saddened to see our success as a nation measured by the number of acres under tillage, or of bushels of wheat exported, for the real value of a country must be weighed in scales more delicate than the balance of trade.

On a map of the world you may cover Judea with your thumb, Athens with a finger tip, and neither of them figures in the prices current; but only as the necessary preliminary of better things. The measure of a nation's true success is the amount it has contributed to the thought, the moral energy, the intellectual happiness, the spiritual hope and consolation of mankind."

Since nations are composed of individual citizens, we therefore ask : What makes a person truly great ? If one were to ask the average person today to name the ten most outstanding people in the world in 1964 he would probably list about three heads of nations, four mop-headed entertainers, a boxing champion, a

movie celebrity and one among several religious leaders. It is significant that the One who demonstrated true greatness did not come to lead earthly movements, neither did He entertain nor did He excel in athletics. Jesus was even a failure in the minds of His spiritual contemporaries! Nevertheless, the Christ gave the world—for all time—an absolute pattern for greatness. The chief ingredients in the ability of the Man of Galilee to inspire and lead others to more abundant, useful existence were these—service, righteousness and dedication. **Service** embraces humility before God and love towards others. **Righteousness** conveys loyal obedience and personal purity. **Dedication** causes one to pursue his purpose faithfully to the end and to show others true conviction and resolve. The world desperately needs these old fashioned Christ-like qualities now! So do our homes.

In the Bible we have many passages that give answer to the question of greatness. Let us notice a few. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked..." (Revelation 3:17). "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth" (Jeremiah 7:28).

Could these words from Solomon, Jeremiah and Christ have application to events in our day? Truly, "It is time to seek the Lord" (Hosea 10:12).

Nations, families, churches, preachers and citizens cannot be great in the sight of God when materialism controls their lives. We must remember, as Daniel said, "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men."

Do you want to be valuable, useful, important? You can be. Just adequately answer this one question:

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE?! Is the Lord ruling your home-life today?

IF I WERE YOUNG AGAIN

It is impossible to recall the past. As much as we would like to, we just cannot go back and replay the bad scenes or ease the unpleasant memories. But we can, perhaps, say a word or two that will encourage our young people to avoid error and walk in the light. Many of us do not profit from past mistakes, and the song was rather accurate when it said:—

“If I had my life to live over,
I'd do the same thing again.”

However, as we shelter in the shadow of the Gospel, in sober reflection, we consider the days of old (Psalms 77:5) and determine to lend aid to the youth of the present. Like the bridge builder in the famous poem we will try to leave a smoother path devoid of subtle pitfalls.

May I suggest these four basic points for the teenagers of today under the heading...

IF I WERE YOUNG AGAIN?

I. I Would Show More Respect for Parents, Teachers, Elders, Preachers.

It is amazing how much one thinks he knows at fourteen. Twenty years ago I was much smarter than I am now. In fact, there just was not anything anyone could tell me. As a result of this foolish attitude many wonderful words of advice from my parents and teachers fell upon deaf ears of rebellion. Not heeding the Biblical injunction to honor and obey my parents often hindered my spiritual growth as well as peace and happiness in the home. In the intervening years remorse and repentance have caused me to see how foolishly spent were many hours during those stubborn years. This is one reason that I always encourage young people to be more respectful to those who are older and wiser than they. Otherwise, there will come many moments of sad regret over past conduct. Boys and girls, remember this

always : **You will be wise not to think you are so smart.** Let every day be Mother's Day at your house. Begin right now to manifest the utmost respect for your Day. The Bible says in Proverbs 10:1—

“A wise son maketh a glad father : but a foolish son is the heaviness of his Mother.”

Young people ought to listen more reverently when the preacher teaches the Scriptures. They ought to be willing to participate fully in the work the elders outline for their edification. If you, as a teenager, desire real happiness, you will be respectful to your teachers in public school and in Bible school. Take it from one who has once been where you now are—it pays in every way to follow this advice. You will respect yourself more in the years to come if you have been considerate of others along the way.

II. I Would Realize the Value and Power of My Influence.

The ages of 15-20 often say : “I’ll do what I want to when I want to do it and it is nobody’s business anyway.” The tragic thing about such nonsense is that it leads straight to the pig pen a la the prodigal son (Luke 15:16). None of us lives unto himself (Romans 14:7). We are our brother’s keeper whether we realize it or not! Have you ever wondered just how many fellow teens might be lost in the Day of Judgment because of **your** wild conduct? In Romans 6:21 Paul asks a penetrating question :

“What reward did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed?”

Christian young people must be pure in thought and action for their friends are watching, and I Thessalonians 4:12 says that we must “command the respect of outsiders.” Let me plead with you to disdain impure speech, bad habits and sensual conduct. Put your approval on things that are excellent (Philippians 1:10) as you engage in matters that are lovely and of good report (Philippians 4:8). It takes courage to be a Christian, but young people like to be challenged. It takes more conviction to be a servant of the

Lord than anything else. So, young person, I dare you to follow Jesus all the way! You will find that Christianity is not a game for sissies but a way of life that is most compelling. God will bless you as you purify your influence by abstaining from evil.

III. I Would Study the Bible and Pray Often.

Juvenile delinquency would suffer a staggering blow if young men and women would let God's holy Word direct their path. Just let the Lord speak to you each day through the Bible. Also, talk to the Creator each day in prayer. Is it not wonderful, in this modern day of world-wide communication media, that Christians can channel through to Heaven? What a glorious encouragement is contained in I John 5:14—

“If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.”

Why should we wait until we are 21 to begin a serious study of the Book of books? How much time we waste on lesser materials such as television, pulp magazines, comic books and foolish fiction when we could feast upon the timeless beauty of heaven's masterpiece, the Bible. If each teenager would set aside two hours a week to really study the Bible and fifteen minutes a day for fervent prayer, his life would be transformed. Burdens would fly away and his joy would soar as a bird on wings because his life would be controlled by the One who cares. As the hymn so aptly states :

“I know my heavenly Father knows
The storms that would my way oppose;
But He can drive the clouds away,
And turn my darkness into day.”

Yes, God knows and cares. Young people, learn now to put your trust in Him. You will need such a friend as you go through life. Do not wait to call upon the Lord, or when you need Him most, you might be as a stranger when you cry out for help. The power of the Bible message in your life and the comforting solace of prayer will see you through many perilous moments. Don't forget it.

IV. I Would Be Sure to Marry A Christian.

Our Saviour demands that we seek first His kingdom in all matters (Matthew 6:33). Certainly, in the tremendous choice of a marriage partner for life, every Christian should select his or her mate from within the kingdom of the Lord. The day you marry begins the major epoch of your life. Make a mistake in this regard and the eternal destiny of many—some yet unborn—can be measurably affected. I have known brilliant young men to be virtually ruined because of an unwise decision in regard to a companion for life. Conversely, some of us with lesser ability have been made more useful due to the wonderful wives God blessed us with. Do not rush into this alliance. Prayerfully consider the **spirituality** of your sweetheart. Do not let physical beauty or social popularity blind your better judgment. Put the emphasis where the Lord does—upon a meek and quiet spirit which is, in the sight of God, priceless (I Peter 3:4). Girls, let me add a word of caution for your benefit, too. When thinking of marriage, choose someone with the ideals that compare favorably with the New Testament's image of a loyal servant of the Lord. If you fall in love with the athletic prowess of a certain football star who has no intention of really being a worker for the Lord, you will realize the sorrow which such misplaced values bring. Put **spirituality** at the top of your list and everything else will fall in place when "the right one" comes along!

It has been my pleasure to know some of the finest young people in the world. Working with them has been one of life's richest blessings. May God bless the teenagers of today and help them to develop into better workers for Christ than any generation that has gone before them.

And, parents, let us all pray that we shall wisely guide the destiny of our beloved children. There is no greater task nor nobler service.

Solomon left these wise words of inspiration for us: "The house of the righteous shall stand—but the house of the wicked shall be overthrown" (Proverbs 12:7; 14:11).

The happiest home is the Christian home. Children are indeed "an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). To bring them up in the nurture of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) is a tremendous challenge. This is, in many ways, the greatest work in the world. The experts on child care realize the power of a loving family atmosphere. When offspring can "rise up and call their Mother blessed" (Proverbs 31:28), delinquency has been dealt a severe blow. Dads who care more for spiritual values than monetary gains will provide a better emphasis in our homes also.

Once a little girl who was just learning to pray, said these words: "Forgive us for Mommy and Daddy." Even though she was confused, there are, in fact, many children who could earnestly utter that prayer. What a pity that so many young people receive no spiritual training at home. They are thus deprived of an anchor for their souls when life's storms engulf them.

Parents, we are building today the spiritual house our children will live in tomorrow. We dare not place it on a weak foundation and erect it with shoddy materials. We must put God and His Word into our daily home-life. We may own houses, land, oil wells, cattle and jewels. But how much do we own in the direction of heaven (Matthew 6:19-21)?

Do you ever talk to that boy or girl the Lord gave you about his or her soul? Does your own example encourage them to think pure and holy thoughts? What will you say in the Day of Judgment concerning the way you discharged parental responsibilities?

THE SOUL OF A CHILD

The soul of a child is the loveliest flower,
 That grows in the garden of God,
 Its climb is from weakness to knowledge and power,
 To the sky, from the clay and the clod.
 To beauty and sweetness it grows under care,
 Neglected, 'tis ragged and wild,
 'Tis a plant that is tender, but wondrously rare—
 The sweet, wistful soul of a child!

Be tender, O gardener, and give it its share
 Of moisture, of warmth, and of light.
 And let it not lack for thy painstaking care
 To protect it from frost and from blight.
 A glad day will come when its bloom shall unfold,
 It will seem that an angel has smiled,
 Reflecting a beauty and sweetness untold
 In the sensitive soul of a child.

In Genesis 44:34 a penetrating question was asked : "For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?"

Let us apply that thought to our responsibility as parents. Will it not be the saddest occasion of all if we have to come before our Heavenly Father one day to acknowledge that our son or daughter has been lost in sin! I can think of no greater tragedy. May God help us to open our hearts and our homes so that the Lord can come in to stay.

"The Middle Wall Of Partition"

Harold Hazelip

The Apostle Paul makes a lengthy argument in the book of Ephesians, in which he seeks to settle the controversy over the rights of Gentiles to become Christians without first becoming proselytes to the Jewish religion. Some of the Jewish Christians were forbidding Paul and his fellow-workers "to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved." (I Thess. 2:16). Paul defends the right of the Gentiles, and his language serves as a key to unlock many problems of Bible study. He wrote, "For he (Christ) is our peace, who hath made both (Jew and Gentile) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." (Eph. 2:14).

WHAT WAS THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION?

What was the middle wall of partition which had separated

Jews from Gentiles for centuries? What was the purpose of that wall? What happened to the middle wall so that Jews and Gentiles could be united in their service to God? The answers to these questions will suggest several conclusions which will be helpful in our service to God today.

What is meant by the middle wall of partition? This was not a wall of wood, brick or stone, but a spiritual wall which had formed a barrier between Jews and Gentiles. Paul writes in the next verse that Christ had "abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*. The law of Moses, with its rites and ceremonies, was the wall of partition. And God was its Author.

WHAT PURPOSES DID THE MIDDLE WALL SERVE?

Why would God erect a wall of separation between men? This was necessary, first, to show that God was faithful to His promises. Before man can be saved, he must come to have confidence or faith in God. (Heb. 11:6). But for man to have this confidence, God must show Himself to be a covenant keeping God! God had made promises to Abraham concerning the blessing of his seed or descendants, and concerning the blessing of all other men through Abraham's seed. The original seed promise had been made in Genesis 12:1-3, but it is often repeated, as in Gen. 22:18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." In some way God had to keep the seed of Abraham separated from other men until the Messiah came. Otherwise, God could have fulfilled His covenant to the letter, but we would not know He had fulfilled it! Paul therefore writes of the law of Moses, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." (Gal. 3:19). The Law of Moses, which was given only to the seed of Abraham, was to keep them separated from other nations until God kept his promise of sending the Messiah through them.

Another purpose of the Law is given in the Scripture just cited: The Law was "added because of transgressions." It was

to govern the Israelites until the Messiah should establish the New Covenant.

The Law was also to prepare or teach the descendants of Abraham so that they would receive the Messiah when He came. Paul wrote again, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us unto Christ*, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3:24). There probably was never a more competent teacher than the Law of Moses was. In all of its rites and ceremonies, it pointed to the Gospel of Christ. The writer of Hebrews said, "For the law having *a shadow of good things to come*, and not the very image of the things ..." (Heb. 10:1). The table of shewbread foreshadowed the Lord's Supper; the incense typified our prayers; the animal sacrifices forecast the sacrifice of Christ; and the Temple foreshadowed the Church.

We may ask, "If the Law was to prepare the Israelites for the coming of Christ, why were they so poorly prepared to receive Him?" Not every student under a good teacher becomes a successful scholar. The student must abide by the rules, properly regard his teacher, and apply himself to his studies. The descendants of Abraham made void the Word of God by the traditions of their elders. (Matt. 15:8-9). There were exceptions, however. The aged Simeon took Jesus up into his arms as an infant, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; according to thy word : For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke 2:29:32). Simeon was properly taught by the law to recognize the Messiah!

WHEN WAS THE MIDDLE WALL BROKEN DOWN?

We now know that the middle wall which separated Jews from Gentiles was the Law of Moses, which was to govern and prepare Israel to receive the Messiah, and to keep Abraham's seed separate so that God could send His Son into the world through them. Paul wrote in our text, Eph. 2:13, that the middle wall had been *broken down* by Christ. When did the Law of Moses end? Paul continues, "Having abolished in his (Christ's) flesh the enmity,

even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself (Christ) of twain (Jew and Gentile) 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: 15-16). Christ therefore broke the middle wall down, he abolished or killed the enmity between Jew and Gentile, *by the cross!* God had established the Law of Moses to keep the Israelites separate until Christ came; now Christ tears away this wall of separation to unite all men who will serve God into one body!

WHY WAS THIS WALL OF PARTITION ABOLISHED?

Paul gives the reasons why the Law was taken away. He says that Christ abolished it "for to make in himself of twain *one new man.*" The "new man" is the Church, so the wall of partition or the law of Moses had to be broken down before the new man or the Church could be established. The Law was nailed to the Cross, and the Church had its beginning on the day of Pentecost, some fifty days later. (Acts 2). Notice, too, that Christ purposed to build one new man. The Gospel of Christ is the New Covenant. It is not merely a revision of the law of Moses, or an improvement upon it; it *replaced* the Law of Moses. Jesus said that He did not come to sew a new patch on an old garment, or to pour new wine into old bottles. (Matt. 9:16-17). These parables simply mean that He came to establish a new and living way to serve God, not merely to revise the Law of Moses.

Paul also writes that Jesus abolished the law "*to make peace.*" (Eph. 2:15.) When Jesus came, there was division everywhere. Israelites were divided into Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Zealots, Essenes, and perhaps other smaller sects. The Gentile world was divided with an estimated 40,000 deities being worshipped. How significant the words of the angels on the night of His birth: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *peace*, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14). The only division line Christ ever marked was the line between those who properly serve Him and those who will not. On this point, He said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his

father... And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..." (Matt. 10:34-37).

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM THE MIDDLE WALL

To this point we have been thinking primarily of applications of Paul's language to the problems of his day. What does the fact that the middle wall of partition has been abolished, that the Law of Moses has been taken away so that Christ could establish the one new man, mean to us? First, it is obvious from this study that God has never had two churches, different from one another, at the same time. He would not allow the Israelites to have one church through which to serve Him and the Gentiles to have another. Rather than authorising two churches with different names and laws to stand at the same time, God took the Old Covenant away and made it possible for all men, regardless of nationality, to be members of the same body! Of course there was a plurality of congregations in different geographical areas as a matter of convenience to the worshippers, but they all had the same constitution and law: the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, the New Testament.

We may learn also from this study that if God ever makes a new Church, He will give the constitution and laws for it, and will confirm these laws miraculously. He has always done so. When He established the law of Moses, the Israelites did not draw up their own laws, but God gave the Ten Commandments, and following that, the remainder of the Law through Moses. The miracles that accompanied the giving of the Law from Mt. Sinai are familiar to all. When the New Covenant replaced the Old, and the church of Christ was begun, the Holy Spirit worked miraculously through the Apostles to confirm the revelation He was making known through them. (Acts 2:1-4). If God should ever establish a new Church, He would certainly prove its heavenly origin and point it out plainly as His Church. Members of Churches with modern origin should ponder this fact well! God has not authorised men to build denominations.

It is also clear from our study that the Church that Jesus built is no mean affair. The Law of Moses, the prophets, the work of John the Baptist, were all to prepare for it. Christ's own life's blood was given for the Church. Many treat the Church as if it were merely a fraternal group, something purely optional that one can "take or leave" and still please God. Christ must have regarded it much differently to have died for it!

And, from our text, in Eph. 2, we learn that it is the will of God that all partition walls between those who endeavor to serve Him should be leveled to the ground. Human laws and human names are divisive. God broke down the only wall of partition He Himself had ever built, and abolished it for the express purpose of making *one* New Church. Division in religion is contrary to His will. However, we cannot omit our duties to God to have peace. We cannot submit to the traditions of men or to the legislation of men to have peace in our service to God. But it is the duty of all of us to seek peace with one another and peace with God upon the sole basis of the Word of God. Every Christian is a peacemaker, not a sower of discord and division.

May we learn well the lesson of the middle wall of partition. It was the Law of Moses; God gave it, allowed it to fulfil its purpose, and then abolished it. Now He desires that all of us serve Him in the one body of Christ, His Church, according to the teachings of the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Have you been reconciled unto God in the one body, the Church? (Eph. 2:16).

Christian View Of Suffering

Thomas Premanandam

Someone has said, "*The evil that comes from without, from our environment of Society and the natural universe is suffering.*" This is an all comprehensive definition.

It is obvious that human experience in suffering is vast and

varied: It may be the reflection of our own actions or the consequences of reactions beyond our control. However, the fact remains: the law of suffering operates with no respect for persons. It knocks at the door of the rich and the poor, the literate and the illiterate, the righteous and the unrighteous. Job has well said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." (Job 14:1).

Attempts have been made by religious leaders of the world to explain the problem of suffering. Buddhism affirms that in order to get rid of suffering, the personality should be gotten rid of; Vedanta teaches that our being is one with the DIVINE and hence we are incapable of experiencing pain and suffering; Judaism states that suffering is for the unrighteous only; Islam declares that suffering is permitted by the will of God. This view is shared by Christianity although it admits of individual ignorance as the matrix of trouble and suffering.

The purpose of this article is not to evolve a satisfactory remedy for the annihilation nor mitigation of suffering, nor to suggest a device to skip it over but put you in mind of the words of Jesus, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16:24) The Christian way of life is not a bed of roses but a narrow way that leads to obliteration of self in suffering.

Thanks to the invasion of multifarious responsibilities, that usual 'quiet hour' where our minds are put in tune with the Lord's will, and seek His blessing upon the heavy schedule of work that we are called upon to do, is either want only withdrawn or sadly neglected. Again when cheer gives no place to fear, when we enjoy the sunny weather unmindful of the stealthy approach of an impending storm, we tend to miss, rather miss to notice the abundance of God's mercies unto us, His children. Little do we realize that we are delinquent and that the spirit droops without the heavenly dew. Much work is done but the service is lost: a great measure of ministry is rendered but the seal of God's approval is missing: sincere appreciation from brotherly lips is announced but the reward is not assured.

Then the Immanent Presence begins to open it. It draws you back to Himself through the chastening bed of suffering. You are there on the sufferance of God. In sickness and during the period of convalescence, you are constrained to devote hours to make Christ the centre of your thoughts. You are chastened that you may partake of His holiness. Affliction drove King David to God's statutes and to His fellowship (Ps. 119:71).

At times the Divine Interference may lead you through the straits of life. Storms of bereavement under which you wince or bitter disappointment, not to your relish may fall to your lot. Even Hope, the last clutching straw may seem to recede beyond the horizon. At this juncture Job of the Old Testament who had been plunged into the depth of a multiple tragedy and whose righteousness could not apparently guarantee the immunity from tribulation and adversity, stands before us like a sentinel guarding God's honour and justifying His ways to men. Again when our concern for the amelioration of society and sincere efforts for the spiritual embellishment of the church bring unwarranted criticism and when the relationships with the people around us are strained beyond repair, we feel forlorn and ostracised. Can you in this plight of isolation, sense the friendly presence of the ONE who has permitted suffering to smite you? Can you realise that sufferings are great hurricanes that lift you up to higher attitudes and towards God's heaven? Should it not be your prayer that the thorn be transformed into a flower? Apostle Paul complained of a thorn in his flesh three times but received the divine answer, "My grace is sufficient unto thee." (2 Cor. 12:9). What a flower whose fragrance permeated his ministry! A Christian should never lose sight of the sweet spiritual uses of adversity. As some one has said, "Night brings out stars as sorrow shows us truth"

Suffering and faith are inseparable. Great faith manifests itself in the furnace of affliction and reduces the poignancy of suffering; but weak faith on the onset of pain dwindles to the dimensions of a dwarf and finally succumbs. Stalwarts of faith used the cross as a stepping ladder to scale the heights of victorious life and have left for us on the stands of eternity their foot-prints to follow. Suffering purifies and deepens faith and faith upholds the sufferer.

Patience grows to its full proportion on the anvil of tribulation. (Rom. 5:3). The noblest of statues have borne most blows of the chisel and out of these blows emerges Christ's form. If you wish to become Christ-like, suffering is inevitable.

Suffering and joy are yoked together. They invariably open up before the sufferer wide vistas for glorious testimony. Paul and Silas with their hands and feet in stocks and their backs bleeding burst into songs of praise to God. (Acts 16:25). Their burning faith, drawing cheer from suffering, turned the hour of affliction into an opportunity to witness. The testimony of those, disciplined in adversity, speaks louder and holds the key for a triumphant door of genuine service in His vineyard. The story of Calvary has been dotted with the blood of cheerful martyrs and this blood has been the million tongues of the gospel proclaiming the GOOD NEWS.

The vicarious suffering of Christ, manifested in the life and crowned on the cross brought redemption of mankind. The Apostle Paul glories in his participation of Christ's act of redemptive suffering. (Col. 1:24). Redemption is a live and perpetual process borne on the wings of suffering. What is our part in this act of redemption? It calls for total, unstinted sacrifice. It is incumbent on every Christian. He should therefore be attuned to a service of relief and radiance to those who lead a life of misery, to those who play fast and loose with the ethical and social laws, to those who are negligent of the saving grace of Jesus Christ and those whose strength is slender to bear down sin and ignorance. Salvation is a free gift (Matt. 10:8) and it is our bounden duty to pass it on despite adverse circumstances.

Dear reader, don't be scared by suffering. Duly make bold to take it by the horns and overcome it. Then it is your slave. He offers you his services: he builds your faith, imparts Christian discipline, bestows on you powers of endurance and prompts you to a cheerful and courageous testimony. Do you know that he, that has no cross wears no crown? The suffering concern and the suffering ministry of Christian faith is our birth-right. That is our goal and that is our heritage. This is the Christian view of

suffering. This 'rainy day experience' is mine and I trust it is yours too.

Firsthand Experience

Lanny Henninger

ALL WEEK the rumor had been rife in the city, running its fingers out into the lifestream of Jerusalem—the rumor of “the King of the Jews.” Many did not know where or how it had started; but here it was fullblown, flying all over the city. The markets buzzed with conversation: “Any further news? Has anyone seen him? Where can he be hiding?” Religious leaders were upset, disturbed. Civil authorities were on edge. Something was in the air—“the King is here.”

Then suddenly it all turned sour—a cruel hoax, a silly joke: “The coming King? Have you heard? Don't you know who he is? It is that wandering preacher from Nazareth—that poor, diluded soul with his hallucinations and megalomania. A carpenter's apprentice trying to be King!” And, as so often occurs, a deferred hope turned into anger and hostility. Down the streets to the place of Pilate they poured, to see what was going to happen.

Inside Pilate and Jesus were face to face. Pilate, too, had heard the rumors. It had been an uneasy week for him and his wife. And now this man stood before him. Pilate, questioning him, almost began to feel that the rumors had substance, almost believed it was all really true. So he probed the prisoner with a question, “Speak up, man. Tell me plainly. Are you a king?” Quietly, but searchingly it came back, a counter-question that goes to the taproot of all religion:

“Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” (John 18:34).

A SECONDHAND RELIGION

Let us leave Pilate, now, for this is really the Lord's question to us. We must face it squarely. Are our words about Jesus—in our hymns and prayers and conversations and sermons—our own word, beaten out in the fires of experience? Or do we just dully repeat what we have been told by others? To put it another way: What is our religion based on? Mere hearsay, rumor blown down through the centuries, other men's thoughts caught in cold storage and handed out to us? Is that it, or have we found in our own experience that Jesus is a sympathetic friend, a wise counselor, a determined advocate, a righteous judge? Do we unthinkingly slip into Christianity like a familiar and used coat, worn and comfortable? Or is our faith something that comes on the authority of God? Put simply: Christianity firsthand experience or secondhand tradition?

The thrust of the New Testament is plain enough. For...“...if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Now is this the kind of religion we possess? Or is it something cold, sterile, mechanical, empty? The contrast is so great—vibrant Christianity on the one hand and frigid formalism on the other—that we are surprised to find people who prefer the latter. Content with an unreasonable facsimile, they reject and spurn the genuine article. Why? There are at least two reasons.

THE SAFER WAY

In the first place, it is safer. You always know where you are with it. No sudden burst of enthusiasm will ever produce the unexpected. “Give us the simple uncomplicated life. Free us from risk, danger, from uncharted and expansive seas.” Craving security above everything else, some have forgotten the very nature of the religion of Christ.

“...for we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians (5:7).

Anyone who knows anything at all about "walking by faith" knows at once it is risky business.

THE EASIER WAY

In the second place, secondhand Christianity is easier. Once Christ is dethroned, once religion becomes the accumulation of other men's thoughts, other men's dreams other men's values, then Christianity becomes impersonal, detached, simplified. A professor once told Henry Drummond: "I used to be concerned about religion, but it is such a great subject...and I was so busy that there was little time to settle it for myself. So I became a Catholic, and instead of dabbling any longer in religion myself, I left it to the church to do everything for me. Once a year I go to Mass." Lest this be misconstrued as sectarian prejudice against our Catholic neighbors, let me hasten to add that in any religious group you can find people who prefer a convenient "cop out" to radical confrontation with Christ. It is more comfortable to deal with Christ by proxy than to face him alone by oneself. It is ever so much easier.

AN INADEQUATE HARBOR

But hearsay religion is really an inadequate harbor. It brings no life, no forgiveness, no reunion with God. In Matthew 17 we are taken with Jesus and Peter, James, and John to a mountain apart. There the Nazarene is caught up in heavenly conversation, transfigured before his disciples, and in time, divinely identified:

"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matthew 17:5).

Later, in coming down from the mountain, the Lord heard the strident voice of human need. "My son is an epileptic; he suffers terribly. Often he falls into the fire and often into the water. I came to your disciples for aid, but they were powerless to help." And Jesus responded, "Bring him here to me" (Matthew 17:17).

Did you catch the message? "Listen to **him**—Bring him to me."

The passage speaks forcefully to those of us who prefer our religion ready-made with borrowed phrases and other men's beliefs. And so does 2 Corinthians 4:6. "Where", asks the Scripture, "is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God?" Not in our dusty books, not in our neatly tabulated articles, not in our controversial debates, not in our ecclesiastical "gnat-stringing." Rather, "in the face of Christ." These other things have value only insofar as they glorify him, magnify his suffering and mission, and clarify his will. Which is to say, the best way to know anything about God is to go to see Jesus for yourself!

The Bible makes this truth crystal clear. Unless our religion is—in a very real sense—our own experience, our own discovery, it is dead! Listen: "...for I know whom I have believed...we did not follow cleverly devised fables...but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty...That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands..." (2 Timothy 1:12; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1).

Here was the secret of their power. And it holds a clue to the secret of our own. For when our religious exercises—our worship, our private devotions, our prayers, our Scripture study, our efforts at soul winning—age without personal encounter with Christ, they are lifeless, stifling, and cold tradition in its most fatal form.

THE COMING OF EXPERIENCE

Now how does the power come? How can one move from secondhand tradition to firsthand experience? Whence the reality of Christ.

First of all, by the absorption of his message. You may never have seen Christ, but you know which road he travels. Pore over his Word, ponder again his claims, listen to his commandments, hear once more his warnings. Follow him down the road of these Scriptures, for it is down this road somewhere that Jesus is to be found.

Then, by the surrender to his way. You may not know all of his will for you, but the Bible does speak of "obedience of faith" (Romans 1:5). Walk by the will you do know—until at last you are united with Christ in the penitent baptism of faith.

Finally, by the prayerful dedication to his mission. Emil Brunner has said: "The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." In Christ one's life takes on the meaning of his purpose, so that we, too, can say with Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me..." (Galatians 2:20).

There is an old story about John Wesley. Caught in a fierce storm in mid-Atlantic, fear got hold of him. But of all the people on board, he noticed, only a small group of Moravian missionaries were not terror stricken. When the storm subsided and the danger was safely past, Wesley asked one of them, "Were you not afraid?" "Afraid?", answered the Moravian. "Why should I be afraid? I know Christ!" Then with disconcerting frankness, he asked Wesley, "Do you know Christ?" A hearsay religion will always be insecure in times of crisis, when faced with life's ultimates. And now the question is put again—not to Wesley—but to us: "Do you know Christ?" Which is to ask: Firsthand experience or secondhand tradition?

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