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The Need For Preachers

Christ said; "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15, 16). Paul wrote Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2). Again, he said, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach accept they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:13-15).

From these verses of scripture we can readily see the importance of the preacher in proclaiming the gospel of Christ. There is a definite place for him, a specific need for him. He is one who is to bear the message of the Lord, the gospel of Christ, which is the good news of salvation.

There is an urgent need for more preachers, They are to be

Christians, faithful members of the church, sincere and dedicated men who have the knowledge, the ability, and the desire to proclaim the truth of God to a lost and dying world.

There is a crying need for more preachers throughout the world. Here in India alone, it would take hundreds and thousands to go out to every city, village, and individual of this country with the message of salvation. Since the church is still young and small in number, it will take time to convert, teach, and train enough men to do this work. It will also take time for congregations to grow and to develop to the point where they can adequately support their preachers.

In the mean time, those men who want to preach must be willing to sacrifice, to earn their living through secular work, and in some cases by looking to other family members to supply their needs. They must then seize the opportunities that come their way to preach and teach God's word. Through such dedication and unselfish service the cause of Christ will grow and spread.

Perhaps you are one of those who would be willing to become a part of this great work. Remember, though, it will be hard work, there will be little materially to gain from it, and it will require the best that you have to offer. Remember at the same time that hypocrites, hirelings, and all such like are not wanted. They will soon be detected and rejected. We are talking about a life of service that one renders for the sake of Christ. It involves teaching the truth and saving souls.

A preacher's work is that of simply telling one or more about Christ, what one must do to be saved, and in general, all that the Lord requires. He may proclaim this to one, a dozen, a thousand or however many he may have the opportunity to speak to. He may do it by word of mouth, in a public assembly, through the means of radio, by the printed page, or in any other way he may make known the Lord's message to man.

Some are under the false impression that preaching is easy, that it pays, that it brings fame, and that one is his own boss. There

are those who imagine being hired out to a foreigner and receiving a good salary, but being free to do as they please. Others picture having their own church and leading a movement. While some may do this, the goal of the Christian is quite different.

To be a preacher one must have a love for souls, he must have a knowledge of the truth, and he must not only be one who has obeyed God, but he must likewise be one who practices what he preaches. With commitment and dedication, and a will to work, then under these circumstances one can be worth much to the cause of Christ.

Will you then join us in this great work? You know who you are and what you are. Begin where you are. If you are a Christian then prepare yourself for this noble work by reading and studying your Bible every day. Spend much time in prayer. Talk to those around you about Christ. Seek opportunities to speak to groups. In your local congregation, perhaps you will be called on to preach. Set some goals for yourself. Work toward those goals. If you are determined to preach God's word then you will.

Preaching the gospel of Christ is the greatest work in all the world. As you involve yourself in it with the proper motives and with all sincerity then the Lord will bless your efforts. Moreover, you will find a great deal of personal satisfaction in knowing that through your work that souls are being saved and prepared for the world to come. Regardless of what you might do in life, you could never do anything greater than that.



**associate
editorial**

How To Seek

Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, concluded the lesson "against

care about riches" by saying, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6: 33). It is interesting to note that in a world where there are so many things man would want to seek, such as business, education, money, etc., Jesus taught we must seek God's kingdom and his righteousness first and let God take care of every other things. Seeking God's kingdom and his righteousness, of course, means to seek what God has said about his Kingdom and his righteousness. For instance, the Bible says, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 3: 5), and at another place it says all God's commandments are righteousness. (Psalm. 119: 172). It means to seek God's will concerning salvation, concerning church, and all that he wants us to know what he has revealed in his book, the Bible.

But as much as it is important to seek it is also very important to seek with the right attitude. Because not all who seek, seek with the right attitude. In chapter 6 of John's gospel account we read about the great multitude of people who were in number about five thousand men. The record says, these people were seeking Jesus. Now, it was good that they were seeking Jesus. But why were they seeking him? What was their attitude? We read that when they found him on the other side of the sea, Jesus told them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, You seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled." (John 6: 26). Jesus had fed them the previous evening when he had miraculously multiplied five barley loaves and two small fishes. So now they were seeking him for another dinner. Their motive in seeking him was wrong. They weren't seeking him to hear from him things concerning the kingdom of God and his righteousness; they weren't seeking him to learn from him, believing that He is the Son of God. But they were seeking him for more bread. Thus we need to look at our attitude of seeking. We need to ask ourselves the question: Why I am a Christian or why I want to become a Christian? Sad to say, but it is true nevertheless, the attitude of some in being Christian is not right. They are there as long as they are getting some kind of help or if they have some position in the church or with any other such motives. On the other hand, some are seeking

to become Christians only for loaves; for some ulterior motives:

Some seek God's kingdom, like Felix, in a casual way. Felix was a Roman governor. Luke, the writer of the Book of Acts of the Bible, says he called Paul from the prison so that he might hear him concerning the faith in Christ. When Paul began to speak to him, however, "of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." (Acts 24: 25). For some studying God's word or Bible reading is a matter of leisure. They want to read or hear when there is a free time available when they are not occupied with any other important thing. No doubt then, Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. (Luke 13: 24). What Jesus is saying is that a casual seeker will never be able to find his way into God's kingdom. But only the ones who seek strivingly will enter therein. Seeking God's kingdom then demands immediate action; it is an emergency. Suppose if you are locked in a room which is set on fire, you would not casually seek for the exit but you will strive to find it. This is what Jesus meant exactly when he said, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. In the burning house one would not seek for any other unimportant thing first except for the exit. And this is how we must seek God's kingdom and his righteousness.

Eunuch was a genuine seeker. (Acts 8). The record says, he journeyed from Ethiopia to Jerusalem for to worship, and as he was returning in his chariot he was reading from the book of Isaiah of the Bible. But on his way when Philip, the evangelist, met him and asked him this question: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" His reply to Philip's question was: "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Then the record says, he desired Philip that he should come up and sit with him in his chariot, and teach him. He was willing to devote his time in reading the scripture. He was also willing to admit that he didn't understand what he was reading. He desired that someone should teach him, and as we will see, he was willing to obey the truth when he heard it. This is what the writer of the Book of Acts tells us: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached

unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8: 35-39). A genuine seeker is then one who is always willing to give his time for the study of the Bible, one who is always willing to accept the truth, one who is not prejudice but always willing to learn the truth, and on learning always ready to obey the truth.

May God help us to realize the need for striving to seek his kingdom and his righteousness first.

How Lovest Thou?

Gene A. Ellmore

Songs are a very viable avenue for transmitting forceful messages. A few years ago one of the most popular songs affirmed that "Love is Wonderful the Second Time Around." The central thought was that those who fall in love with one another after having broken up have a stronger love than they first experienced. Whether or not the sentiment is completely accurate as a principle, we do know that love can grow and develop through experience and time, mellowing, rather than fading, through the years.

How long has it been since you first fell in love with Jesus? A short time for some; a long time for others. But, whether short time or long time, unless we were merely infatuated with Him, our love should be growing and maturing, rather than fading and dying. Our present and future state of spiritual happiness or

discontent depends upon whether our love of God and Christ is subjective, objective, or not love at all.

Subjective love cannot survive, because it is turned inward. There is no god nor mortal man that can continually satisfy my every desire and demand. If you are presently disenchanted with Christ and his church because of what someone said or did, or that it is not providing up to the level of your desires, perhaps it is time to analyze your "love type". If there is a personality clash or other problems in the congregation, you may need to make a lateral move to worship with another congregation. If it is a case where your personal desires were not met, you may need to admit that your love is subjective. In either case, delinquency in worship and service to God is NOT THE ANSWER.

If our love for Him and our loyalty to Him isn't really growing stronger, may be it was "puppy love" or not love at all. Maybe we were baptized because we didn't want to go to hell, not because we really loved the Lord and all he stood for.

Objective love is a mature love. It can survive the worrisome threats, insinuations, and innuendos of human relations. Human sensitivities find adjustment and perspective in the object of its love, not escape.

What did the Lord say about it? To the church at Ephesus, he said: "I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). Their love had grown cold. They had regressed rather than progressed. Their love for other things were allowed to take precedence over their love for the Lord. Their attention and loyalty had become divided. They were still on friendly terms with the Lord, but they were not in love with Him. People in love just don't act the way they did.

Did you ever wonder what the Lord's thermometer would register in measuring your love or mine? Do you really wonder what the underlying cause for neglect of worship and service is? What is missing in the life of the delinquent member? The clock-watching-one-service-a-week member? The Bible class drop-out?

The brother who is stingy with his time, service, and money, but liberal with his "prophetic utterances" of the downward descent of the brotherhood? Tell me it isn't true they have fallen out of love with the Lord!

If this is your condition, you need to take the advice the Lord gave to Ephesus: "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else..." (Rev. 2:5).

Others who have glowing, active, energetic, tender love need to keep love in tune lest they, too, take the Lord for granted.

Brother! Sister! The one thing above all others which determines your relationship to your Lord is this: **HOW LOVEST THOU?**

That Which is Perfect

Glendon Cantrell

1 Cor. 13:10, "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Two things are contrasted in this verse: (1) That which is in part. (2) That which is perfect. Many use this verse to support the false doctrine that miracles and gifts continue in the Church today. However, if one will: (1) Give close examination of this verse in light of its proper setting and context, (2) Give heed to proper rules of Biblical interpretation, one can readily see that instead of support, this verse actually refutes this theory.

First, consider the phrase, "that which is in part." It is obvious that whatever was represented by this phrase was "temporary" in nature; it was to be done away. Verse 8 includes two items which were "in part". These two things, knowledge and prophecy, are two of the nine Spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor. 12. Knowledge and prophecy, both miraculous in nature, were to pass away. Since

prophecy was the most desirable gift in regards to benefit to the assembly (1 Cor. 14:1-5), it is valid reasoning that when the superior gift (prophecy) passed away, the inferior gifts would also cease. This is a necessary conclusion unless one wants to take the absurd position that God terminated the superior gift while retaining the inferior gifts!

Let us now turn our attention to that "which is perfect." The word perfect signifies that which is finished or completed. Some have made this refer to love. This is however, a false view for these reasons: (1) Love was already here (Jn. 3:16; Matt. 22:37-40) (2) The "in part" existed at the time of Paul's writing. Since the "in part" (gifts) was still there and so was love, then love could not be the proper interpretation. Some have totally disregarded the context and demanded that the word "perfect" refers to Christ as He is the only thing that is perfect. This is also wrong for the following reasons: (1) The same basic Greek word is used in the Septuagint at 2 Chron. 8:16. The word is translated as "finished." It is an accident that the same word used to describe the finished Temple of the Old Testament is used by Paul in 1 Cor. 13:10 to refer to the finished revelation of God's Word! (2) "That which is perfect" is a THING (neuter), not a person. If Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit had said "when he that is perfect is come" then we would and must conclude he had reference to Christ. However, since he speaks of a thing, then we must conclude he has in mind the complete revealed word of God. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19). Paul also wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit in James 1:25 "Whoso looketh into the PERFECT law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deeds." (3) Since the gifts of the Holy Spirit were received "only" by the laying on of the Apostles hands (Acts 8:14-18) and there remain no Apostles today, then the gifts have ceased. (4) Because the text supports this view. Paul was helping them to see the temporary nature of the gifts (Note: he emphasizes TONGUES Ch. 12-14). (5) Because other passages teach this same principle, Eph. 4:8-16. (6) Because we are now better off with the completed will of God than we would be with "only the part" (miracles or gifts) Jn. 20:30-31; 1 Cor. 13:8-13; Lk. 16:31.

(7) When Christ comes again it will not be to teach or rule, but to judge, Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:6-9.

Don't Follow the Crowd

Jim Bill McInteer

Contrary to some popular advice God Almighty never has suggested that it is the part of his servants simply to follow the whim of the crowd. A multitude can so easily be wrong; the majority can easily be in error, but with their incorrectness and with their error there also is the tremendous pressure that numbers bring. It perhaps is easier said than done to suggest "Don't follow the crowd."

But God has said this frequently—it must continue to be the will of every Christian, follow only that which is right! If the crowd is with the right thank God; but if the crowd is wrong, stand with God even if you stand alone.

One time a whole city was ready to listen to a king, they felt a prophet was wrong. Isaiah brought the unhappy and the unpopular minority report. He felt the pressure of his own situation, but do you know what God said to him, "Walk not in the way of this people." (Isa. 8:11.)

On another occasion Jeremiah was cast in the unpopular role of telling the truth when people did not want to hear it. Jeremiah made his speech and at the end of the speech the son of the priest "smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord." (Jer. 20 : 1, 2.)

A long time ago God had said to his people, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." (Ex. 23 : 2.)

As difficult as is the assignment it still comes with its rewards—it is the supreme obligation and the profound privilege of every Christian to “follow after the Lord.” This he must do whether he walks with thousands or whether he walks alone. Constant prayer will help a man accomplish his responsibilities.

Know the Truth

Marvin Rainey

UNITED, WHY DIVIDE? Two preachers, from different denominations, agreed to conduct a union meeting. At the conclusion of this meeting each convert would choose the denomination he wished to join. To the dismay of the preachers, the twenty who were converted refused to join either denomination. They said; “We are already Christians, members of the body of Christ, and we are united. But if some of us join one denomination and some another, then we would be divided.” They decided to meet and worship God as the New Testament teaches and to be Christians only.

Wouldn't you say their reasoning is sound? If all people would be content just to obey the gospel, and let Jesus add them to his church, and never join any denominations, then we would not have all this division.

What is a denomination? A denomination is a religious organization larger than any local church on earth and yet smaller than all the Christian people on earth. Therefore it comes in between, separate and distinct from, the church of the Lord. How is the word church used in the Bible? It is either a local congregation or it embraces all Christians, everywhere. Now, a denomination stands between these, and therefore, it is a thing that is not heard of in the Bible; and I say that cautiously, respectfully, and yet firmly.

Well, then does a man have to be a member of a denomination in order to be saved? When we use the words "church of Christ" or simply "church" we do not have in mind a denomination. We readily admit that a man can be a Christian and go to heaven and never be a member of any denomination. But when we say one must be a member of the church of Christ, or simply, the church, we mean that the Bible teaches that a person must be a citizen of the kingdom of God, a soldier in the army of the Lord, a member of the body of Christ, a child of God in the family of God. This is our plea. Let us study the Bible with you. We want you to know the truth. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32).

HAVE YOU BEEN WONDERING WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES?

Man is blessed to have the Bible, the word of God. It is to be found around the world in most of the known languages. It is the world's best seller year after year. Yet, many are not familiar with its contents. Others are confused by what they are told that it teaches. Even when they read it, because of prejudice or other reasons, they often find it difficult to understand.

It should be remembered that the Bible is both easy and difficult. It can enlighten but it can also be confusing. It is milk to some but meat to others. It can bless but also curse. It can deliver but likewise destroy. It can be used as a sword by one who is skilled but it can cut the unskilled. It can save now but one day it will be our judge.

Such is to say that all depends on how we approach the word of God and our attitude toward it. I would suggest that we keep the following things in mind when we turn to the Bible :

1. Have respect for the Bible as being God's word. Realise that God is the spokesman and that he has seen fit to reveal his

message to man. (Hebrews 1:1,2). We are also told that God has spoken through his Son, Jesus Christ (Matthew 17:5), and that it has all been given by inspiration. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

2. Recognize it as being a book of truth. Christ said that God's word is truth. (John 17:17). Truth does not contradict itself. Never array one scripture against another. Do not abuse it by using it to try to uphold some man-made doctrine. Do not add to it or subtract from it or substitute for it in any way. (Revelation 22:18,19; Galatians 1:6-9).

3. Desire to know God's will. Read and study it. (2 Timothy 2:15). Search the scriptures. (John 5:39). David said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105). Surely God didn't give us a book that we can't understand. The whole purpose of giving it was to reveal his will. He wants us to know that will. Only in knowing, can we respond to it.

4. Love the truth. When one loves the truth, it is so easy for him to learn God's will. It is so easy to teach such a person. His mind is not filled with resentment, with man-made teaching, with excuses for not obeying it. Paul said of some of his time, "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

5. Believe God's word. Trust the Lord, take him at his word, believe what he says. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6). Sometimes there are those who become so entranced with learning and knowledge that they take an intellectual approach and never get around to that of believing. Paul speaks of this kind, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 3:7). Don't try to know everything because you will never reach that point. The Bible is designed to fit the need of every person regardless of what stage of growth he may find himself. But you can be sure of this, and that is, that

everything that pertains to your soul's salvation is plain and simple, easy to understand, to believe, and to comply with.

6. Obey God's word. He will not mislead you. He will guide you, through his teaching, to do only what you need to do. Be a doer of the word. (James 1:22). "Blessed are they that do his commandments." (Revelation 22:14). It is not enough to say, Lord, Lord, or a lot of other things. Only those who will do the will of the Father will be saved. (Matthew 7:21-23).

7. Trust God to keep his word. He has made many promises and he will keep everyone of them. (2 Peter 3:9) He will bless those that are his with all spiritual blessings. (Ephesians 1:3). Paul said, "But as it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9).

My friends, have you been wondering what the Bible teaches? If so, if you will read and study it, following the suggestions just given, then you should not have any problem in learning God's will and in obeying its teaching. He has revealed plainly and clearly that you should hear his word, believe it repent of your sins, confess Christ as being the Son of God, and that you should be baptized for the remission of your sins. (Romans 10:17; Romans 10:10; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38). If you will do this then he will save you and add you to his church. (Acts 2:47). Then as a Christian he would have you to worship him and to live the Christian life that you might have a home in heaven. (1 Peter 4:16; John 4:24; Colossians 3:17; Revelation 2:10). May God bless you as you so do.

Authority in Christianity

E. Claude Gardner

The question is raised: Christ is the head of the church and if this excludes the "pope" of Rome from having any authority, then

why would this not also prevent elders from having any authority. In reply please observe these truths.

CHRIST IS THE HEAD

The risen Lord claimed all authority when he met with the apostles in the mount in Galilee. Said he, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) This would have been a rash claim had he not been raised the third day. His resurrection proved him to be the Son of God (Rom. 1:4) and this enabled him to declare his authority. Because of his sonship he spake for the Father. They are agreed. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30; Matt. 11:27; John 3:35).

Christ was raised to sit on the throne of David. In this capacity he exercises control over the kingdom. He makes all laws of the kingdom. Peter preached on the day of the establishment of the church that Christ was raised "to sit on his throne." (Acts 2:30.) The "his" refers to David's throne. This was in fulfillment of prophecy. (Cf. 2 Sam. 7:13-16; Luke 1:32).

The head controls the body. The members of the body do not quarrel with the decision of the head! Since Christ is the head of the church, a member should never question the will of Christ. Paul declared that God raised Christ "from the dead, and set him at his own right hand." (Eph. 1:20.) Having established his divinity by the resurrection he then proclaims his authority by stating, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22, 23.) Paul also teaches that Christ is the only source of authority when he wrote, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18).

It is therefore established that the final and only authority in religion is from Christ. Every question or problem must be answered by him. He has not relinquished his sovereignty to a

man or to a collective body of religious leaders. Christ has primary power in heaven and on earth. No man has any right or reason to make any new law or to attempt to nullify any teaching of Christ. All of us should be ready to confess Christ as our creed even as Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16.)

AUTHORITY EXPRESSED IN THE BIBLE

The authority of the King of kings is expressed in the New Testament. In order to assure the correctness of the will of God the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the New Testament. This divine influence we know as "inspiration of God." (2 Tim. 3:16.) Prior to the Lord's death and departure he promised that the Holy Spirit would come to endow them with "all truth." He announced, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come." (John 16:13.) Also he assured the apostles that "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) Hence, when an apostle or inspired man wrote or spoke in the first century his words were authoritative. They were not his own; they were not man's wisdom but the word of God. The Thessalonian church was complimented by Paul for their reception of the preaching. He wrote, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. 2:13.) Bible writers claimed to speak by the direction of the Spirit. Paul establishes this influence of the Spirit over the apostles and evangelists by saying, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth." (1 Cor. 2:13.) What Paul preached came by the revelation of God. He guaranteed his preaching. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11,12.)

God speaks to man in this generation not directly, nor by dreams, visions, and fortune telling but through Christ. How does Christ speak to man today? It is through the New Testament. The voice said at the transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5.) The Hebrew writer assures us, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Heb. 1:1,2.)

AUTHORITY OF APOSTLES

Christ who has supreme authority has granted such power to the apostles to execute his plans. To all the apostles and not to Peter only he delegated some authority to carry out his will. Guided by the Spirit they were enabled to reveal how men may have remission of sins. Jesus sent them to men so they could enjoy remission of sins. "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whomsoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whomsoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20: 21-23.) Peter made known conditions of remission of sins on Pentecost in these words, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2: 38.) When this was preached by Peter or any other apostle or evangelist it was sanctioned in heaven. Jesus said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16: 19.) This same power was given to all apostles. (John 20: 23.) The teaching of the apostles of Christ must guide the church. Obviously Christ is the judge of all men (Acts 17: 31) but since the standard for judgment will be the words of Christ (John 12: 48) which was set forth by the apostles, they thus will judge us. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19: 28.)

The original apostles continue to maintain their honored position in the church. We do not need modern, living apostles. No successors to Peter or the apostles have been named with heavenly sanction. No man today can qualify to be an apostle. (Acts 1: 21-26.) Mormon apostles and the Romish pope that claims to be successor to Peter must be rejected as unauthorized officials. The apostles of Christ have not been displaced by modern, false apostles. They have not been appointed as the earthly representatives for Christ. The "pope" claims to be the Vicar of Christ and absolute ruler. He claims equal authority with Christ. This would make two heads over the body, the church. Actually Christ is the only head and he has never shared this headship with another. Popes and pseudo-apostles must be refused and rejected because they claim to enjoy primary and delegated authority that has never been granted to them.

AUTHORITY GRANTED

Jesus and the Father have enabled certain ones to have authority but this is not primary or original authority. Parents have been granted authority over children (cf. Eph. 6: 1); rulers have control over citizens (cf. Rom. 13); elders have authority over the church (cf. Acts 20: 28; Heb. 13: 17). Parents cannot require other than the Lord's teaching; rulers should not defy God's will (cf. Acts 5: 28, 29) and elders do not originate any new teaching. Elders are responsible to execute what Jesus has already authorized.

Since parents, rulers, elders have been allowed prescribed authority they in no way encroach on the power of Christ.

The Privilege of Giving

Melvin J. Wise

Giving is looked upon by many people as a necessary nuisance, from which one is indeed fortunate to escape; but the genuine

Christian is grateful to God for the privilege of giving. Personally, I am truly thankful for this wonderful privilege for the following reasons:

Getting is animal-like; while giving is God-like. The joy of giving moved God to create, as well as to redeem mankind. In the beginning creation sprang from the goodness of God. (Read Psalm 19:1-2). Then when man, whom God had created and placed upon the earth, had sinned and separated himself from God, "God so loved the world, that he gave" again, and this time it was "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Throughout our Saviour's ministry on earth he "went about doing good." He lived to enlighten, to comfort, to bless, and he died to redeem mankind. It was very little indeed that he ever received. Eventually Jesus "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." All this he did that we might have remission of sins here, and eternal happiness hereafter. Thus Paul said of Jesus, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, That, Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

And who is it that does not love a giver who gives cheerfully? Valuable as any gift may be, yet if it is given through pressure, who could appreciate it? God loves the cheerful giver because it displays a heart like His own.

Why does the Lord command us to "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth"? Because it is wicked to be rich? No, but because moth, rust and thieves will get them after our death, if not before. Therefore, the Master exhorts us to "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Why? Because heavenly treasures will abide.

If from the right motive we give to others when they are in need, God will incline the hearts of men to give to us when we are in need. But more important than this will be our eternal dividends which come from liberal giving. We are thereby "Laying up treasures in heaven."

To the miser this may not seem to be true, but to those who truly love the Lord giving is a genuine privilege. It is a privilege to give to relieve the wants of others and to see them blessed by our liberality.

What Church Should I "Join"?

More and more people are becoming interested in religion and one of the first questions which comes to their minds is, "What church should I join"? They realize that there should be a visible fellowship of believers and yet there are many such visible fellowships called "churches". Their question is a very natural one. Let us examine the Word of God to find the answer :

The New Testament presents only one church. Jesus said : "I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." He established this church fifty days after his resurrection. Through the Holy Spirit he inspired the Apostles on the day of Pentecost and, with Peter as the main spokesman, they proclaimed salvation to all who would believe and obey Jesus Christ as the crucified, buried, and resurrected Son of God. Those who believed this message asked the question. "What shall we do"? not, "What church should we join?" Peter replied to them in these words: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). With other words Peter continued and exhorted them to save themselves from that crooked generation. 3000 of them were baptized in response to this inspired instruction and others obeyed the gospel message later. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47).

This church of Christ, body of Christ, kingdom of heaven on earth, grew by leaps and bounds. There were no denominations or sects in that New Testament church. Signs of the party spirit appeared in Corinth and Paul severely reprovved the church for

such symptoms of division (I-Cor. 1:12). All believers obeyed one gospel and were added by the Lord to the one body or church.

So, from the New Testament we learn that there is only one church or kingdom of God established by Christ, and that men do not "join" it in the sense one "joins" a club or political party. No human being has the power to put one into this body or to turn one out of it. We simply face the fact that we are unsaved and ask the question, "What must I do?" Then we follow New Testament teaching and example and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repent of all our sins, and trusting in Christ we obey his command to be baptized (immersed) unto or in order to receive the forgiveness of our sins. Then the Lord will add us into his church, or body, or kingdom, and we simply follow in Jesus' steps throughout our life. If all believers would do this, there would be no division among them. All would be Christians, members of the one Kingdom of God.

WHO WAS (IS) JESUS

Maxie B. Boren

The fact he lived, none deny. Well attested is his time in history. His acclaim, and impact in the lives of hundreds of millions must be conceded. No other person in the annals of human history has wielded such influence.

But who exactly was Jesus? How can anyone explain him—what he did, and what he continues to do?

Was he some sort of 1st century superstar who has become a legend? Perhaps an egomaniac with grand illusions as to his own identity? A fraud? Was he a determined reformer within Judaism that stirred up a "hornets' nest"? Was he a great teacher-prophet who had a unique insight into mass psychology? Was he a man who happened to possess an uncanny charisma, and thus attracted unbelievable attention and fame?

OR WAS JESUS INDEED THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD?

There was controversy over who Jesus was during his life-time as there continues to be. After one of his mighty deeds, the people were divided, some saying he was from God and others denying it. Read *John 9:16*. Perhaps it was such things that prompted Jesus to inquire of his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" The answers varied. But then he asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus acknowledged this one answer as being true. Read *Matthew 16:13-16*.

After all the evidence is examined and analyzed—his birth, his life, his teachings, his wondrous works, his death and subsequent resurrection, and the countless other considerations—I don't see how anyone can come to any other conclusion than the one Peter came to: *JESUS WAS (YEA, HE IS) THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD!*

This I believe with all my heart, as do millions and millions of others!

The Church Of the New Testament

J. Roy Vaughan

The church of the New Testament is the church revealed in the New Testament. This is the church Christ promised to build, when he said, as recorded in *Matt. 16:18*, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." It is the church of which Christ is the head. Paul said, in *Eph. 1:22*, "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Furthermore, that is the church of which Christ is the saviour, the church purchased by

his blood. We read in Eph. 5:23, "Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the Saviour of the body." And in Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus, we read in Acts 20:28, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." This is the church God is interested in, and it is the church of which we want to be members. Any church which claims that a man founded it, or that claims as its head a man or a group of men, cannot be the church revealed in the New Testament.

The pattern of the church Christ built is revealed in the New Testament. God gave Noah specific instructions concerning the building of the ark. Noah follows these instructions and in Gen. 6:22 we read "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him so did he." And when Moses was about to build the tabernacle in the wilderness, God warned him saying, "See ... that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shown thee in the Mount." (Heb. 8:5) If it was essential that Noah follow God's instructions in building the ark, and that Moses follow God's pattern given for the tabernacle, is it not essential that we follow the pattern of the church revealed in the New Testament?

In the New Testament God's people are called the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the house of God, the body of Christ, and sometimes the church. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are one and the same. And the kingdom of heaven and the church of God are the same divine institution. Christ is the head of the church and he is the king of the kingdom of God. The kingdom and the church have the same laws of induction. When one is born again he becomes a member of the church and a citizen of the kingdom of God. (John 3:5.) When a man is converted he becomes a Christian, a member of the church and a citizen of the kingdom. In Luke 8:11 the Lord Jesus said the "seed is the word of God." The kingdom spreads by the sowing of the seed of the kingdom, that is by preaching the word. But where ever the seed of the kingdom is planted, the church is established. The seed of the kingdom and the seed of the church are one and the same. Therefore the church and the kingdom

must of necessity be the same. On the first Pentecost after the ascension of Christ, Peter preached the gospel of Christ crucified, and opened the doors of the kingdom and on that same day men were for the first time added to the church. (Acts 2:47.) Christ had promised to give unto Peter the keys of the kingdom. (Matt. 16:18.) The kingdom and the church are the same divine institution, or otherwise Peter unlocked the doors to the wrong institution, for with the keys of the kingdom he opened the doors of the church.

Furthermore, the New Testament teaches that Christ is king, now ruling at God's right hand. In John 18:36,37, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. And when pilate asked him, "Art thou a king?" He answered, "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." After his resurrection Jesus said to his disciples, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." (Matt. 28:19). And Paul tells us in Eph. 1:20, that Christ is now at God's right hand "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." From these scriptures and many others we might read, we understand that Christ is now reigning at God's right hand, exercising authority in heaven and on earth. And he will continue to rule as king of the kingdom of heaven until he comes again. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:24, 26, "Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father...For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet."

From these scriptures we have learned that God's people, the church, is a kingdom. It is not a democracy ruled by the people. Christians, citizens of the kingdom, have no authority to make laws for the church or to rule the church by majority rule. In Col.3:17, we are told, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through

him." And in 2 John 9 we read, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into thy house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works." Christ, therefore, is the head of the church, he is the only head of the church in heaven and on earth, and all authority resides in him. No man, nor any group of men on earth, have the authority to rule the head of the church of the Lord,—the church revealed in the New Testament.

Finally, we ask, is it necessary to be a citizen of the kingdom of God, which is the church, in order to be saved? Let us remember that all in the kingdom of God have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ. We read this in Col. 1:12—14. Paul said, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love: in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." Christians are "a holy nation." (1 Pet. 2:9.) Therefore if one is not in the kingdom of God he is of necessity in the kingdom of Satan. There is no hope for those who serve the devil. There is therefore no hope for those who refuse to enter into the service of Christ, and through obedience to the gospel, be translated into the kingdom of God, which is the church of God, the church revealed in the New Testament.

Finally, let us understand that the kingdom of God, the church revealed in the New Testament, is not a denomination. Christians in the early centuries did not join denominations. None of the apostles were ever members of a denomination. They were simple Christians, members of the body of Christ, the church, citizens of the kingdom of God.

FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD HAS ITS COST

Garland Elkins

After the Jews had returned from captivity and had gone far

enough with their building programme that the people of the land saw that they were going to succeed, they offered to have a part in the work. This same principle has been reenacted in the life of the church in many given communities. When the church was established by a small, and what the community might consider, insignificant group of people, the community pays little attention to the church. However, after the saints have struggled and sacrificed to the point of building a commodious meeting house and have perhaps converted some of the community leaders, then the denominations take notice of the church and are willing to be classed as a "sister denomination" with them. Christians must ever be aware that friendship of the world always comes on condition of concession. The adversaries of zerubbabel claimed that they worshipped the same God that he and his brethren worshipped. However, these adversaries did not claim to be converted to the true way of worship, but implied that their way of worship should be accepted by the Jews. So it is that the denominational world wishes to fellowship the church. Fellowship is offered on the condition that the church of the Lord will accept the work and worship of the false religions on a par with its own. It is often the case that they do not demand that we change the doctrine or our manner of worship, but it is also true that their friendship is extended on the condition that we do not demand any change in their doctrines and manner of worship.

If Zerubbabel and his fellow-Jews had accepted the offer of these men, their number would have been increased, but it would have been at the expense of truth, unity and the approval of God. So it is today when the church of the Lord makes concessions to the world to gain friendship. They may appear stronger outwardly, but inwardly they will be weaker because of their compromise. Such is true because we are taught, "And have no fellowship with the unfaithful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them." (Eph. 5 : 11). So serious is the matter of condoning error that the beloved John wrote: "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he who biddeth him God speed is

partaker of his evil deeds." (II Jno. 9-11).

When those in religious error make offers of fellowship; if they are sincere and honest, we should teach them the truth, urge them to renounce error and to "cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord." (Acts 13 : 10). In no case can we afford to compromise the truth.

A refusal to accept the world's friendship takes courage. Because we do not desire to be unnecessarily offensive, it takes much discernment, love for the truth, and firmness to turn down an offer of friendship, which a true Christian cannot accept. That is especially true when we know that a refusal of the world's friendship will cause persecution. (Jno. 15 : 7, 18 ; 11 Tim. 3 : 12).

A refusal to accept the world's friendship may (and often does) arouse criticism within our own ranks. In most congregations there is an unformed element and also a worldly element which are courting the friendship of the world. When the faithful and discerning members reject the offer of the world to compromise, the worldly members become vociferous in their criticism of the faithful. Sometimes congregations are torn asunder because compromisers demand that the church either practice or tolerate the way of the world.

Zerubbabel and his brethren were willing to pay the cost of purity. When we compromise we do so at the loss of purity in doctrine, morals and thus in spirituality.

All members of the church need to read, believe and apply the principle as set out in Ezra 4 : 3. "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel." In effect Zerubbabel was rejecting their offer of a "union meeting" with those who were in reality enemies of God. When our compromising brethren enter into "union meetings" with the Christian Church and other such denominations they are guilty of compromise. They need to learn not to do this and this lesson can be learned from Zerubbabel. (Rom. 15 : 4; Ezra 4 : 3).

When the followers of error saw that God's people would not compromise, they then demonstrated that they were only professing friends, therefore; truly enemies of the people of God. It is recorded, "Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building." (Ezra 4 : 4). They discouraged the work and sought to hinder it in every possible way. They offered to be friends on their own terms, based upon God's people being willing to compromise. When the Jews would not do so, they hired counselors to represent them in Babylon, to render the decree of Cyrus ineffective. Eventually, they were able to gather enough strength to stop the work entirely, at least for a time. (Ezra 4 : 7-24).

The work of rebuilding the temple was not resumed until the second year of the reign of Darius, about 520 B.C. This was done under the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah. Tatnai and his associates asked the Jews who gave them authority to build. The Jews replied that Cyrus, not only gave them authority to build, but he also gave them material assistance. Then Tatnai and his associates wrote a letter to Darius, the king, and requested that a search be made in the King's treasure house to see if Cyrus made any such decree. Darius made the search and wrote Tatnai and said, "Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place." (Ezra 6 : 7). Ezra informs us: "And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king." (Ezra 6 : 15).

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