

THE BIBLE TEACHER



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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL

Searching For The Better Way

We are living in a restless age. People are unsettled and unsure of themselves and of those who are around them. Many have lost respect for the law and no longer have confidence in their religion. The average person seems tired and bored.

Many of the modern youth are searching for their identity. They do not know who they are and their purpose for being here. They are experimenting in drugs and other dangerous practices. Many precious lives are being destroyed.

Sin is no longer recognized as sin. It is said that man is only sick and needs physical and mental help. Social ills are numerous. Corruption is running wild. Inflation and materialism are out of control.

All of this is a sad commentary on man. But where will it end? Is there any hope in sight? If there is one lesson that we should gain from all of this, it is the simple fact that man cannot save

himself, he cannot direct his own steps, he cannot find happiness in the things of this world.

Man is not a lower animal, although he often acts like it. Rather, he is a higher being, one who has been created in the image of God. He has a soul within him, an eternal being that will live on and on forever. Because of this, greater things are expected of him.

It is not a sign of weakness to look to a higher power for help, but rather, this indicates man's intelligence and wisdom. There is one, the eternal God of heaven, who created all of us. As our maker, he is concerned about each one of us. He wants to help us. He will help us if we will but look to him and humble ourselves to obey his will.

Even while we were in sin and without hope, God sent his Son to die for us on a cruel cross that we might be saved. We read from God's holy word, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Romans 5:6-10).

Although God loves us, and Christ died for us, this does not mean that we will automatically be saved. Salvation is not forced on anyone but it is there for all who will accept it. In other words, it is conditional. It is dependent on one's acceptance of it in obedience to the commandments of the Lord. Obedience is a means of testing one's faith. Christ said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16).

When one learns the truth of God, he then must make a deci-

ion, either accepting it or rejecting it. To accept is to obey it. To reject is to be disobedient and to be lost. Obedience to God brings salvation by his grace and mercy. Salvation from sin is nothing to be ashamed of even in these modern times, but it is something to thank God for and to tell others about.

It is not easy to be a Christian in these times. There are many opponents, enemies, those who would scoff at the idea of salvation. Even among those who claim to be followers of Christ, the majority reject the Christ and the salvation that is set forth in the Bible. But the Christian has every reason to stand erect, with full confidence that he is on the right path and that he will be victorious in his world and in the world to come.

The Christian is the most blessed person in the world. He has thrown off the shackles of sin and has become a new creature in Christ. He has been forgiven of all of his past sins. He is now a changed person, a different person. He thinks differently and acts differently. He has confidence in himself because he knows in whom he believes. He has nothing to be afraid of or to run from. He is living for God. He is a good moral person, a lawful citizen, and one who is interested in the welfare of his fellowman. He is a blessing to his family, a hard worker, and one who is always faithful to his Lord. He knows that God watches over him, that Christ has promised to be with him, and that the word of God is ever there to direct him. He is aware of the fact that he is a member of the Lord's church, God's family, and that he has the hope of eternal life.

With all of this in mind, the true Christian is one who has taken a stand. He is convicted, convinced, and determined to stand for God. He is ready and able to proclaim God's will to others and is more than happy to do so.

In times like these the Christian is sorely needed in the world. His honesty, his moral uprightness, his good influence will do much to lighten the thinking and actions of those around him. He is needed because he does stand for something and because he will courageously take a stand for righteousness.

It is true that sometimes that Christians feel outnumbered. They may even have an inferiority complex about being who they are. They may think of themselves as little and insignificant. They may be ashamed to let others know who they are. But this attitude is wrong. We have no reason to feel inferior to anyone, religiously or otherwise. We need not apologize to anyone for who we are or for what we are. We are Christians, citizens of God's kingdom, children of the King. The Lord is on our side; he is with us. We have every reason to go forward with full confidence in God, in ourselves, and in the cause that we serve.

As the Lord's people, we represent him. We should always tell the truth, stand up for the truth, and preach the truth, which is our hope and the hope of the world. Let us therefore take courage and represent the Lord with all joy, knowing that he will be with us, bless us, and finally save us.

We would encourage you to become one of us. At least take the time to consider Christianity. Investigate the church that you can read about in the Bible and read and study about it for yourself. Take a close look at Christianity and what it can do for you. If you will, you may find that for which you have been searching.



**associate
editorial**

What Is The Church Of Christ?

When Jesus came into the coats of Caesarea Philippi and asked his disciples what people believed or said about him, he replied, "Some say that thou art John the baptist; some Elias;

others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." (Matthew 16:18). Evidently, he was misunderstood, because he was none of them, but Peter said, and Jesus accepted, he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16,17). In the same passage Christ promised that upon the foundation of this confession of Peter he would build his church. More than 1900` years have passed since the Church of Christ was established in the city of Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, after his resurrection, but still many people are asking the question: "What is the church of Christ?" One of the reasons why people have misunderstood or are ignorant about the church of Christ is denominationalism, that is, the presence of so many, probably almost 700, different brands of churches. Since Christ promised to build the church, it is therefore easy to think that any church belongs to Christ. But the fact is, Christ has said that he would build HIS church; church of Christ, therefore, in the first place, the church of Christ is neither a Catholic church nor a protestant church; it is not a denomination or inter-denominational church, it is THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

To know about the beginning of the Catholic church one can go only as far as the 6th century A.D. Likewise none of the denominational Protestant churches are more than 400 years old. But the church of Christ is as old as Christianity itself. Christ himself promised to build it. He established his church after his resurrection and ten days after his ascension into heaven, that is, around 33 A.D. (Acts 2). The first members of the church of Christ were the apostles of Christ. When the 3000, in Acts 2, were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins they were added unto them, and then the last verse of this chapter says, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved". This church grew in number daily because the Lord added, himself, to his church daily such as should be saved, and even today those who believe in him and repent of their sins he continues to add them to his church. He has but only one church. Be sure, he is not adding different ones to different churches but all the saved he adds to his church daily.

Christ is the head of his church, because his church is his body. (Colossians 1:18). There is no man living on earth who can claim

to be the head or the director of the church of Christ. Christ is the only head of the church of Christ. Therefore on earth there is no head office or headquarters of the church of Christ. The head of the church of Christ is Jesus Christ himself and he directs his church on earth by his New Testament of the Bible. The church of Christ, therefore, follows no other creed books, such as manuals, Lord's Prayer, Catechisms, Confession of faith, etc. The church of Christ strictly follows the New Testament in its faith, practice and teaching. For instance, the church of Christ today preaches the same gospel which was preached by the apostles in the beginning. (Mark 16:15, 16; 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Its worship is based upon New Testament teaching. (Acts 20:7; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2). The members of the church of Christ are always called Christians (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16); they never use any other name or phrase to identify themselves, such as members of denominational churches use. Likewise preachers of churches of Christ are called simply preachers, evangelists or ministers. (Romans 10:14; Acts 21:8; 1 Timothy 4:6). They never use any unscriptural titles such as denominational preachers use, for example, Reverend, Pastor, or Priest.

Many of the members of the church of Christ today all over the world were formerly members of various denominational churches. But once they understood the difference between a denominational church and the church of Christ, they left their denominations and obeyed the commands of Christ to let Christ add them to his Church. (Acts 2:38, 41, 47). You too can become a member of the Church of Christ, the church of the New Testament, by simply obeying the commands of Jesus Christ. Then as a Christian you can worship him and live for him wherever you are, with the New Testament of Christ being your guide. (Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:17). Wherever there are two or more Christians together, in a village, town or city, the church of Christ is there in existence. The church will grow in number as others will believe in Christ, will repent of their sins and will be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, for Christ will add them into his church. This is the Church of Christ.

"Be of Good Courage"

When the Israelites were about to do battle with the Syrians and the Ammonites, Joab said: "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God." (2 Sam. 10:12.) This was a ringing exhortation and challenge to his people. Someone has defined courage as "fighting with the handle after the sword has been broken." Courage is that quality of mind which enables one to meet danger with firmness and without fear.

The finest examples of courage are to be found in the Bible, and not in secular history. This does not mean that secular history does not afford many examples of unusual courage. Winkelried, the Swiss patriot, gathered a sheaf of Austrian spears to his bosom to open the way for his countrymen through the ranks of the enemy. Luther was determined to meet his enemies in Worms, even if the devils were as numerous as the tiles on the steeples. After the battle of Marengo had been lost, Napoleon came to his drummer boy and said: "Beat a retreat!" The boy replied: "Sir, I can beat a charge, but not a retreat. I do not know how to beat a retreat. I can beat a charge that will wake up the dead. I beat the charge at Lodi and the Pyramids. Shall I beat a charge?" Napoleon was so impressed that he said: "Beat a charge!" The boy beat a charge, which rallied a defeated army to renew the battle with such courage and determination that Marengo is numbered among the outstanding victories of the "Little Corsican." After this battle, Napoleon had medals struck for its heroes. On one side of the medal read, "Marengo"; on the other side, "I was there." The charge of the light brigade at Balaklava and Pickett's charge at Gettysburg were brilliant and courageous. But for sheer moral courage we must go for our finest examples to Noah preaching to the ante-diluvians; Moses demanding of Pharaoh, Israel's release; Gideon and his three hundred routing the Midianites; Paul on Mars Hill and before Nero; and such like, who immortalized sacred history.

One of the crying needs of our time is courage—courage to live right; courage to preach the truth, without fear or favor, to both saint and sinner. “Be of good courage,” brother: “let us play the men” for the church of our Lord and the truth of his gospel. When the shattered remnants of the Old Guard were called on to surrender at the battle of Waterloo, they replied: “We know how to die, but not to surrender.” The apostles knew how to die for to “the word of God and the testimony of Jesus,” but they did not know how to surrender. “Add to your faith virtue”—courage.

Know The Truth

Marvin Rainey

THE BIBLE VS. THE CREEDS OF MEN

In our study today I want to show the difference in what the Bible teaches and the various creeds given by men. We are told to preach the word, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” The attitude that I propose to assume toward the Bible is this: I want to preach nothing, practice nothing, be nothing, do nothing, unless the Bible specifically and directly authorizes it. Is there anything wrong with such a position? Is this not the safe course? Some take another position. They say, “I propose to practice whatever I please, whatever suits my fancy, provided God does not directly and specifically say, “Thou shalt not.”

You may be asking just what is the difference in the two attitudes or positions. One asked, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The other says, “Lord, what hast thou said that I must not do?” On respects the authority of God; the other takes advantage of his silence. We are not to go by the silence of the scripture.

Let me give you an example. God told Noah to build the ark. (Gen. 6:14). He told him to build it out of Gopher wood. He did not need to tell him the kind of wood not to build the ark out of. Would it have been alright for him to use anything other than Gopher wood? Surely all can see the lesson in this! We must do what God has authorized. Many are in churches that are total strangers to the Bible.

Are you willing to spend your time, your talent, your money, your influence, your all, in propagating and promulgating a doctrine and an institution regarding which the Bible is as silent as the grave? What will you have to say in that great and awful day? Why turn from that which is plainly put upon the pages of God's Book, and lend your very best efforts to the building up of that which is purely of human origin? I plead with you to become a member of the church bought by the blood of Christ, and about which you can read in your own Bible. Take the safe course. Do only what God has authorized to be done.

Saints Loved By God

The apostle Paul addressed the Christians in the church at Rome as those "*who are loved by God and called to be saints.*" (Romans 1:7). He then went on to write: "*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world*" (v. 8).

The modern Christian, reading these words, might think that the Christians to whom Paul wrote in the first instance must have been a superior breed. They were "*Loved by God*". They were "*saints*". Their "*faith*" was world-renowned. How very different, the modern Christian may think, from present-day experience. He may be besieged by personal doubts and uncertainties, depressed by unwanted memories and anxieties, and disturbed because there seems to be little change in personality since becoming a Christian.

But God does not promise freedom from doubts, erasure of bad memories, or dramatic personality change at our conversion. The modern Christian may think that his doubts belie his "*faith*", that his past life must exclude him from the company of the "*saints*", and that his troublesome personality traits prevent him from being "*loved by God.*"

The Bible, God's word to us, is a very practical book dealing with the realities as we find them. It does not romance or fictionalise or make false promises. The people of the first Century, who first heard Christ's new testament message, were no different in their personality and spiritual make-up from people of any other time. That is why the Bible is a time-less book, and speaks to us today just as effectively as ever if we will listen.

To begin with, it is a plain fact that some people are self-assured and some are always plagued with self-doubts. Some people are extraverts and others are introverts. Some are selfish and some are unselfish. Some are mean and suspicious, and others may be generous and open. Some have happy temperaments and some are melancholic and pessimistic. Some are strong, imperturbable characters, and others may be inadequate and dependent. There are many variations and degrees of human behaviour acquired from heredity and from growing up.

All individuals who become Christians bring into this new life the same features which identified them from others before. To expect anything else is to demand what is not possible and what God does not promise. There is no psychological change at conversion any more than there is any physical change in the new Christian. But there is a change in status and relationship—the Christian is separated from past sins (a "*saint*"), and he is now adopted into the family of God (and so "*loved by God*" in this special way), and he enters and continues in this new life by "*faith*" and not by feelings. In other words, what the person becomes (when he obeys God's directions for salvation) is so, because God said it, and not because that person feels anything.

NON-CHRISTIAN

A person can only be saved through hearing and responding to

God's way to God's message of salvation (*Rom. 10:14*). On doing God's will in this, whether the person feels different from before or not, he is added by the Lord to the company of the saints. (*Acts 2:47*). He is given the Holy Spirit on his obedience to God. (*Acts 2:38; 5:32*). He is reconciled to God (*2 Cor. 5:20*). Whatever that person's personality characteristics might be makes no difference. When he does all that God wants him to do, he is a Christian.

CHRISTIAN

The letters in the New Testament include many instructions to Christians for Christian living. Thus it requires only a little thought to realize from the nature of the instructions that Christians are still human! Otherwise, for example, there would have been no point in Paul writing to these faithful saints, loved of God: "*We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*" (*Romans 15:1*). Some were strong, some were weak. They needed to be reminded that selfishness or self-centredness was not a Christ-like characteristic (v. 3). Thus they were encouraged to practise positive concern for each other. (v. 2).

Spiritual endurance and encouragement don't come unsought. These necessary qualities come from diligent study of the Scriptures. (v. 4. See also *2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3ff*). In this way the Christian's hope of eternal life is strengthened. (v. 4. See also *Rom. 8:24; Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:11, 18-19*). God has given us the avenue of endurance and encouragement in His word, and so Christians must build themselves up on it. (v. 5. See also *Acts 20:32*). "A spirit of unity among yourselves" (v. 5) is ensured as Christians "*follow Christ Jesus*". (See *Phil. 2:1-5*). They are then united in glorifying God. (v. 5. See *John 4:24; Eph. 4:13; Heb. 13:15*).

Christians are to "*accept one another.*" (v. 7). This, too, is something which must be worked at and the supreme model is Jesus Christ Himself. (v. 7. See also *Heb. 12:1-4; 1 Peter 2:21ff*). By so doing Christians "*bring praise to God*". The modern Christian is reassured by this preserved record that his situation is really the

same as those Christians of long ago. We can be sure of being "loved of God" and "saints" persevering in our "faith", despite our inadequacies and failings, as we encourage each other to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18).

The Supremacy of Love

L. Crouch

THE thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians has been called "the greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote." It comes in the middle of the part of the letter which deals with spiritual gifts. The point of the chapter is to show that the exercise of the spiritual gifts mentioned in chapter 12 is not the central thing in Christianity. The spiritual gifts need to be put into the proper place. Speaking in tongues is certainly one of the gifts of the Spirit, but it is not the principal one. Instead of being too concerned with the spiritual gifts, the Christian should develop Christian love. To be filled with love as described by Paul is the highest spiritual level one can reach.

This chapter can be divided into three specific sections: (1) verses 1-3, the need for love; (2) verses 4-7, the characteristics of love; (3) verses 8:13, the superiority and permanency of love. The first of these sections shows that all spiritual gifts and good deeds are of no value without love. The second lists the great qualities of love in action. Love, if fully developed, makes a man like Christ. The third section shows how love is revealed as both superior to the gifts being discussed and permanent as opposed to temporary.

THE PERMANENCE OF LOVE

Verse 8 opens with the emphatic statement: "Love never faileth." The word "faileth" is from a work (Greek *pipto*) which

means "fall" or "collapse". That which collapses ceases to function and this is what love will never do. Paul adds that "prophecies" shall come to an end or become inoperative (Greek *katargeo*). When the need for prophecies has ceased, the gift will cease to exist. Of tongues, Paul simply says "they shall cease" (Greek *pauo*), i.e., come to an end. The point at which these will become inoperative is stated in verse 10. The "knowledge" which was to come to an end or become inoperative (Greek *katargeo*) is the special gift of knowledge mentioned in chapter 12:8. It cannot mean general knowledge because that, at least to some extent, will continue into the next world. (Luke 16:19-31; 1 John 3:3). Verse 9 tells us that the spiritual gifts taken together only furnish a part of the total picture of God's scheme of redemption. This verse might well be rendered: "For our knowledge is fragmentary or imperfect (incomplete), and our prophecy is fragmentary or imperfect (incomplete)." At the time of writing, many things had not been revealed, so in order to know God's will the spiritual gifts were necessary. There is no reason to suppose that this refers to the partial knowledge of divine things known now as compared to that which will be known at the coming of Christ. It must be applied to the time of writing.

THAT WHICH IS PERFECT

Verse 10 tells when the gifts were to become inoperative or disappear. No one denies that these gifts were to disappear sometime after Paul wrote and that it would be when "that which is perfect is come." The major question to be considered then, is the meaning of the phrase "that which is perfect."

A literal reading of the verse is: "But when the perfect is come (or appears), the in part (or imperfect) shall be rendered inoperative." The Greek construction indicates that "the perfect" was coming but the time was indefinite. "Perfect" is an adjective used with the definite article but the noun which it modifies is omitted, thus it is used as a substantive. If Paul had included the noun, our question would be answered. He did not include it, but it does seem clear that the first readers understood what he meant.

The word "perfect" (Greek: *teleion*) is in the nominative case, the neuter gender, and singular number. This means that it cannot refer to Christ. If Christ had been meant the masculine gender would have been used. So we must exclude the thought that the coming of Christ is intended by this statement.

The lexicons are in agreement that "*teleion*" indicates a thing having reached its end or purpose, being finished, or mature, complete, perfect. From this we conclude that "the perfect" referred to something still "on the way" when Paul wrote. It is clear that the "in part" was to reach its end and give way to "the perfect" when the latter arrived. It is also clear that the "in part" means the spiritual gifts. We know, too, that the purpose of the miraculous gifts was to confirm or guarantee the message of the gospel. (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3). From these facts, it seems obvious that "the perfect" refers to the completed revelation of God. This complete revelation is found in Jesus Christ (John 1:18; 14:7-9) and is recorded for us in the Bible. The prophecies (Divine revelation) given at any one time did not always include all that would be needed on that subject. (verse 9). The body of Scripture given by the Holy Spirit is "perfect" and "complete." Nothing else fits the language and context. Note also that the statement does not refer to the perfected state which will come at the end of the age, because Paul's language indicates that there would be a period of time after "the perfect" came (of verses 9, 11, 12; Eph. 4:11-16) in which the church would continue until the Judgement.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE POINT

In the eleventh verse Paul compares the period of spiritual gifts in the church to childhood and shows that when the completed revelation comes the church will become like a man no longer needing childish things. It was right and good to use the gifts while they were necessary, but he warns about abusing them and trusting in them to last. The next verse continues the comparison. Looking in a mirror of Paul's day would give an imperfect reflection so that which was seen is properly termed "darkly" or "an enigma." The words "but then" must refer to "when the perfect is come." It was only when the New Testament was completed

that everyone had access to a perfect and complete revelation of the Father and His will. Note that the words "even as also" do not imply equality. The point is that Paul's knowledge of God was growing, but God's knowledge of Paul was complete. W. E. Vine rightly says, "What is meant is that our knowledge will, in its measure, be complete even as His is in its infinite measure?"

In the last verse of the chapter, Paul gives the conclusion of the point. Faith, hope and love are permanent while the spiritual gifts are temporary. These three things are to abide or continue all through the Christian age but at the end of time faith will be terminated in sight (2 Cor. 5:7) and hope in experience (Rom. 8:24, 25). Of these, love alone continues into eternity (13:8).

The Transfiguration Of Jesus

Text : Matt. 7:1-13.

The transfiguration of Jesus was one of the evidences to the apostles that Jesus was indeed the Lord Jesus Christ. They knew that they were not following the fables of men, for they themselves beheld his glory. Thus, the apostle Peter said; "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." Peter went on to show that we also have additional evidence in what he calls "a more sure word of prophecy." (2-Pet. 1:16-18.) This must have been a sight such as no other men of their time witnessed. For he "was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." (Matt. 17:2.) Mark tells us that his garments glistened, being exceeding white such as no fuller on earth can whiten them. Luke tells us that his raiment became white and dazzling and the fashion of his countenance was altered.

He, who was on the earth in a life of self-emptying, manifested to his disciples something of his glory.

This was not the only miracle which took place upon the mount for there appeared unto him Moses and Elijah. These men also appeared in glory. (Luke 9:31.) About what did Christ and Moses and Elijah speak? Was it concerning the glories of the life which he had had with the Father in the beginning? Did it concern the glories of the after life? Luke tells us that they "speak of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Think of it! In this moment of the manifestation of his majesty on earth, they spoke of his coming death at Jerusalem. But in this death is certainly manifested his glory, although in a different sense from the manifestation on the mount. For, in the death of Christ is manifested the glory of God's love for man, of Christ's willingness to die, and of the very heart of the divine wisdom of God in the scheme of redemption. What the law had foreshadowed in its sacrificial system, what the prophet Isaiah had clearly predicted in Isa. 53, was now that of which they spoke as the time neared when Jesus Christ would be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and offer up his soul as an offering for sin. The apostle Peter was tremendously impressed and "said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Matt. 17:4.)

Peter, be it noted, was willing to be submissive to the will of Christ in this matter, yet it seems that he would place Moses, Christ, and Elijah on more or less the same level. A tabernacle, or booth, would be built for each one of them. That some such idea was in his mind is also evident from what took place while he yet spake. For, "behold, a bright cloud over-shadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him! And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." (Matt. 17: 5-8).

Christ told them to "tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead." (Matt. 17:9.) The disciples had raised the question as to why the scribes said that Elijah must first come. Christ showed that Elijah had to come first and restore all things, but that he had come already. They then understood that Jesus had reference to John the Baptist. (Matt. 17:10-13.)

The disciples did not understand his statement concerning the resurrection from the dead "and they kept that saying, questioning among themselves what the rising again from the dead should mean." (Mark 9:10.)

There are many things which can be learned from Matt. 17:1-13.

First, the fact that on the mount of transfiguration the death of Christ was the central theme of conversation of Christ with these men from the spirit world helps to underscore, what is evident throughout scripture, that the death of Christ is central. Our determination should be to know Christ and him crucified. This does not mean, since it did not mean that in the case of the apostle Paul, that the only thing we are to mention in our teaching is Christ and his cross; but it does mean that Christ and his cross are central and other matters derive their significance from their relationship to Christ and his cross.

Second, we can learn that Christ is the authority today. There are some who think that we are in some way casting a reflection upon the Old Testament when we maintain it does not constitute the standard of faith and practice for Christians. God, who has given to us both Testaments, would not cast reflection on the Old Testament. Thus, we know that it is not a reflection on the Old Testament but a proper understanding of its function and position to recognize that Moses, the great lawgiver, and Elijah, a great prophet, are not to be placed upon the same level of authority with Jesus Christ. In the gospel, we do not build three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Christ. Instead, we have the one tabernacle for Christ. Moses and Elijah did the will of God, fulfilling the purpose and function that God ordained for

them. But theirs was a preparatory work which has given way since that, for which they prepared, has been ushered in. Thus, we should hear with the disciples the voice of God saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." To hear him, means to recognize that although God spake unto the fathers in times past by the prophets, he speaks to us in these last days through his Son. (Heb. 1:1, 2.) To hear him means that we must not neglect this message which comes to us through the Son. For since the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, we know that we shall not escape if we neglect this great salvation which first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. (Heb. 2:34.) We should hear him for he has all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matt. 28:18, 19.)

It also means to hear those who have been sent by him. For those who were sent and inspired by him were to teach others to observe all that Jesus commanded. (Matt. 28:20.) Thus, we must continue in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) for it is the doctrine of Christ. We must also accept the doctrine of the prophets of the New Testament for the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. (Eph. 2:20.)

We must hold fast to that which was delivered by the inspired men. (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:14.) We must receive their message, not as a message of men, but as the word of God. (1 Thess. 2:13.) Their message, of course, comes to us today through their writings and every man should acknowledge that the things which they wrote are the commandments of God. (1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:14.) Their written word is the voice of the Spirit to the church. (Rev. 2:7.) To have their word is to have the apostles and the prophets. (Compare Luke 16:29-31.) When we read their word we are listening to their voice. (Compare Acts 13:26, 27.)

Third, we can learn also to see "Jesus only." This does not mean a denial of the Father or of the Holy Spirit but it does mean that Christ is the prophet, priest, and king of the new covenant

and that God has made him pre-eminent. (Col. 1:13-20.) This does not mean that God has subjected himself unto Christ but that he has subjected all things unto Christ. (1 Cor. 15:24-28.) Then, too, we must remember that Christ is the revelation of God to us. (1 Tim. 3:16; John 14:8, 9.) Furthermore, he sent the Holy Spirit. (John 16:7-13; Acts 2:33.) Our lives and our teaching should honor Christ. The commandments of Christ are important but they are important because they are commandments of Christ. We appeal from the commander to the commands. They have significance because he is who he is. The *whats* of the New Testament are important but they are important because of the *who*. Our preaching should go from the *who* to the *what* and should not consist of the *what* isolated from the *who*. The *whats* do not have any significance except on the basis of their relationship to Christ. With love for and faith in him, we should have the attitude of: "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." But without love for or faith in him, how do we know that what we hear is significant. We cannot accept the *what* he said and fail to accept *who* he is. Some may accept some things that he said for various reasons but to accept the totality of his teaching is impossible without accepting the person of Jesus.

Although modernism, and also carelessness in considering what and who we are actually preaching, has led to the relegating of Christ to the background of many lives or sermons. Andrew W. Blackwood recently pointed out that in the hymn book which he had which contained over five hundred hymns, most of them accord Christ the place of honor which he has in the gospel. He noted, however, "these Christ-centered hymns nearly all come from earlier times." ("Giving Christ the Place of Honor," *Christianity Today*, June 8, 1959, p. 3.)

Fourth, we can learn something concerning the interpretation of prophecy. The prophets spoke in divers manners. (Heb. 1:1-3.) Thus, not all prophecy is literal. Not all prophecy is symbolical. Not all prophecy is clothed in the language that described the Old Testament types. However, in this case we do see that sometimes in prophecy the type was put when the anti-type was meant. Mal. 4:5 said that Elijah would come but Jesus shows that the Elijah to

whom the prophet had reference was not the literal Elijah but to John the Baptist. (Matt. 17:10-13; 11:13-15.) God designed that there be some point of resemblance between Elijah and John the Baptist. John the Baptist went forth in the Spirit and power of Elijah. (Luke 1:17, 18.) It was a mistake to believe that the literal Elijah was to come. How do we determine when a prophecy is literal, or when it is symbolical, or when the type is put for the anti-type? We should see how the New Testament interprets the prophecy. Its interpretation must be final with us.

There are, however, some prophecies which are not quoted and interpreted in the New Testament. We must not interpret these in such a manner as to contradict any New Testament teaching nor so as to contradict any of the Old Testament prophecies which we know to be fulfilled. We must let Christ be our final authority with reference to the interpretation of prophecy. He, as the author of prophecy (that he was in some sense the author of prophecy is indicated in 1 Pet. 1:11), knows the meaning of prophecy. He, as the Son of God, knows the meaning of prophecy.

Fifth, we can also learn that the kingdom was not established at the time of the mount of transfiguration. There are some who think it was established before that, but such is not the case. For when they came down from the mount they questioned among themselves what the resurrection from the dead might mean. (Mark 9:10.) This, of course, had reference to the resurrection of the Son of man from the dead. (Mark 9:9.) If the New Testament church had been established by this time, these men would have both believed and preached the gospel of Christ's death for our sins, his burial, and his resurrection. But, they could not have done this for they did not even understand it and thus did not yet believe it. (Matt. 16:21-23.) The gospel of the actual death, burial and resurrection of Christ was not preached until the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection.

We were not there to see the glory of his majesty on the mount of transfiguration. We do not now know the glory which he has with the Father but we do know this, that he shall come again to receive us unto himself. At that time we shall be transformed and

“as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Cor. 15:49.)

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For the corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that *is* written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 15:51-57.)

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:2, 3.)

Reconciliation

Homer Putnum Reeves

Reconciliation is a big word and exceedingly meaningful. Primarily, it means reunion. To reconcile is to unite again. It is the re-establishment of friendship and the renewal of harmony which coincides with the adjustment of some difficulty or the settlement of a quarrel between persons.

PARTIES

Usually, there are two principal parties in every encounter. This is true whether it be a national problem or some international

difficulty; whether it be labour-management hostility or domestic animosity. It is most evident in the creator-creature relationship.

Enmity exists between God and man. This is due to the fact that man has been rebellious and disobedient. The creature has defied the Creator and has thus become responsible for a state of disunity and alienation. Man is the party at guilt. God is the innocent party. God made man upright, but man sought out many inventions. Man was made in the image of God and was the loftiest touch of creative power—the crowning glory of the creative act. How tragic that the creature made a “little lower than God,” should become the most rebellious and insubordinate of all the creatures of God!

The enmity is expressed by Isaiah: “Behold, Jehovah’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.” (Isa. 59: 1, 2.)

MAN TO BE RECONCILED

It is important that we understand the true character of the parties. Then we can appreciate the liability of each. It must be emphasized that man is guilty and that man is to be reconciled to God—not God to man. Contrary to popular opinion and the pious prayers of many well-meaning people, God, the innocent party, does not incline his ear to hear the petition of a rebel. Isaiah declared, “Your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.” Before one can expect God to hear his prayers, that one must become obedient to God. “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” (Prov. 28:9.)

Man “be ye reconciled to God.” In your irreconciled state, the ear of God is closed to your petitions. “We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and do his will, him he heareth.” (John 9:31.)

Let us not be guilty of reversing the process and expect God to be reconciled to man. Man is to be reconciled to God.

THE MEDIATOR

In order that man might come again into a state of purity and union with God, Jesus Christ was sent to fill the office of mediator. Paul said, "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 2:5)

A good mediator is one entirely unbiased. He stands on an equal footing with both parties. He understands the position of both parties and is able to appreciate the merits and demerits of the contending parties.

Jesus Christ is a perfect mediator. He came from God; he came to man. He was God and man. He was the God-man. He has returned to God. He knows of the glory and wonders of the heavenly estate. He has experienced the privations and trials and sorrows of the earthly estate. He was tempted in all points even as we are tempted. By experience, he knows of our difficulties and sorrows and imperfections. He possesses every requirement necessary to adequately represent man before the throne of Deity. He does his work infinitely well. Jesus declared, "I am the way, and the truth and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.)

BARRIERS REMOVED

It became necessary for the Mediator to remove some obstacles before the reconciliation could be effected.

The law of Moses was a barrier which would forever separate Jew and Gentile. This had to go. It was abolished by Christ that reconciliation might be effected between Jew and Gentile; that both might be reconciled to God in one body through the cross. (Eph. 2:14-16.)

The man Christ was the temple and shrine of Eternal Divinity;

in him dwelt all the fullness of the God-head bodily; he made peace by the blood of his cross.

Sin is the great barrier which separates man from God. This had to be moved. The love of the innocent party for the guilty party was so great that he sent his only begotten Son to become an offering for sin. Christ, by his offering upon the cross, became the atonement for the sins of the world. The blood of Christ is the only satisfaction before God for the sins of humanity. (1 Cor. 5:21.)

THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION

The apostles were the Lord's ambassadors. To them was committed the word of reconciliation. The innocent party had a right to propose the terms of reconciliation. This he did through the meditation of Christ. These terms are revealed in the New Testament—the word of reconciliation.

From the New Testament we learn that man is to be reconciled to God. Man is to hear the word of the mediator and obey it by faith. When one becomes a child of God, the ear of God will be inclined to receive his petition. The word of reconciliation completely furnishes man unto every good work; it instructs the Christian to remain faithful even unto death. (Rev. 2:10.)

Forced To Serve

G.K. Wallace

A man of Cyrene, Simon by name, was on his way to Jerusalem and was compelled to return to the country and bear a cross that was not his own. (Matt. 27:32.) Life is ever like this, and often times we suddenly have to change directions. Joseph, at the instruction of his father, went into the vale of Hebron to see about his brethren who were watching his father's flock. In

Shechem he was directed to go to Dothan where he would find his brethren. Happily he went on his way without the slightest idea that before the day was over he would have to change the direction of his life from one of luxury to slavery. Joseph's envious brothers sold him for twenty pieces of silver and he went away to a strange land to bear a cross that was not his own. (Gen. 37: 15-36.) Paul, having completed his missionary journeys, goes up to Jerusalem to bring alms to his nation and finds that he is a prisoner. Tomorrow may bring in the lives of any of us a quick and rapid change. If we have the faith of Paul we can sing with the poet, "I know not where his islands lift their fronded palms in air; But this I know, I cannot drift beyond his love and care."

Simon was forced to bear a burden that was not his own. The cross he bore was not his. Sometime ago I visited in a home of a mother who had an invalid child. The child was at least twelve years of age, and had never once recognized his own mother. Such plans were not hers. When she began her home she looked forward, as all young mothers, to having a happy home that was blessed with children. When her little boy came, her hopes were high, but the cross that she bore took her in a direction different from the way she had planned. Like Simon of Cyrene, she had to change her direction and bear a cross that was not of her making.

When we are forced to change directions in life we may react differently. Some are given to hot anger, and others are driven to suicide. In some countries today, and let us pray that it will never come here, the heavy hand of a soldier may be placed upon the shoulder of a disciple and he will be forced to change his direction as was Simon of Cyrene. Others may suddenly change their direction because of sin, as did Judas and Ananias. Some may have to suffer misfortunes in life when they are in no wise to blame. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9:1-3.) In this instance we see that there is great suffering when neither the one who was blind nor his parents were in any wise to blame.

When Agabus, the prophet, told Paul that he would be bound and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, his brethren were greatly grieved. Fearing for the life of Paul, the disciples sought him not to go up to Jerusalem. "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus: And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done." (Acts 21:11-14.) It was such a faith that caused Paul to say, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.)

Let us pray, each day, for God to give us strength to bear our cross even if we have to reverse our direction.

WHAT THEN?

When all the great plants of our cities

Have turned out their last finished work :

When our merchants have sold their last yard of silk,

And have dismissed the tired weary clerk :

When our banks have taken in their last rupee,

And have declared their last dividend;

When the Judge of the last day says: "Closed for the night,"

And calls for a balance, WHAT THEN?

When the singers shall have sung their last anthem,

And the preacher has prayed his last prayer,

When the people have heard their last sermon,

And the sound has died out on the air;

When the Bible lies closed on the altar,

And the pews are all empty of men,

When we all stand facing the record—

And the Great Book is opened, WHAT THEN?

When the actor has played his last drama,

And when the mimic has made his last fun;

When the film has finished its last picture,

And the billboard's displayed its last run;
 When the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished,
 And gone out into darkness again;
 When the Trumpet of all ages is sounded,
 And we stand before Jehovah, WHAT THEN?
 When the last bugle call has been sounded,
 And the long marching columns stand still;
 When the Captain has given his last orders,
 And they've captured the last fort, and hill;
 When the flag has been hauled from its masthead,
 And all the wounded soldiers checked in;
 When the world that has rejected its Savior,
 Is asked for a reason, WHAT THEN?

Unknown

LORD'S SUPPER

"On the first day of the week we came together to break bread."—*Acts 20:7*

This seemingly superfluous piece of information is really very instructive for us. The context shows that the apostle Paul and his co-workers had arrived at the seaport of Troas and stayed seven days. Then, on the first day of the next week, the Christians in Troas came together for a stated purpose. That purpose was to "break bread". While this expression is also used for common meals, it is unlikely that such an ordinary daily activity would be referred to as the purpose for coming together on this particular day. The first Christians were "*continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer*" (*Acts 2:42*). The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, "*Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?*" (*1 Cor. 10:16*.) Thus, the "breaking of bread", as an act of remembrance instituted by the Lord Jesus (*1 Cor. 11:23-26*), was the significant and primary purpose of this gathering on the first day of the week in Troas.

The inspired record of the presence of an apostle of the Lord on this occasion gives divine approval for the observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. Since the apostle also stated that "*as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes*" (1 Cor. 11:26), it strongly suggests a weekly observance on each first day of the week. (The Jewish Sabbath had to be observed on "*the seventh day*"—Exodus 20:10. They understood that it was to be observed on the seventh day of every week.) Of further interest is the apostle Paul's instruction to the churches concerning "*the collection for God's people*". "*On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money...*" (1 Cor. 16:1-2). This reinforces the impression of a weekly gathering of Christians on "*the first day of the week*" in every place where a local church is found.

The apostle Paul had to condemn the church at Corinth for making the time "*when you meet together*" an occasion for demeaning "*the Lord's Supper*" into a common meal (1 Cor. 11:20:22). Thus Christians today need to take care that due importance and solemnity are given to the purpose and practice of the Lord's Supper in the assembly on the first day of the week.

Will They Remember?

That their father and mother loved each other and were kind to each other?

That home was a happy place—respected and revered by the law of love?

That each child was treated fairly, deeply loved, and required to obey both parents?

That home was a place where God was loved, respected and obeyed?

That Sunday was a happy day, looked forward to as a day when everyone went to Bible study and worship without question?

That absolute truth abode there; where no earnest questioner, however young, was put off with evasion?

That the Bible was the law of God that settled everything—that it was read and studied each day?

That although father and mother worked long and hard every day, they still took time to read the Bible and pray?

That home was a place where friends and friendships were dear, but where truth and right were dearer?

These are the things that make home dear. For some it may be too late. For some it may be that the children's remembrances of home may yet be changed—for the better.

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