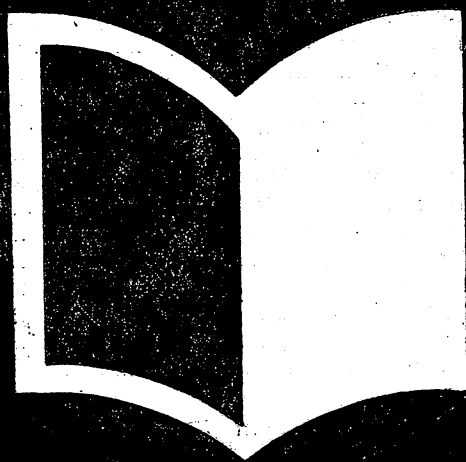


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Published by Church of Christ, Box 3815

New Delhi-110049

Pleading for the restoration of pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 5

No. 9

EDITORIAL



Where Is The Power In Preaching?

Christ said, "Go... and preach." (Mark 16:15). Paul wrote, "preach the word..." (2 Timothy 4:2). We therefore have our orders and we must comply with them. This is as true today as it was in the first century.

Preaching is one of the major ways that the Lord has ordained through which his message is to be conveyed to man. Whether done in the pulpit, or in some other public manner, the work is still preaching. This involves man personally, speaking by word of mouth, in communicating the word of God to one or more.

There are some who think that preaching is losing its power. For instance, they point to gospel meetings, which at one time drew great crowds but now attract very little attention. Preaching on all other occasions likewise seems to be on the decline. Does this mean that the time will come when preaching will no longer be used? Not if Christianity is to survive.

Taking a closer look there are many number of reasons why

preaching does not get the attention that it once did : there is the lack of time devoted to worship, lack of interest in spiritual matters, but perhaps the basic problem is that too much emphasis has been placed on the messenger instead of the message.

Behind the preaching is the preacher and he is the one that has been schooled, polished, and catapulted to the pulpit. He has been well dressed, taught how to properly pronounce every word, has learned by experience how to time his remarks to a bare minimum, and he prepares a variety of lessons so that they will hold the interest of his audience. He must have a pleasant disposition, be friendly at all times with everyone, never be negative, and always be entertaining. Paradoxically, all of this effort to "sell" preaching is the very reason that many have lost interest in preaching !

While the preacher is very important, and there are many things that he can do to help get the message to his audience, the fact remains that the real power in preaching is in the message. Paul says that it pleases God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1 : 21). Again, he says that the *gospel* is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. (Romans 1 : 16). Christ tells us that the *truth* is what makes us free. (John 8 : 32). Peter says that we are purified by obeying the *truth*. (1 Peter 1 : 22).

Beautiful and flowery oratory are not enough. Sermons that illustrate only the speaker's education make the wrong kind of impression. Preachers that say a lot but never say anything are wasting their time. Instead, the preaching that is needed, that is powerful, and that will get results, is just good, simple, scriptural preaching. Those truths may have been stated over and over but the soul craves that food again and again. Nothing else can take its place. Nothing else can really satisfy.

Brethren, we would be a lot better off if we would quit trying to update our preaching and decide that we are going to speak the language of the people and preach the message that man really needs. This doesn't mean that we can't study, learn, and prepare ourselves, but our emphasis should be taken off the preacher and put back on the message as God intended.

Our sermons should be according to the scriptures, based on the needs of the people, instead of trying to entertain them by tickling their ears. Don't worry, if we'll preach the word we will find that it still holds unlimited power.



**associate
editorial**

The Universal Problem Of Man

(No. 1)

EVER since they came out of the garden of Eden, human beings have been faced with sorrows, difficulties, and problems. Wherever human beings are found upon the earth, problems and sorrows have co-existence with them. Through the centuries people have been trying to get release through various ways and means from their problems and difficulties. But as much as they are trying, their problems are exceedingly increasing. It is a shocking state of affairs.

As we turn to the greatest book of the world, the Bible, in its third chapter we read that the first man and the first woman, whom God had made and blessed to multiply upon the earth, rebelled against God by doing the thing that God had forbidden them to do. God who had made human beings for His glory was greatly displeased with the rebelling attitude of these human beings and before He cast them out from His presence, the record says, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the

field ; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Thus, all human problems started with “*sin*”. The word *sin* is a very small word to speak or to write but, in fact, in nature it is far more destructive than all the atoms and missiles found in the world. *Sin* has always been very popular among human beings and more attractive than God. Most of the human power and energy is spent on practicing or promoting *sin*. Nearly fifty-five per cent of all of the wealth in the world, in one way or another, is being spent on such things which lead to *sin*. A larger amount of precious time, which may be used for the betterment of nations and societies, is either spent on producing such things which promote *sin*, or on practicing *sin*. *Sin* is not a local problem which could be explained in terms of environment of social conditions. But *sin* is man’s universal problem. It exists in every home, in every society, and in all countries of the world. It is a universal problem of every human being.

It is believed that around ninety per cent of the people of the world, directly or indirectly, realize the problem of *sin* and regardless of the fact of the increasing numbers of *sins* daily committed in the world today, people are somehow conscious of its dangerous and destructive effect on human beings. And so, many people according to their knowledge and belief, though sincere, have devised several different ways and means, such as imaginary gods and goddesses, religions, idols, so-called gurus, yoga, and several others, through which to try to find a remedy for the problem of *sin*.

Different terms are used to emphasize the meaning of *sin*, such as iniquity, that is, deviation or turning aside from the right path. Another term is transgression, meaning to go across ; to go beyond the bound. *Sin* is also explained in the terms of missing the mark or violation of God’s commandments. *Sin* can be committed in different ways. First, it may be committed by direct violation of God’s command. This is the very type of *sin* which brought condemnation and death, i.e., separation from God, to the first human being in the

garden of Eden. And again, this was the very sin which led the Israelites, after they had come out of Egypt, to wander in the wilderness for a number of years, before entering into the promised land of Canaan. And not only that but they, including their leader Moses, had to suffer several other consequences too because of it.

Although all sins primarily are committed against God, however, sin may also be committed against our fellowmen and against our own bodies, of which the Bible speaks is the temple of God (It is the temple of God in the sense that man originally was made by God after His likeness and in His image; a spiritual being, in whom God's Spirit can dwell). The type of sin that we are now considering includes all the works of the flesh, such as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred or enmities, variance or strife, emulations, wrath, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, etc. such sins, however, are not always committed by outwardly performing the very act of doing, but as the greatest teacher, Jesus Christ taught, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5 : 28) Therefore, this great principle may be applied to any kind of sinful act such as mentioned above and thus the very thought which may lead one to commit an act of sin will be enough to condemn one. For there is no fruit without the seed. Therefore, before a sin is committed its seed first fell into one's heart and when it is grown then the fruit of sin follows. Thus, sin is not always actually committed by actions, but it may be committed in one's heart. Just as the character of the fruit depends on the character of the tree, so likewise one's actions are determined by one's heart because it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks. (Matthew 12 : 34). Just like in some particular physical diseases certain spots or marks appear on the body as symptoms of that particular disease, so are sins the symptoms of a spiritual disease in every human being, which infects directly the hearts of people. Emphasising the fact, Jesus made it more clear and plain when he said, "For from within, out of

the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy or railing, pride, foolishness, All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Matthew 7 : 21-23).

The Wedding Garment

Jai Kumar Gootam

"And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast ; but they would not come. again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and fat calves are killed, and every thing is ready ; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thorough-fares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find. And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good ; so the wedding hall was filled with guests."

"But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment ; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness ; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' For many are called, but few chosen." (Matthew 22 : 1-14 RSV).

In the above parable Jesus was teaching about the kingdom of God. Yes, God sent his Son. "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become

children of God." (John 1 : 11,12 RSV). Many times people are mistaken when they read this passage and think that one has to believe on Jesus and that is all they have to do to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Of course it is necessary that we "believe" but we must also do the works of faith.

The invitation was rejected by the Jews and it was then opened to the Gentiles. But as many as that heard the invitation and went in to take part in the feast had to put on the wedding garment. Some times it looks ridiculous to demand wedding garments to be put on by the people who were called in the last minute out of the roads. I think however we must realize that the king has a right to make certain demands of the invitee if he expects to attend and participate. That is why all except one man had put on the garments and the one who had not was cast out. Yes, God has also given us garments to put on.

He promised in Zechariah 3 : 4 : "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." He expects that we should remove the beggarly clothes of sin and evil and put on the new garment. That garment is Christ. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3 : 27). So one can put on Christ, the wedding garment, only in baptism.

Any one who has not yet been clothed with this garment (not yet baptized), he needs to hurry before the king comes to inspect the invitees. One cannot expect to take part in the wedding feast without the garment prescribed. In other words, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven without putting on Christ in obedience to his will in baptism and thereby washing away our sins. Then we need not be ashamed on the day of judgment. Isaiah said in chapter 61 and verse 10 : "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robes of righteousness." This joy will be ours if we submit ourselves to the will of God in baptism and put on Christ.

“God’s Formula For success”

Mark Nunley

In Josh. 1:1-9 we find the Israelites just about ready to cross the Jordan river to enter into Canaan to conquer it. And the Lord God gave Joshua and Israel a plan or formula that they would have to follow if they were to be successful in their lives; “Only be strong and very courageous, to observe and to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night; that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

I would suggest to you that we can have success in our lives today if we will follow the same formula for success in our lives that God gave to Joshua and Israel.

THIS BOOK OF THE LAW SHALL NOT DEPART OUT OF THY MOUTH. The law of God, the Bible, is to be the very centre of our life. It is to be that which guides and directs our footsteps, and as a result it should be something that we talk about. But before we can make the Bible the central part of our life that it should be, and we can speak about it, we must of necessity study it diligently to know what the Bible says. God said in Matt. 17: 5, “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, Hear ye him.” Notice the prophecy that is referred to in Acts 2: 22-23 as the apostle Peter instructs his listeners that they must now listen to Jesus and not to Moses, “Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to Him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever He shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.”

BUT THOU SHALT MEDITATE THEREIN DAY AND NIGHT. One of the best ways to keep the Word of God from departing from our heart and mouth is to meditate upon the Word of God. Before we can keep the commandments of God, keep the law in our heart, and speak it faithfully as we would teach others, we must do some deep and serious thinking and dwelling upon God's Word. The Bible says in prov. 23 : 7 "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he." We become what our heart is filled with. If we are filled with deceit and falsehood and wickedness in our heart, then these traits will be exhibited in our lives. If we are filled with the Word of God which we constantly think and dwell upon, then our lives will exhibit righteousness and godliness. Psa. 1 : 2 gives a description that must fit our life, "But his delight is in the law of Jehovah : and on His law doth he meditate day and night." What better thoughts or principles could fill our mind than the teachings of the Lord ? Certainly this is necessary if we are to enjoy very much success in life that is worthwhile and lasting.

THAT THOU MAYEST OBSERVE TO DO ACCORDING TO ALL THAT IS WRITTEN THEREIN. We learn the will of God by hearing it preached and by reading the Bible for ourself. Then, we plant that Word deeply in our hearts and come to deeper insight and understanding by meditating upon the Word of God. And when we learn and meditate upon God's law, it leads us to obey Him. And God's purpose for man down through time is that we obey Him. Eccl. 12 : 13 says, "This is the end of the matter, all hath been heard : Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." I Cor. 4 : 6 says, "That in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written." II John 9-11 says, "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 cometh unto you, and bring not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting ; for he that giveth him greeting partaketh of his evil works."

You cannot possibly find the richness and fullness and happiness and success in life that God intended if you do not

follow these 3 steps or principles in life. We must know God's Word, and the person that knows it must speak it faithfully to others. We must meditate upon God's Word. And we must faithfully obey the Word of God. Are you willing to do that today? "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22 : 16).

"The Love of the World"

Dick Cupp

We all know and love the beautiful verse, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). But in I John 2:15-17, the apostle clearly and emphatically says "Love **not** the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him..." Is this a contradiction?

The kind of love God had for the "world" was a love for the **people** of the world, whom He created in His own image. His love was and is a love of compassion and mercy. But the word John uses for "world" is **kosmos**, whis means "a sphere of being," or "an order of things." What John forbids us to love is a worldly order of things that entails evil desire; a greedy reaching forth for things of the world that are contrary to God and not good for us. John is so emphatic as to say that if anyone loves the world in this sense, the love of God is not in him!

This same principle is taught many times in the New Testament: it is impossible to wholly love God and the world at the same time. Jesus said "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24). James declares "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4). And

the apostle Paul Tells us exactly what this kind of "love of the world" involves in 2 Corinthians 6:17-18, when he says "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing..." We are to be a separate, different kind of people; **in** the world, but not **of** the world (see Romans 12:2).

John places "things of the world" in three categories: (1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust of the eye, and (3) the pride of life.

The "flesh" he refers to is not the skin and muscle of the body, but the evil appetites that we might have. Paul talks about the "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21, and lists them as adultery, idolatry, hatred, murder, drunkenness, etc. The "lust of the flesh," then, is carnal desire; a willingness to defy God's will to satisfy your own appetites (Satan tried to tempt Jesus into turning stones into bread when Jesus was starving for food in the wilderness).

The "lust of the eye" involves evil desires brought on through the appeal of objects of sight. Satan, in his tempting of the Lord, took him to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus could see them in all their splendor and power and glory and wealth. Then Satan told Jesus he could have everything he saw...if he would just bow down and worship him.

The "pride of life" is vanity; pride; a coveting of worldly honour. Satan, in tempting the Lord, took him to the top of the temple and said "Throw yourself off; if you're the son of God, and angels will come and minister to you." He was tempting Jesus to have enough vain pride to prove himself.

All three of these qualities are seen in the tempting of Eve, in Genesis 3:6; "And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food** (the lust of the flesh), and that it was a **delight to the eye** (the lust of the eye,) and that the tree was **desired to make one wise** (the pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

John is telling Christians to beware of these very same

general temptations, which are involved in loving the world and the things that are of the world. He then ends his exhortation with a very logical reason for loving God and the things of God more than the world and the things of the world. "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Peter taught the same thing in 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Peter then went on to say that we ought to, therefore, be followers of God and godly living: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

And that's exactly the point John is making. The world and everything in it is temporary; someday it will all disappear. But your godliness is enduring. Therefore, don't love the world or the things of the world, but love God instead...and abide in His will (1 John 5:3).

Don't put your trust in the world. Some day it will be burned to nothing. Don't put your trust in the things of the world. They are temporary, and they cannot bring salvation or life after death! Put your trust in eternal God, and in His word...that will never pass away!

Ecumenical Unity

John Wadley

Will the Ecumenical Movement succeed? Will there be a real unity among believers?

These efforts for unity will fail because they are based on human wisdom. Men ask, "How can we reconcile our creeds and traditions?" I have yet to see a search for GOD'S THINKING on how we can attain unity.

Present trends give Protestants the chance to become

Catholics. What Protestants would think of such? Shall the Baptists give up their name and creed and accept that of the Lutheran? No! It just won't work!

A SOLUTION THAT WILL WORK:

1. Since the Creeds, Names, Traditions and man-made forms of Government stand as obstacles to unity; let them all be cast aside. Then let us build on the firm foundation of God's eternal truth.
2. Let us call ourselves Christians, Acts 11:26. Is there a better name? Everyone can accept this. Let us call our congregations the Churches of God, I Cor. 1:1-3, or Churches of Christ, Rom. 16:16. These names will offend no one.
3. For our Creed, let us take the Bible ONLY. Let each man, "speak as the oracles of God." I Pet. 4:11. Let us not go beyond what is written. I Cor. 4:6. Let us hold to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, Jude 3. The Scripture will make us complete, furnished completely unto every good work, II Tim. 3:16-17. Can we improve on this?
4. God's plan of Church government is more workable than man's. Christ is the only head, Eph. 1:22. His New Testament is the only rule of authority, Matt. 28:18, John 12:48. There will be no earthly headquarters, for each congregation will be responsible only to Jesus the head. In each local group elders would have the oversight, Acts 20:17, 26:31.
5. Traditions should gladly be laid aside. Their authority is only that of fallible men. They cannot be pleasing to God. These traditions have made void the commandments of God, Matt. 15:9.
6. The Bible presents a divine prescription for worship: Prayers, I Thess. 5:17. Bible study and preaching, Acts 20:7, singing, Eph. 5:19, and giving, I Cor. 16:2. The Lord's supper was observed weekly as a commemoration of Christ's death, Acts 20:7, Matt. 26:26. About these things there should be no controversy.

7. Terms of membership will pose no problem. People believed the gospel, repented and were baptized for remission of sins. The Lord added them to the church, Acts 2:36-38, 47. The form of baptism would be simple: Bible examples were "buried with Christ in baptism". Rom. 6:4.

Nothing would be made a test of fellowship save faith and a willingness to obey the Lord's plain commands.

This is God's basis for a REAL AND TRUE UNITY in Christ of All believers. Are you willing to follow God's plan?

Faith

By Clovis Caudle

I. What Is Faith?

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1)

II. Faith Is Necessary.

1. Faith Is necessary To Please God.

"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." (Heb. 11:6)

2. We Are Condemned Without Faith.

"... but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mk. 16:16)

3. We Will Die In Our Sins Without Faith.

"...for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (Jno. 8:24)

4. Everlasting Life Depends On The Right Kind of Faith.

"... that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jno. 3:16)

III. In Order To Have Faith It Must Come In Some Manner.

The Bible Teaches That Faith Comes By Hearing The Word Of God.

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17)

The faith of the people on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 came by hearing the preaching of the Apostles. “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)

“But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (Jno. 20:31)

IV. Since Faith Is Necessary To Please God, The Bible Teaches That We Are Saved By Faith.

“For ye are all the children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:26)

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1)

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8)

That faith is necessary to salvation is absolute.

V. How Does Faith Save?

1. Faith Saves When It Is Active and Obedient.

“Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 7:21)

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit of unfeigned love of the brethren...” (1 Pet. 1:22)

2. John 3:16 and similar passages are inclusive in scope; they include all things through faith that are required of the Lord to be saved, not only from past sins but to be saved eternally. (2 Pet. 1:9)

VI. The Following Are Some Of The Actions Of Faith, Or “Faith Working.”

1. Repentance is faith willing. (Matt. 21:28-32)

2. Confession is faith speaking. (Rom. 10:10)
3. Baptism is faith in action. (Col. 2:12)
4. Prayer is faith communing. (Matt. 21:22)
5. Work is faith being made perfect. (Jas. 2:22)
6. Influence is faith shining. (Rom. 14:20-22)
7. Hope is faith assuring. (Heb. 11:1)
8. Singing is faith praising. (Heb. 13:15)
9. The Lord's Supper is faith remembering. (1 Cor. 11:24,25)
10. Eternal life is faith realized. (Jno. 3:15,16)

VII. Faith Is Comprehensive And Inclusive.

All the above are included in the faith or in the "believeth" in Jno. 3:16.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

VIII. The Bible States That We Are Saved By Works And Not By Faith Only.

"Ye see then that by works a man is justified and not by faith only." (Jas. 2:24)

"man is justified by works and not by faith only." (Jas. 2:24)

IX. Jesus Says That Faith Is A Work That God Gives Us To Perform.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (Jno. 6:29)

Prayer

K. Mathew

A small word with a great meaning, prayer is a word which primarily means to make a request. In a spiritual sense prayer can be defined like this ; communication between God and man, talking to God. God is our Heavenly Father and as his children we can talk to him through prayer. Thanksgiving and asking for our needs, we can say that prayer is the anchor of our Christian life.

Without prayer a person cannot be a successful Christian. Prayer is needed every time you need something. When you need something you ask your parents or guardian; God is our parent and guardian and we can go to him through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. A person who prays regularly can have a different experience in life. You can draw more closer to God and Christ.

But sad to say even among some of the believers, there are no prayers. They believe that we are to pray only on Sunday morning or Wednesday night or whenever the church meets. But this is not so. We should pray every day without ceasing which means always wherever you may be. You may be in school, in the office, in the home, or in the field, but you can pray and you should pray. Twenty-four hours of the day God is ready to listen. We have many examples in the Old Testament to support this.

Many people pray only when they have difficulties. But let us make a habit of praying. Many Christian homes are divided and quarellsome because they have no connection with God. I can suggest that the morning time is a very good time to pray. Once a poet wrote like this: "While the birds are singing sweetly in the morning why man you are sleeping like a beast?" When all the atmosphere is quiet, get up early and talk to God. You should be an example to the whole family. Make a practice of praying every day. Make prayer a part of every day life. Many preachers in the pulpit never pray to God with their family. They may talk on Sunday morning about prayer but they should not preach what they are not applying to their own life.

Let us pray without ceasing, for the world, for souls without Christ, for those who are in troubles and have various problems, for the sick and poor. Let us offer our thanks through prayers. When ever you are failing to pray you are not thanking God for what he has done for you.

Jesus prayed on that night he was betrayed. May be it was a starry, clear night. Why can't you choose such opportunities

and talk to God? It is really a blessing to be able to do so. Paul and Silas sang praises and prayed to God at midnight when they were in prison. Why are you too lazy to get up in the night and pray? So every time of the day is suitable for us to pray. Arise and make a change of your life. Let us pray. A praying mind can do many things. Let us draw closer to God through our prayers.

Prayer is the anchor of our Christian life. A huge ship can be controlled by a small anchor. Prayer may be a small thing in our eyes, but it can control our Christian life. This world is not a suitable place for the Christian. While living in this troublesome world the winds and waves of sin are tossing all about us but prayer can control this and keep us safe for the Lord.

Why I Am A Member Of The Church Of Christ?

Nehemiah Gootam

There are hundreds of so called churches in the world today and in order to find out the right or genuine church we must begin a thorough search in the Bible where God has revealed the identification marks of this genuine institution.

Before we begin our search for the genuine church or the church of the Bible, we must find out the meaning for the term "church". Its Greek word gives the meaning 'called out'. Therefore the church is not a four walled brick building or a material structure of some sort but it is a called out body of people, those who have been called out of the world in the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). It is the spiritual body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), made up of those who have obeyed Christ (Hebrews 5:8,9) and are therefore saved by him and added to His church (Acts 2:47). It is the spiritual house composed of men and women (1 Peter 2:5). Therefore the church consists of members or followers of Christ.

The church of the Bible came into existence in fulfillment of the prophecies of the prophets. They prophesied that the

church would be established in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2) and in the last days, the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection (Daniel 2:44). This prophecy took place exactly the way they foretold. (Read Acts 2). Also the Bible church was built by the Son of God. He said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:18) which he did on the first Pentecost after his resurrection. Christ is not only the builder but also is the foundation of the church that we are studying about. The apostle Paul said, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Any other foundation whether it be Paul, Peter or any person is the wrong foundation. In continuing our study we learn again, Christ is the saviour of the church. Paul said, He is the saviour of the body (Ephesians 5:23) but the body and the church are the same (Eph. 1:22-23). Also we learn, Christ shed his blood and purchased the church. To the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul said, "Take heed to 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" (Acts 20:28). Also we find Christ is the head of the church. The apostle says that God has given "Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body" (Eph. 1:22-23). Thus we see the divine Sonship of Christ and the church are related with each other, so the church of the Bible is divine in nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

But now we shall see about the membership of this divine institution. Its terms of entrance are conditional. One should obey to the gospel to be a member in the church. The Gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). It gives the commands and we are to obey them. Its first command is that one must have faith. "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). Second, one must repent of his sins. "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commanded men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17:30). Third, One must confess Christ to be

the Son of God. Christ himself said "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my father which is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32). And fourth, one must be baptised for the remission of His sins. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptised 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). Therefore when one does these things, he is born again through water and Spirit (John 3:5) in to the kingdom of God which is the Lord's church or the Bible church. The Lord adds such people to His church but there is no such a thing as joining in the church.

The doctrine of the church is based on the Bible only. It is accepted without addition, subtraction or substitution (Revelation 22:18-19, Galatians 1:6-9). Christ is it's creed. His word is law. His authority is supreme.

The church is not a human organisation, even though we can be members in it on earth. We find it's organization is according to God's plan. Christ is the Head (Eph. 5:23) and each congregation had its own elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3). There is no central head or head quarters of the church and no organization superior to the elders of each local congregation. A plurality of elders or presbyters are selected by the local congregation (Titus 1:5) on the basis of qualifications set down in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3:1-8).

As we see all the churches around us no church has all the identification marks that a Bible church should have such as we have seen above. But only the "Church Of Christ" has all these marks of identification so it is only the church of the Bible. Even we can find its name in the Bible, Paul said, "...Churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16), whereas the names of there churches we cannot find in the Bible. They are denominational and man made institutions, therefore I am a member of the CHURCH OF CHRIST.

I urge you also to become a member of the Church of Christ and thus be saved. The writer of the Hebrew letter says this is the kingdom that cannot be shaken where we have grace and may offer our service well pleasing to God with reverence and awe. (Hebrews 12:28)

१. "क्या मानव स्वतः का छुटकारा कर सकता है ? क्या वह इसके लिये यथोचित कदम उठा सकता है ?"

उत्तर : वास्तव में, मनुष्य स्वतः का छुटकारा नहीं कर सकता । हाँ, वह छुटकारा प्राप्त करने के लिये यथोचित कदम उठा सकता है । इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं कि मसीही धर्म के अतिरिक्त, संसार में पाए जानेवाले लगभग सभी अन्य धर्म इसकी शिक्षा देते हैं कि मनुष्य अपने कर्मों तथा प्रयत्नों के द्वारा स्वतः का छुटकारा करा सकता है, परन्तु इसके विपरीत, बाइबल (धर्म-शास्त्र) की शिक्षानुसार, प्रत्येक मनुष्य पापी है और वह चाहे कितने भी भले कार्य करे परन्तु वह अपने किसी भी प्रकार के कार्यों अथवा प्रयत्नों द्वारा पाप से अपना छुटकारा नहीं करा सकता । केवल परमेश्वर ही मनुष्य का उद्धार कर सकता है । यही कारण है कि जब मनुष्य पाप के अथाह गड्ढे में पड़ा था, और पाप से छुटकर परमेश्वर के पास उस ऊँचाई पर पहुँचना चाहता था, और जब उसके सब कार्य तथा प्रयत्न निष्फल निकले, तो परमेश्वर को दया आई, और वह स्वयं ही, यीशु मसीह के रूप में इस संसार में आ गए । प्रभु यीशु ने संसार में परमेश्वर को, तथा मानव जाति के उद्धार के लिये परमेश्वर की योजना को प्रगट किया । प्रेमी तथा महान् परमेश्वर ने, प्रत्येक मनुष्य को उसके पाप के फलस्वरूप अनन्त मृत्यु दण्ड देने के विपरीत, मानव जाति के पापों के प्रति अपने पुत्र यीशु को एक भारी क्रूस के ऊपर मृत्यु का दण्ड दिया । इस प्रकार से परमेश्वर ने पाप के प्रति अपना न्याय भी दिखाया तथा मनुष्य के प्रति अपना प्रेम भी । आज कोई भी व्यक्ति, यदि वह पाप से छुटकारा प्राप्त करना चाहता है, प्रभु यीशु में विश्वास करके तथा उसकी आज्ञाओं को मानकर अपनी आत्मा को पाप तथा पाप के दण्ड से बचा सकता है ।

२. "अपने जीवन को बचाने के लिये मैं क्या कर सकता हूँ ? उसे योग्य कैसे बना सकता हूँ ? मुझे निश्चय कैसे हो कि मेरा इस संसार में आगमन सार्थक रहा ? मैं अपने सृजन-हार के समक्ष अपनी आत्मा का लेखा कैसे दूँगा ?"

उत्तर : निसन्देह, अपने जीवन को बचाने से आपका अभिप्राय अपनी आत्मा को बचाने से है । आप अपने जीवन को यीशु मसीह के पास आकर बचा सकते हैं । उसमें भरोसा रखिए, उसपर विश्वास कीजिए तथा उसकी आज्ञाओं का पालन कीजिए, वही आपकी आत्मा को अनन्त दण्ड से बचा सकता है । आप अपने जीवन को वास्तव में योग्य बना सकते हैं यदि आप

पवित्र बाइबल के विषय में, इस कथन का अनुसरण करें: “व्यवस्था की यह पुस्तक (बाइबल) तेरे चित्त से कभी न उतरने पाए, इसी में दिन रात ध्यान दिए रहना, इसलिये कि जो कुछ उस में लिखा है उसके अनुसार करने की तू चौकसी करे; क्योंकि ऐसा ही करने से तेरे सब काम सुफल होंगे, और तू प्रभावशाली होगा।” (यहोशू १:८)।

जी हां, आपको यह निश्चय हो सकता है कि क्या आपका आगमन इस संसार में सार्थक रहा या नहीं। अति-बुद्धिमान उपदेशक, सुलैमान कहता है, “कि परमेश्वर का भय मान और उसकी आज्ञाओं का पालन कर; क्योंकि मनुष्य का सम्पूर्ण कर्त्तव्य यही है। क्योंकि परमेश्वर सब कामों और सब गुप्त बातों का, चाहे वे भली हों या बुरी, न्याय करेगा।” (समोपदेशक १२:१३-१४)। यहां परमेश्वर के प्रति भय से अभिप्राय उसके प्रति आदर, श्रद्धा, विश्वास-योग्यता इत्यादि से है; तथा उसकी आज्ञाओं का पालन करने का अभिप्राय उसके पवित्र वचन, बाइबल, का अनुसरण करने से है। निःसंदेह, यह अवश्य है कि प्रत्येक, आत्मिक प्राणी एक दिन प्रभु के न्याय आसन के सामने अपना-अपना लेखा दे। इस विषय में प्रभु यीशु ने कहा, “जो मुझे तुच्छ जानता है और मेरी बातें ग्रहण नहीं करता है उसको दोषी ठहरानेवाला तो एक है; अर्थात् जो वचन मैंने कहा है वही पिछले दिन में उसे दोषी ठहराएगा।” (यूहन्ना १२:४८)। पवित्र बाइबल, एक अन्य स्थान पर यूँ कहती है, “क्योंकि अवश्य है, कि हम सब का हाल मसीह के न्याय आसन के सामने खुल जाए, कि हर एक व्यक्ति अपने-अपने भले बुरे कामों का बदला जो उसने देह के द्वारा किए हों पाए।” (२ कुरिन्थियों ५:१०)।

३. “आपका क्या विचार है यदि हिन्दु अथवा अन्य धर्मों के लोग कहते हैं कि यीशु मसीह का पिता हमारा परमात्मा है तो उसके पुत्र यीशु मसीह के पास कौन सी सर्वोच्च शक्ति है ?”

उत्तर : प्रभु यीशु मसीह के विषय में लोगों के बहुतेरे अशुद्ध विचार सही हो जाए यदि वे यीशु मसीह के व्यक्तित्व को भली-भांति समझ लें। बहुधा, लोग जब यीशु मसीह के विषय में पुत्र के दृष्टिकोण से विचार करते हैं तो वे उसकी तुलना केवल एक मनुष्य के रूप में ही करते हैं। पवित्र बाइबल में यीशु मसीह को परमेश्वर के पुत्र के रूप में इस दृष्टिकोण से प्रकट किया गया है कि पुत्र होने के कारण वह उत्तराधिकारी है तथा पृथ्वी पर उसका जन्म किसी मनुष्य की इच्छा से नहीं परन्तु परमेश्वर की इच्छा से हुआ है।

वास्तव में, परमेश्वर, यीशु मसीह तथा पवित्रात्मा को कोई भी अलग नहीं

The New Testament Church

N. Victor

Prophesied by Isaiah	(Isaiah 2:2-3).
Prophesied by Daniel	(Daniel 2:44).
Prophesied by Joel	(Joel 2:28-32).
Preached by John the Baptist	(Matthew 3:1-2).
The Rock was CHRIST	(1 Corinthians 10:4).
Foundation is CHRIST	(1 Corinthians 3:11).
Built by JESUS	(Matthew 16:18).
Church is the bride of CHRIST	(Ephesians 5:25,31, 32; Revelation 21:9)
Bought by the blood of CHRIST	(Acts 20:28).
The Church wore CHRIST'S NAME	(Romans 16:16).
CHRIST is the Head of the Church	(Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians. 1:18).
Salvation is only in CHRIST	(II Timothy 2:10; I John 2:24,25; Acts 4:12).
CHRIST is the Saviour of the body the Church	(Eph 5:23).
Saved are added to the Church by JESUS	(Acts 2:47).
CHRIST is the Author of the New Testament	(Hebrews 9:15-17; James 4:12).
CHRIST is the way, and the truth, and the life	(John 14:6).
CHRIST is the only mediator between God and Men	(I Timothy 2:5).
CHRIST is our Advocate	(I John 2:1).
CHRIST will return for his Church	(Ephesians 5:27).
CHRIST Will be our future Judge	(Hebrews 10:30,31; John 5:27).

There are many denominational churches in the religious World, but none of the above cited Scriptures are true with any denomination. A number of denominational Christians claim themselves as Christian, but they are ignorant of the Scriptures (Mark 12:24). Denominationalism is a Plant which

hath not been planted by God, and every Plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up (Matthew 15:13). For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Dear Friend, if you want to be only a Christian, then come out from the shackles of denominationalism and follow the New Testament Pattern in order to achieve your goal which is heaven.

The New Testament church was in the plan of God and He revealed it to us through the prophets, and the Prophecies were fulfilled in the New Testament. The Lord's church was established in A.D. 33 at Jerusalem (Acts 2).

Dear Reader, are you a member of the Lord's Church? Because the Church of Christ is non-denominational and non-sectarian, it is the body of Christ which is his only church (Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18).

If you are not a member of the New Testament Church, then why not be a member of that church today itself by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), believing in Christ (Hebrews 11:6), repenting of your sin (Luke 13:3) confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10) and by baptizing into Christ (Mark 16:16)! Then you will be a Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16) and you will be added to only his church by Christ and Christ only (Acts 2:47).

Finally, you have to remain a faithful and successful Christian till you meet your death in order to receive a Crown of life (Mark 13:13; Revelation 2:10).

आपके प्रश्नों के उत्तर

निम्नलिखित, कुछ प्रश्नों के उत्तर दिये जा रहे हैं। यह प्रश्न हमें एक मित्र से प्राप्त हुए, जो हमारे बहुतेरे पाठकगणों में से एक हैं। इन प्रश्नों के उत्तरों को केवल उन्हीं को न भेजकर इस पत्रिका में इसलिये प्रकाशित किया जा रहा है ताकि अन्य वे सब लोग भी, जो कदाचित्त इन प्रश्नों के उत्तर जानना चाहते हों, इन उत्तरों से लाभ उठाएं।

के ऊपर प्रगट किया। जिन लोगों ने उसके अद्भुत जीवन, तथा सामर्थ्य-पूर्ण कार्य, और मृतकों में से उसके आश्चर्यजनक पुनःस्थान तथा फिर स्वर्ग में वापस चले जाने जैसी घटनाओं को अपनी आंखों से देखा, उन्हीं लोगों ने बाइबल की पुस्तकों में लिखकर हम तक यीशु का समाचार पहुँचाया है। जब लोग यीशु मसीह के सुसमाचार को पढ़कर या सुनकर उसमें विश्वास लाते हैं और उसकी आज्ञाओं का पालन करते हैं तो वे उसके प्रति अपनी श्रद्धा व प्रेम को दर्शाते हैं। उसने कहा, “यदि तुम मुझ से प्रेम रखते हो तो मेरी आज्ञाओं को मानोगे।” तदानुसार, जब हम यीशु मसीह, जिसने परमेश्वर को हम पर प्रगट किया, की आज्ञाओं को मानते हैं तो हम वास्तव में परमेश्वर के प्रति अपने प्रेम को दिखाते हैं।

८. “प्रभु यीशु मसीह के जी उठने का अर्थ आज हमारे लिये क्या है?”

उत्तर : प्रभु यीशु के जी उठने से हमें यह आश्वासन मिलता है कि हमारा एक जीवित उद्धारकर्ता है। वास्तव में, यदि मसीह मुर्दों में से नहीं जी उठता तो आज मसीही धर्म का नाम तक नहीं होता और न ही इसका उदय हुआ होता। यदि वह नहीं जी उठता तो हमारा प्रचार करना तथा लोगों का उसमें विश्वास करना सब व्यर्थ होता। सच कहा जाए तो मसीह धर्म की नींव ही यीशु मसीह के जी उठने पर है। यीशु के सुसमाचार का प्रचार, उसकी कलीसिया की स्थापना, इत्यादि सब कुछ उसके जी उठने के बाद ही से आरम्भ हुआ। किन्तु, यीशु मसीह के जी उठने से हमें केवल यह आश्वासन ही नहीं मिलता कि हमारा एक जीवित उद्धारकर्ता है, परन्तु हमें यह भी आशा मिलती है कि जैसे यीशु मसीह मृतकों में से जी उठा ताकी फिर कभी न मरे वैसे ही हम भी एक दिन जी उठेंगे। प्रभु यीशु ने कहा कि इस बात को सुनकर अचम्भा मत करो कि सब जी उठेंगे, उसने यह कहकर लोगों को चिताया कि, “जिन्होंने भलाई की है वे जीवन के पुनःस्थान के लिये जी उठेंगे और जिन्होंने बुराई की है वे दण्ड के पुनःस्थान के लिये जी उठेंगे।” (यूहन्ना ५:२९)।

—सनी भाई

वक्त

लेखक—एफ० डेविड

“वक्त जैसे बहता पानी है, सबको बहाता है, इन्सान जमीन पर फ़ानी है जल्द चला जाता है।” गीत की यह पंक्तियाँ अपने में कितना बड़ा अर्थ रखती हैं! वक्त के साथ-साथ पिछला वर्ष भी गुजर गया तथा अब नव—वर्ष का आरम्भ हो गया। अनेकों लोगों ने नव—वर्ष के लिए भिन्न-भिन्न योजनाएं बनाई होंगी तथा बहुत सी बातें सोची होंगी जिन्हें कि वे नव वर्ष से आरम्भ करेंगे। अर्थात् अभी तक हमने शायद सांसारिक बातों को करने व सोचने में ही अपना वक्त गुजारा हो।

एक वक्त होता है कि मनुष्य इस संसार में एक नवजात शिशु के रूप में जन्म लेता है, धीरे-धीरे मनुष्य बड़ा होता है। फिर वक्त आता है कि वह स्कूल जाता है और इसके पश्चात् कालेज से उच्च से उच्च शिक्षा प्राप्त करना चाहता है। किसी दफ्तर में कार्य करने लगता है या किसी बिजनेस में लग जाता है। फिर समय शादी का आ जाता है तथा वृद्ध होने का वक्त साथ साथ चलने लगता है और फिर मृत्यु। अर्थात् वक्त आ जाता है कि मनुष्य को इस संसार को सदाकाल के लिए छोड़कर चला जाना पड़ता है।

परन्तु प्रश्न यह उठता है कि क्या मनुष्य के लिए केवल इतना ही काफी है कि वह इस संसार में आए तथा सांसारिक जीवन व्यतीत करके सदा के लिए संसार को छोड़कर चला जाए? क्या मनुष्य में आत्मा नहीं है, जिसने अपना लेखा न्याय के दिन परमेश्वर को देना है? जबकि वक्त बड़ी तीव्रता से गुजर रहा है, क्या आपने अपनी आत्मा को परमेश्वर के सम्मुख लाने के लिए विचार किया? अनेकों बार हम संसार के कार्यों में इतने फंस जाते हैं कि हम अपनी आत्मा के विषय में कुछ भी ध्यान नहीं देते। बाइबल बड़ी स्पष्टता से कहती है "यदि मनुष्य सारे जगत को प्राप्त करे और अपने प्राण की हानि उठाए तो उसे क्या लाभ होगा? (मरकुस ८:३६)? चाहे हम इस संसार में कितने ही सुखी हों। संसार के प्रत्येक लाभ वाली वस्तुएं हमारे पास हों। कितना ही पैसा हमारे पास हो। परन्तु यदि हम अपनी आत्मा के विषय में अनजान हैं तो इससे कुछ भी लाभ नहीं है।

पवित्र बाइबल के अनुसार प्रभु यीशु एक दिन फिर वापस आएगा। कोई भी यह नहीं जानता कि वह कब आएगा। परन्तु वह आएगा अवश्य। शायद वह सन् १९७५ में ही आ जाए; क्या आप उससे मिलने के लिए पूर्णतः तैयार होंगे? आज अधिकतर लोग हैं जो प्रभु यीशु से मिलने को तैयार नहीं हैं। वे उसके उन शब्दों पर भी ध्यान नहीं देते जो वह उनसे कहता है "हे सब परिश्रम करने वालो और बोझ से दबे हुए लोगो, मेरे पास आओ; मैं तुम्हें विश्राम दूँगा।" जो लोग उसकी नहीं सुनते वे अपना वक्त व्यर्थ में गवां रहे हैं। एक गीत का लेखक अपने एक गीत को लिखते हुए कहता है "यीशु, प्यारो कहता कीमती वक्त है। जाता, वक्त गया जो प्यारो, वापस फिर नहीं आता। यह बात बिल्कुल सत्य है। जो वक्त बीत गया वह कभी भी वापस लौट कर नहीं आयेगा।

प्रिय मित्रों, समय बहुत कम है परन्तु अनन्त जीवन निश्चित है। आज इस नव-वर्ष की शुभ-कामनाओं के साथ मेरा अपने पाठकों से यह आग्रह है कि यदि आपने अभी तक प्रभु यीशु को अपना उद्धारकर्ता स्वीकार नहीं किया है तो आज ही इस बात का निश्चय कीजिए। वक्त के महत्व को समझते हुए शीघ्र ही आगे कदम उठाएं। यदि आप प्रभु यीशु को अपना उद्धारकर्ता स्वीकार करना चाहते हैं तो उस पर विश्वास कीजिए तथा उसकी आज्ञाओं को मानिए प्रेरित पौलुस के इन शब्दों को ध्यान से पढ़िए "..... देखो अभी वह प्रसन्नता का समय है, देखो, अभी वह उद्धार का दिन है" (२ कुरिन्थियों ६:२)।

कर सकता, ये तीनों एक हैं, यद्यपि, पृथक व्यक्तित्व हैं। ठीक उसी प्रकार से जैसे एक जलती हुई मोमबत्ती में तीन अलग-अलग विशेषताएं, अर्थात्, मोम, घागा, व लौ, होती हैं परन्तु तौमी वास्तव में वह एक मोमबत्ती ही होती है, ऐसे ही ईश्वरयत्न भी है, अर्थात्, परमेश्वर, पिता, यीशु मसीह, पुत्र तथा पवित्र आत्मा। इससे पहले कि यीशु मसीह का मनुष्य के रूप में इस पृथ्वी पर आगमन होता, वह वचन के रूप में आदि से ही परमेश्वर के साथ विद्यमान था। पवित्रशास्त्र की शिक्षानुसार, "आदि में वचन था, और वचन परमेश्वर के साथ था। यही आदि में परमेश्वर के साथ था.....और वचन देहधारी हुआ; और अनुग्रह और सच्चाई से परिपूर्ण होकर हमारे बीच में डेरा किया और हमने उसकी ऐसी महिमा देखी जैसी पिता के एकलौते की महिमा" (यूहन्ना १:१,२,१४)। इसके अतिरिक्त, यीशु मसीह ने कहा, "मैं और पिता एक हैं।" (यूहन्ना १०:३०)। इसलिये यह असम्भव है कि हम परमेश्वर को यीशु मसीह से अलग कर दें परमेश्वर तथा उसके वचन को अलग नहीं किया जा सकता। और याद रखें कि वचन देहधारी हुआ, और वही यीशु मसीह के रूप में मनुष्यों के बीच में रहा। सम्पूर्ण सृष्टि के कर्ता, परमेश्वर, ने अपने आपको यीशु मसीह में होकर प्रगट किया। परमेश्वर को स्वीकार करके यीशु मसीह को अस्वीकार नहीं किया जा सकता, क्योंकि मूल में ये दोनों एक ही हैं।

४. "क्या आप पुनर्जीवन में विश्वास करते हैं? यदि हां, तो क्या आप प्रमाण दे सकते हैं?"

उत्तर: परमेश्वर के नियमानुसार, "मनुष्यों के लिये एक बार मरना और उसके बाद न्याय का होना नियुक्त है।" (इब्रानियों ९:२७)। निःसंदेह, बाइबल इस विचार का खण्डन करती है, जैसे कुछ लोगों का विश्वास है, कि मनुष्य बार-बार इस संसार में जनम लेता है। परन्तु इसके विपरीत बाइबल यह शिक्षा देती है कि मनुष्य स्वाभाविक देह में मरता है परन्तु एक दिन वह आत्मिक देह में जिलाया जाएगा। (१ कुरिन्थियों १५)। यह प्रमाणित करने के लिये कि मुझे वास्तव में जी उठेंगे, प्रभु यीशु ने लाज़र नाम के चार दिन से मरे हुए एक व्यक्ति को जिला कर लोगों को दिखाया। और न केवल यह, परन्तु वह स्वयं भी मृतकों में से जी उठा।

५. "धर्मशास्त्र परमेश्वर के बारे में हमें क्या बताता है? कितने परमेश्वर हैं? वह कौन है? उसकी विशेषताएं क्या हैं?"

उत्तर: पवित्र शास्त्र की शिक्षानुसार, "परमेश्वर आत्मा है" (यूहन्ना ४:२४) लगभग ढाई हजार वर्ष पूर्व परमेश्वर ने यशायाह नाम के एक भविष्यद्वक्ता के द्वारा कहा, "मैं सबसे पहिला हूं, और मैं ही अन्त तक रहूंगा; मुझे छोड़ कोई परमेश्वर है ही नहीं.....क्या मुझे छोड़ कोई और परमेश्वर है? नहीं।" "मैं यहीवा हूं और दूसरा कोई नहीं, मुझे छोड़ कोई परमेश्वर नहीं।" (यशायाह ४४:६,८ तथा ४५:५)। पवित्रशास्त्र में परमेश्वर की यह

बाणी है, "क्या मैं ऐसा परमेश्वर हूँ जो दूर नहीं, निकट ही रहता हूँ ? क्या कोई ऐसे गुप्त स्थानों में छिप सकता है, कि मैं उसे न देख सकूँ ? क्या स्वर्ग और पृथ्वी दोनों मुझ से परिपूर्ण नहीं हैं ?"

६. मैं जानता हूँ कि यीशु ने कहा कि हमें एक छोटे से जीव को भी नहीं, मारना चाहिए । परन्तु मसीही लोग बकरे इत्यादि का मांस खाते हैं, क्यों ? क्या यह पाप नहीं है ?"

उत्तर : आश्चर्य है कि आप अधिकारपूर्ण कहते हैं कि मैं जानता हूँ ! जी नहीं, प्रभु यीशु ने कभी भी ऐसा नहीं कहा । इसके विपरीत बाइबल हमें बताती है कि आरम्भ में परमेश्वर ने मनुष्य को कहा, "फूलो-फलो, और पृथ्वी में भर जाओ, और उसको अपने वश में कर लो; और समुद्र की मछलियों, तथा आकाश के पक्षियों, और पृथ्वी पर रेंगनेवाले सब जन्तुओं पर अधिकार रखो ।" (उत्पत्ति १:२८) और कुछ ही समय पश्चात् अपनी प्रतीज्ञा को दोहराते हुए परमेश्वर ने फिर मनुष्य से यूँ कहा, "और तुम्हारा डर और भय पृथ्वी के सब पशुओं, और आकाश के सब पक्षियों, और भूमि पर के सब रेंगनेवाले जन्तुओं, और समुद्र की सब मछलियों पर बना रहेगा: वे सब तुम्हारे वश में कर दिये जाते हैं । सब चलनेवाले जन्तु तुम्हारा आहार होंगे; जैसा तुम को हरे-हरे छोटे पेड़ दिए थे, वैसा ही अब सब कुछ देता हूँ ।" (उत्पत्ति ९:२-३) । इसके अतिरिक्त, यीशु के कुछ चेले स्वयं मछली पकड़नेवाले थे । बाइबल में लिखा है कि एक बार बहुत बड़ी भीड़ को यीशु ने केवल पांच रोटी तथा दो मछलियों से भोजन खिला कर तृप्त किया । (मत्ती १४:१७-२१) । बाइबल शिक्षा देती है कि मनुष्य को यह अधिकार नहीं कि वह किसी मनुष्य की हत्या करे, क्योंकि मनुष्य परमेश्वर के स्वरूप के अनुसार रचा गया आत्मिक प्राणी है । (उत्पत्ति १:२७) । परन्तु, पशु पक्षी इत्यादि न तो परमेश्वर के स्वरूप पर बनाए गए और न ही उनमें आत्मा है । उनकी रचना पेड़, पौधों की तरह की गई, और ये सब मनुष्य के लिये रचे गए ।

७. "हम केवल उनसे प्यार कर सकते हैं जिन्हें हम शारीरिक रूप से देख सकते हैं । परन्तु हम परमेश्वर से कैसे प्रेम कर सकते हैं जो हमें अपनी शारीरिक आंखों से दिखाई नहीं देता ?"

उत्तर : शारीरिक आंखों से दिखाई देनेवाली प्रत्येक वस्तु शारीरिक अथवा स्वाभाविक है, और इस कारण ऐसी वस्तुओं का प्रेम भी शारीरिक तथा अनिश्चित होता है । किन्तु, परमेश्वर आत्मा है, और अवश्य है कि परमेश्वर को जानने और उसे प्रेम करने के लिये विश्वास रूपी आत्मिक आंखों की आवश्यकता है । "परमेश्वर को किसी ने कभी नहीं देखा एकलौता पुत्र जो पिता की गोद में है उसी ने उसे प्रगट किया" (यूहन्ना १:१८) । प्रभु यीशु के कथन अनुसार, "जिसने मुझे देखा है उसने पिता को देखा है ।" (यूहन्ना १४:९) । यीशु मसीह में होकर परमेश्वर ने अपने आपको मनुष्यों

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