

THE BIBLE TEACHER



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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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EDITORIAL



Things That Should Be Found In Every Home

The home that we are thinking about at this time is not the house or the place where people stay, but instead we are having reference to the father, mother, and children that make up the real home. It is true that many people have never experienced this type of home. They have only had a place to sleep and eat. It is merely a place where a group of people meet. With so much of this type of thing in the world, it is little wonder that the world is in the shape it is in.

In this particular study we are also having reference to the Christian home. It is a home, a real home, because it is Christian. But to be a Christian home then it must have certain things in it. These things make it superior to all other homes. It is the ideal home, the best home. If you don't have one, perhaps this article will encourage you to have one.

There should be a Christian husband and father in this home. He is to be the head of the family. (Ephesians 5:23). He is to love his wife and children. (Ephesians 5:25, 28). He is to discipline his children and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). He is to provide for them. (1 Timothy 5:8). If he is this type of husband and father, then his leadership, guidance, and direction

in the physical and spiritual realms can go a long way in making it the kind of home that it should be. How blessed a home is to have such a person as its head.

There should be a Christian wife and mother in this home. She is to be willingly in subjection to her husband, respecting him, and recognizing him as the head of the household. (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1). She is to love her husband and children. (Titus 2:4). She is to be a homemaker. (Titus 2:5). She is to be pure, holy, and godly. (1 Peter 3:1-4). If she is the kind of wife and mother that Christianity would demand of her then she is an asset to her family. She brings happiness and joy into her household. The wise man describes her like this: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships : she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it : with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good : her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household : for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen; and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain : but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and her own works praise her in the gates." (Proverbs 31:10-31).

The children should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord so that on reaching the age of accountability they will become Christians. They should obey their parents. Paul said, "Children; obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-4). They should be cared for, given an education, and brought up to make an honest living. They should be taken to worship each Lord's Day and given spiritual training that will sustain them throughout their lives. They should be taught and all preparations made for them to marry only in the Lord. If they are given the training that they should have then they will grow up to be fine Christian young men and women to have Christian homes of their own. They will also remember their aged parents and give them the care that they need for the remainder of their lives.

Christ should reign as the head of this home. He is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18) and with the members of this home being Christian then that makes him the head of the household as well. He should ever be honored as the head. Nothing should ever be said or done by the members that would bring shame to the Lord or that would dishonor his name. Cursing, filthy jokes, gossip, and such should never be allowed. Fussing, arguing, fighting, and murmuring should likewise be rejected. Bad habits should be entirely shunned. Only wholesome activities and people of good moral character should be welcomed.

Daily Bible Study and Prayer should be found in this home. Spiritual food is needed for spiritual growth. In this case, that spiritual food may be provided through the reading and studying of God's word. Christ said that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4). Peter wrote, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby". (1 Peter 2:2). He also said, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18). And then who can survive without spiritual communion with God through prayer? (1 John 5:14,15). And what about the offering of thanks at each meal? Regardless of how successful a family may be in

the material world; although they may have many friends; still, the most important thing is for them to have the spiritual atmosphere and growth that will enable them to survive in this world and to have the kind of home that will be a blessing to each member, that will be an example for those around them, and that will honor God.

There should be a lot of love in that home. We have somewhat covered this, but that love should not only be for God, for each other, but that love should be shown for others as well. That love should be genuine and sincere and readily seen by all. (Matthew 22:36,37).

There should be a forgiving spirit in that home. Although a Christian home, and one of many fine and wonderful qualities, still it is made up of human beings and human beings make mistakes. And where mistakes are made, in dealing with one another, then there must be the willingness on the part of each one to forgive one another and to help each other to do better. (Matthew 6:12, 14,15). This is Christianity at work.

The members of this home must be good law abiding citizens. They should love their country and pray for their leaders. (1 Peter 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; Romans 13). They should be a credit to their community and to the society in which they live. They should be good examples of cleanliness, hard work, honesty, progress, and happiness.

The Christian home would no doubt have many other qualities but the ones already listed would be some of the major ones. It really doesn't matter whether that home is large or small, living in an apartment or their own house, rich or poor, where these qualities exist among its members then it is going to be marked as a home that is different, unique, and far above the average. What a difference it would make here in India if there were many more of these homes than there are at the present time. And it is Christ that makes all the difference. Just like when you come to believe in him as an individual, and you believe in him enough to obey him and to follow him, then your life is changed for the better, and there is such a dramatic change for the better that you would never want to go back to your former life without him.

My prayer for you then is that you might obey God and that one day you too may have the kind of home that we have been talking about and that is a Christian home.



**associate
editorial**

Think It Over!

If you believe in Christ, in his death, burial and resurrection for your salvation, then it is because you read about them in your Bible, which is the standard of God's authority for you and me and for all the world. No doubt, you agree with me on this.

But have you ever stopped to think

1. Why you are a member of the church where you serve or worship presently? Is this the church about which you read in your Bible? Is this the one that Christ said he would build? (Matthew 16:18). Is this the one that wear the name of Christ? (Romans 16:16). Is this the one that had its beginning in Jerusalem around 33 A.D.? (Acts 2), and also for which Christ died and shed his blood? (Acts 20:28).

2. Why, how, and when were you baptized, that is, if you were baptized at all? Was it, as the Bible teaches, for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38); to wash away sins (Acts 22:16), to put on Christ (Galatians 3:27), or just to comply with a church ordinance or religious rites? Were you immersed or buried in water through baptism according to Romans 6:3,4 and Colossians 2:12, or you had just a little water sprinkled or poured over your head? Were you baptized as a believer, that is, did you believe in Jesus Christ before you took baptism, as Christ taught (Mark 16:16), or as an infant?

3. Why should you call your preacher, Padri, Pastor, Father or Reverend etc.? Are there preachers called by such names and titles in the Bible? (See Psalms 111:9; Matthew 23:9).

4. Why do you celebrate or observe special days, such as, Christ-mas, Lent, Good Friday, Easter? Does the Bible command or authorize them? (See Galatians 4:10,11).

5. Why should you use various creed books in your worship, such as, Manuals, Lord's prayer, Catechism, Intikhabi Sabak, etc. beside the Bible? Is not the Bible a perfect guide in all matters pertaining to Christian life and worship? (See 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Revelation 22:18).

6. Why should you as Christians, suppose that preaching or teaching the gospel of Christ is a work of a preacher only, when Christ commanded that his disciples, his followers, should go everywhere and preach his gospel to all the people? (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:4).

So think upon these things and see where you need to make corrections. Let the Bible be your only guide. (1 Peter 4:11). Remember, Christ said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Are you walking and living according to His word? Think it over!

Church Discipline

Ray Peters

There should be more teaching and preaching on church discipline. As one of the books on the subject of discipline is entitled, "The Forgotten Commandment," so it rightfully can be called. Yet, it is a plain command, "Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6). Nevertheless, we see that this is a neglected command. As a result of the neglect there have been many erroneous ideas that have arisen in connection with discipline. Some brethren feel that discipline is not possible, that it is impractical, and even unnecessary, or at least optional. A consequence of this attitude is seen when members quit attending

the services of the church, their name is just dropped from the rolls, and brethren say, "Well, they have withdrawn themselves from us"! Nowhere does the scripture intimate that members are disciplined when they stop coming and so-called "withdraw themselves". This is but an effort to shun the responsibility of disciplining those who need disciplining. Too often those who quit for awhile decide to come back, they "slip in," never publicly repenting of their sinfulness, and the first thing one knows, the brethren, if it is a man, have him leading in prayers and serving the Lord's Supper! But when discipline is practiced by a congregation, scripturally and properly, some are always ready to criticize, "They didn't do it right, or, You should have visited more, and You all are so mean and cruel" and on and on; and thereby making the sinner a martyr.

THE MEANING OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

It is doubtful if many really understand what the word "discipline" means. To some it may mean; to withdraw, an abusive use of power, or something that is not to be mentioned. The word "discipline" involves more than simply to "withdraw". A comprehensive definition of discipline is, "Training" which corrects, molds, strengthens; "Control" gained by enforcing obedience to order; "Development" by instruction and exercise. There are three key words involved in that definition: (1) Training (2) control (3) development. The Greek is "Paideia". In Heb. 12:4-11, it has the meaning of "training the soul of adults by holding in check the evil desires". There are four thoughts that are involved in the application of discipline: (1) **Instruction** to the church and this instruction is based on God's word. (2) **Exhortations** that these instructions be obeyed (II Tim. 4:2). (3) **Rebuke and Admonition** that disobedience be turned away from. (4) **Punishment** in the form of correction if all of the previous have failed and the cause of sin is not turned from. The above elements are based upon the inspired statement of the Apostle Paul in II Tim. 3:16, 17. Discipline is that given by the members of the church to each other, it is designed to bring every member to completeness in God's sight. Discipline by the church begins in the classroom, training and developing, the young and old alike. The pulpit is very important as God's word is proclaimed to mold, to correct, and to strengthen members

of the church. When one veers from this training and instruction, they are to be exhorted to return to these teachings, and if this fails, a stronger rebuke and admonition is employed, and if none of these are successful, then punishment in the form of withdrawal is administered.

BIBLE INSTANCES WHEN DISCIPLINE TO BE USED

Church discipline is to be administered at all times to all the members of the church. It primarily refers to training in the Christian life. (Matt. 28:20).

Correction means to restore one to an upright position of life and character. The New Testament sets forth several instances when correction must be exercised: (1) When a grievance against a brother who sins. (2) Go to him alone. (3) If not successful take one or two with you. (4) If these fail tell it to the church. (5) If all is for naught then count him as a "publican or heathen". Secondly, correction must be administered to those who corrupt the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 16:17, 18). This is the duty of Christians and is not optional. Thirdly, when one violates the commandments of God they need to be corrected (1 Cor. 5:1-5). Paul, through inspiration, says, "To deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus". The Corinthians, had conveniently overlooked and let the situation go on with no effort to admonish the brother and correct the situation. Paul says, "Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (verse 3). This serves as an example of any type of act which violates God's will. Lastly, those who fail to abide by God's word, (II Thess. 3:6) embraces all who fail to walk righteously. It includes those who are "negligent". On this we have been most negligent !! Many deliberately neglect the cause of Christ and seldom a word is said to them. This is especially true in regard to those that quit attending the services. This is a plain violation of Heb. 10:25 and is sinful, and if one does not repent after being visited and encouraged to return, the action of "withdrawal" is not optional but obligatory.

To some the final act in discipline, the withdrawing, may seem hard and un-Christian. It isn't, but rather is an act of love. It is

an effort to save the soul of the sinner (I Cor. 5:5). Jesus had many "hard" sayings (John 6:60), and as a result "many" of the disciples left Him. Jesus did not change His sayings nor His tactics. Just because there are brethren who don't like "withdrawing" does not mean the Lord is going to change His command. Even if the one who is withdrawn from doesn't come back, it is still God's command and doesn't invalidate the practice of withdrawing.

REASONS WHY CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS NECESSARY

One of the main reasons is to maintain the purity of the church. The apostle Paul was admonishing the Corinthians about not practicing church discipline, set forth this principle that, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). It is a principle of growth. Leaven spreads slowly but surely until it has influenced and affected the whole cake or whatever it is put in. The same principle holds true with sin. For this reason, God, through His word urges purity (II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14). When sins are committed by members, and if they are not corrected or repentance is not obtained quickly, the effect of those sins are soon detected in the members. This influence may be by example or word of mouth. When one goes unreproved of sin, others may feel they can do likewise. Solomon stated in Eccl. 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil". Discipline is to be implemented right away lest it influences others and the one guilty of sin becomes hardened. The church has the responsibility to maintain purity. This principle is recognized in society because we have prisons for those that violate the laws of the land, and if they are not disciplined for wrong, then everyone else would go and do likewise; it is practiced in business with the practice of boycotting, because if a business is guilty of malpractice, people withdraw their business and do no business with that company; it is also observed by our nation and other nations in the practice of deportation, if a person becomes a naturalized citizen and then violates the standards of this country they can be expelled from the country. The same responsibility rests upon the church to reprove, admonish the sinner and then excommunicate if all efforts fail.

Another reason for church discipline is that the erring member might be saved. Paul stated, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This clearly should be the motive behind discipline. When one is impenitent, fellowship must be withdrawn from them. Where words have failed, the "universal action" of the church often avails. This final step often shocks one into the realization of their sins and impresses upon them the need to repent. The withdrawal must be observed by the whole church, otherwise the procedure is ineffective. If only a few observe it the sinner will think that some of the members are mad at him and will not repent. It is not a question of liking or disliking a certain person, but rather a principle of obeying the Lord and His commandments.

Discipline is necessary to maintain the respect of the world. This by no means suggests that the church of our Lord is to try and please the world. Peter stated, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). The apostle Paul observed, "Not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts (I Thess. 2:4). There are many honest people in the world who know what is morally right and wrong. The church of our Lord Jesus Christ must have the respect of the world if it is to be a "converting" church. The church must set a good example to the eyes of the ever-present observer. Of course, examples aren't guides in religion, yet, one cannot deny the power of examples. Sin in the church causes the people to lose respect for Christ and His church. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for allowing the sin of fornication to go unreproyed and said, "such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." Things were being done by this one who claimed to be a Christian that even the heathens wouldn't do. We cannot for one moment be conformed to the world, but we must be transformed. (Rom. 12:2). Therefore, the church must ever be vigilant and active to maintain purity and to "keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

THE PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN ADMINISTERING DISCIPLINE

First, an effective programme of teaching and guidance in the service of the church. This involves having our classrooms in the educa-

tional work of the church occupied by teachers that are competent, qualified and sound in doctrine. A preacher who preaches the "whole" truth. All of this overseen by qualified elders (I Tim. 3). The key to this programme of teaching and guidance is to have elders or members to quickly encourage and admonish one of these at the first sign of negligence.

When the procedure of teaching, encouraging, and admonishing fails—withdrawal. In observing discipline (Gal 6:1) is to be observed. The action of withdrawal is not to be the result of rumor, suspicions, or from listening to Pharisaical members. The word "overtaken" means, "to be caught at the the scene specific knowledge or reliable testimony". Pray that the impenitent will turn from their sins, but if one shows a hardness of heart and won't repent, we are not to pray the Lord will forgive the impenitent. (1 John 5:16).

Fellowship is to be withdrawn if all effects of visiting, reproving, exhorting, etc., fail. The scriptures do not require that we talk and reprove forever; Titus 3:10, "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject". Warnings, rebukes, and exhortations sometimes are not strong enough measures for those set in their sinful ways, and it takes the stronger measure of withdrawal to shock them out of their lost condition.

Letters are to be sent to the ones to be "publicly" withdrawn from and also to other congregations informing them of the action. The other congregations are to honor and uphold the action and not welcome into fellowship and harbor the sinner, but rather rebuke him to go and make restitution of his wrongs with the congregation from which they were disciplined. There is and has been a problem in this area of discipline and as a result of this, congregations are not in fellowship and the sinner goes unreproved.

II Thess. 3:14, 15 points out that there is more to withdrawal than getting up and announcing the withdrawal. Each member is to avoid association or fellowship with the person or persons. But if this person is a member of one's "fleshly" family, complete disassociation is impossible. Paul was referring to "spiritual" fellowship. At the same time those in the fleshly family should use every opportunity to encourage the withdrawn to repent and not let him

or her feel that you condone his actions. The average person will repent before the measures are to be taken. If one repents the church is to accept him or her without ridicule or snobbery." (II Cor. 2:7, 8).

Accepting Bereavement

Calvin Barber

The approach of the scripture to the problem of bereavement is realistic. Bible writers have spared no effort in their exposure of the nature of life and the reality of death. The Bible helps us to be conscious of the brevity of life and to shed the illusion of longevity. In Genesis 5, the ages of Methuselah, Adam, Seth, and Lamech range from seven to nine hundred years, but the expression occurs with a sobering type of repetition, "and he died".

When a loved one passes from his life, we must deal with the emotion of bereavement. Webster defines bereavement : to deprive, especially by death; strip, dispossess, to take away. Other synonyms that describe this emotion are sorrow, sadness, mourning, anguish, and grief.

When death deprives us of a loved one, there is hardly any burden that comes to man that surpasses bereavement. If bereavement is not properly accepted and expressed, it may express itself in negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, or even hostility. Peter said, "God hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness". (II Peter 1:3). The Bible gives us the answer to all of life's problems. The following are Bible principles that reveal to us God's solution to accepting bereavement.

ACCEPT THE REALITY OF TRUTH

"It is appointed unto man once to die." (Hebrews 9:27). "What man shall live and not see death?" (Psalms 89:48). In the light of both human reason and divine revelation, death is a fact that no one can deny. With the help of modern medicine, we may

prolong life, but ultimately, each of us must die. Death is as much a reality as life itself.

Modern man has difficulty in accepting death as a reality. Someone has said, "One cannot look directly at either the sun or death." We deny its reality by using terms such as expired, passed away or departed from this life, instead of the words "died" or "death." Seldom do you hear people in a conversation talking about death. The lack of family communication on the subject is the cause of the unprepared, chaotic condition that is often expressed.

Don't deny the reality of death. If we accept death as a part of life and the valley into which all shall pass, it will help us bear our burden. Psychiatrists tell us that any delusion, magical thinking, or irrational methods which we use to blind ourselves to the fact of death are psychologically unsound and spiritually unhealthy.

EXPRESS YOUR SORROW

When Jesus saw Mary and the other Jews weeping over the death of Lazarus, he groaned in spirit, was troubled, and Jesus wept. (John 11:33-35). Jesus could and did raise Lazarus from the dead, but this compassion is our example to "weep with those that weep." A bereaved person should give healthy expression to this feeling of sorrow in whatever thoughts, words or tears that may seem natural. There is a tremendous healing power in the free expression of genuine sorrow. If we do not express our grief, it bottles up inside and makes the burden even heavier. Some find it difficult or are ashamed to cry. If you find crying difficult express your grief by talking to a friend, or through prayer to God.

ALLOW OTHERS TO HELP

We live in an independent society and are not often as close as we should be. Due to this background and our present emotional state, we often resent or even become hostile toward the help of others. Privacy and quiet meditation are desirable and necessary in our hour of grief, but do not shut others out. Our friends can't bring a loved one back and often are unable to find words to truly express themselves, but their presence shows that they are

concerned for us and want to follow the Bible's admonition to "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2). Often we are unaware of the many friends we have until we lose a loved one. We should thank God for our many friends and allow them to help us.

CAST YOUR BURDEN ON THE LORD

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalms 52:22). "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you," (I Peter 5:7). Some burdens are beyond human endurance and aid from other. We admonished to cast not only our heaviest burdens, but all of our cares on Him, because he cares for us.

We often try to shut God out when bereavement comes. We may even blame Him for our tragedy, but God cares for you. This feeling may be because our concept of God is too small. God set this universe into being. He sustains it by the word of his power. He is all powerful, all knowing, and ever present. (Psalms 139 : 1-12). Trust in God. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Ephesians 3 : 20).

UTILIZE THE POWER OF PRAYER

"Be careful (Have anxiety) for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God." (Philippians 4 : 6). A humble prayer to "the God of comfort" brings relief, binds the broken heart and lightens the burden. The first verse of the old song "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" reveals to us what we forfeit when we fail to utilize the power of prayer. "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear ! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer ! O, what peace we often forfeit, O, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer." When we feel the pain of loneliness that comes from seeing the picture on the wall, or the vacancy at the dining table, or the favourite living room chair, we should pray. We will find great comfort through prayer.

STUDY THE BIBLE

The Bible is the number one book seller in world but it is the most abused and the least used book in the world. We often live at such a rapid pace that we seldom ever wipe the dust from the Bible and read it even less. If you are among the vast number who seldom read the Bible, you don't know what strength you are missing.

The scripture gives comfort. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope." (Romans 15 : 4). "This is my comfort in my afflictions; for thy word hath quickened me." (Psalms 119 : 50). The written examples of Job, Ruth, David, the Apostles, and our blessed Saviour have given countless thousands comfort in their bereavement. They can comfort you, also. Why not determine now to set aside some quiet time that you will devote to Bible study and meditation. It will bring you comfort and genuine happiness. (Psalms 1:1-2).

BEGIN NOW TO PREPARE FOR ETERNITY

The time that God has allotted us to prepare to meet Him is very short compared with eternity. Yet, even our knowing this does not keep us from neglecting to prepare for our appointment with death. Someone has said, "Life is uncertain, but death is sure." Sometimes it takes the loss of a loved one to jog our memory of our need to prepare to meet God.

If you have not yet denied yourself and taken your stand with Jesus Christ, let us urge you to do so now! The book of Acts is sometimes called the book of conversions. We urge you to read each of these examples of conversion to get a complete answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" The examples are: the Jews (Acts 2:36-47), the Samaritans (Acts 8:5-13), the eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), Saul (Acts 9:1-18), Lydia (Acts 16:13-15), the jailor (Acts 16:25-34), the Corinthians (Acts 18:1-8), and the Ephesians (Acts 19:1-5). From a study of these conversions we learn that to be saved, we must: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Confess that faith to others, repent or (turn from) our sins and be baptized by immersion for the remission of

sin. When we have complied with these conditions, our sins are forgiven, and the Lord adds us to the church. (Acts 2:38-47). From then on we live in the Kingdom (the church), working and worshipping with others who take the Bible as their only rule of faith and who strive to reproduce New Testament Christianity as it was in the first century.

“Words of Life”

Most have heard the expression “there’s a method to his madness.” God has a method to save sinners and it can be in no way considered madness (Worldly wisdom may think so, I Corinthians 1:18-30). God’s method to save sinners is Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). This was Jesus’ very purpose in coming to the earth (Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 2:14,15). However, the fact of Christ’s coming and dying on the cross has no significant value to one who does not have faith in Him. Jesus must be the object of our faith (John 8:24; Acts 8:37-38).

Now, how does faith come about? The Bible says in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Therefore, if one is to have faith in Christ then he must first hear the Gospel (the “Good News” of Christ). Why? Because the gospel is God’s power (method, 2 Corinthians 4:7) to save the sinner. (Romans 1:16).

A study of the book of Acts reveals that in every case of conversion the gospel had to first be preached in order for people to be saved. Study carefully Acts 2:14,41; 8:5,12; 8:35-40; 16:30-34. “Praying through” or “Mourner’s bench salvation” is simply not taught in the Bible. It is completely foreign to New Testament examples of conversion.

Calvinism

by J. Noel Merideth

John Calvin (A.D. 1509-1564), was a French theologian and reformer. Calvin has had a tremendous, but erroneous, influence upon the religious world from his day until now. The followers of Calvinism define the doctrines of Calvinism by an acrostic of the word "tulip," as follows:

T—Total depravity

U—Unconditional predestination

L—Limited design of the atonement

I—Irresistible grace

P—Perseverance of the saints

Briefly, Calvinism teaches that every baby, born into the world, is a reprobate sinner; that God, from all eternity unchangeably fore-ordained and predestinated those who would be saved (in fact whatsoever comes to pass) and the number is unalterable; that Christ is the atonement only for the limited elect; that the limited elect cannot resist the irresistible grace effected by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, which gives life not only to the elect dead sinners but also to the word (without which it is merely a dead letter); and that the limited elect will persevere to the end, will be saved, without the loss of a single one.

Total Depravity

As may be seen by the various creeds, the Calvinian System teaches that the sin of Adam resulted in the total corruption or depravity of man; that he has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so he is dead in sin and not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself to salvation. They use such proof texts as Eph. 2:3; Rom. 5:12; and Psalms 51:5. But we are children of wrath by "nature" in the sense of long practice of our *own* sins, not Adam's sin. (Eph. 2:1-3 ASV; Thayer, p. 660 on "nature.") The idea that death has passed upon all men in Rom. 5:12 simply states the fact that all have sinned. The expression in sin did my mother conceive me in Psalm 51:5 simply teaches he was conceived in a world full of

sin. Actually, sin is something you "do" not something you inherit. (1 John 3:4.) The son does not bear the iniquity of the father. (Ezek. 18:19, 20.) God gave each person his spirit; surely no one could say the righteous God gave a depraved spirit. (Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9).

Unconditional Predestination

Calvinism teaches that God decreed from all eternity all things whatsoever come to pass. By the decree of God some men and angels are predestinated to eternal life, without any condition or cause; others being left to sin and condemnation. Of course the Bible speaks of election and predestination (Eph. 1:4-11; Rom. 9:11-13; 8:29, 30), but such election and predestination to *salvation* is always conditional. The verses themselves indicate conditions. Besides, God is no respecter of persons and Calvinism would make God a respecter of persons. (Rom. 2:11.) The invitations to come to Christ which applies to all mankind would be useless if man could not come. (Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 22:17).

Limited Design of the Atonement

By limited atonement Calvinism teaches that Jesus did not die for everyone, but just for those elected to salvation. But John says Christ died not only for us but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2.) Christ died for the man who could be destroyed. (Rom. 14:15.) Was he one of the non-elect? He died for one who could perish. (1 Cor. 8:11.)

Irresistible Grace

Since Calvinism has man born in sin and totally depraved, how could God save the elect? They say what happens is that God calls the elect irresistibly to salvation by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. The Bible really teaches that God is no respecter of persons. (Rom. 2:11.) So God calls all men alike. All men are called by the gospel. (2 Thess. 2:14.) All who believe and obey the gospel are saved. Thus God chooses or elects to salvation all who obey the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16.) Salvation is conditional. (Matt. 7:21; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Mark 16:16; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 1 John 2:4.) The agency of the Holy Spirit which is used to convert sin-

ners is the word of God. In every record of New Testament conversion listed in the book of Acts, the word of God was preached to those in need of salvation. The Holy Spirit converted them, but he exerted his power and influence upon them through the word of God. The New Testament affirms the action performed by the Holy Spirit is also to be said to have been accomplished by the word of God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit works through the word of God.

Holy Spirit	Action	Word of God
2 Cor. 3:6	Gives life	James 1:18
John 3:5-8	Born of	1 Pet. 1:23—25
Titus 3:5	Salvation	James 1:21
1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13	Sanctification	John 17:17
Rom. 15:13	Power of	Rom. 1:16; Heb. 1:3
Rom. 8:9	Leads	Psa. 119:105
Acts 9:31	Comforts	1 Thess. 4:18
John 6:63	Made alive	Psa. 119:50, 93
Rom. 8:9-11	Dwells in	Col. 3:16

Perseverance of the Saints

Calvinism teaches that those who are saved can neither totally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere in faith to the end and be eternally saved. This perseverance, they say, of the saints depends not upon their own free will; but upon the immutability of the decree of election. It is alleged that they may fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein. Yet they shall renew their repentance and be saved in the end. If this doctrine were true then one of the elect could fall into a sin he enjoyed, continue therein, and since God would not let him die in the sin he could live forever here in sin! The Israelites believed (Psa. 106:12) were saved, but then believed not and were destroyed (Psa. 106:24). So Christians may believe and be saved (Heb. 4:1-3), then believe not and fall (Heb. 4:4-11). The parable of the soils not only refutes the false idea of direct operation of the Holy Spirit but also speaks of those who believe and in time of temptation "fall away." (Luke 8:13.) Thus it teaches that believers can fall away.

Calvinism is a false denominational system of man. We should not fall for these errors. It is tragic that some are falling into the error of direct operation of the Holy Spirit and speaking an uncertain sound on apostasy. Let us reject the false tenets of Calvinism.

What is Baptism?

David Lipe

In discussing what is baptism, we must note what baptism requires. Baptism, first of all, requires water. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized..." (Acts 10:47). Baptism also requires much water. "And John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there..." (John 3:23). I know a glass of water would be much water compared to a teaspoon of water. You cannot prove sprinkling, pouring, or immersion by that expression alone. But it is inconceivable to me that the amount of water to sprinkle or pour upon an individual would be called "much water."

Baptism involves going to the water. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water..." (Acts 8:36). Mark 1:5 tells us that John went to the Jordan river to baptize. If baptism is sprinkling or pouring, why did John go all the way to the RIVER Jordan? He went because he needed much water. One must go down into the water for baptism. Acts 8:38 says "...they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Let us note that both the administrator and the candidate are IN the water.

Someone may say, "Well, that proves nothing." This may be the case, but the same thing that keeps preachers out of the water today would have kept them out of the water then had they sprinkled.

While in the water baptism involved a BURIAL. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism..." (See Romans 6:4). Neither sprinkling or pouring is a burial. They do not picture the meaning of baptism and are therefore meaningless. Someone says, "Oh, but we are buried spiritually." The Bible says, "Buried in baptism". When one is plunged into the water, he is in a watery

grave. He would not live ten minutes unless brought out of the water. When we bury an animal that has died, we do not sprinkle or pour dirt on it. We cover it completely and this is what is involved in baptism. Finally, baptism involves a resurrection. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him..." (Col. 2:12). After the resurrection Philip and the eunuch came up out of the water (Cf. Acts 8:38, 39).

Baptism involves water, much water, going to the water, going down into the water, a burial, a resurrection, and going out of the water. This is very plain. Have you been baptized according to the SCRIPTURES ?

The One Baptism

Paul Sparks

The Bible declares that there is "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 4:5). The Bible further declares that baptism is in water (Acts 8:36-39; I Peter 3:21). Thus, the subject of the ONE baptism should be forever settled. However, there is much confusion on this subject in that there are many in our world who believe that every child of God who receives water baptism also receives the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit. This would, of course, constitute two baptisms and the Bible declares that there is but one.

A proper understanding of those who were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit should clear up this matter once and for all. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised only to the apostles of Christ (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 1:8). The promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was made only to the apostles and they were to receive this promise in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49). Those who hold such views, as all Christians receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, base their belief on Acts 1:15 where the Bible speaks of one hundred and twenty in number. The context, however, does not support this theory. As one reads further in Acts, he sees the apostles appointing two men—Justus and Matthias, from whom they were to choose another apostle to take the place of Judas who by transgression had fallen. (Acts 1:25,26).

“And they (apostles) gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” At the beginning of the second chapter of Acts, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they (the apostles) Were all with one accord in one place. “As one reads on in the second chapter he sees that only the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit. “But Peter, standing up with the ELEVEN (Not the hundred and twenty) lifted up his voice and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.” (Acts 2:14).

There is a rule of grammar which declares : “Pronouns must agree with the nouns for which they stand, in gender, number, and person.” The antecedents of the pronouns in Acts I are, without doubt, the apostles and the apostles ONLY.

FAITH

C.L. Powell

In Hebrews 11:6, we read, “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.” Then from Romans 5:1, “therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In Hebrews 11:1, he defines faith for us: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Thus by this we could say that faith is a firm persuasion based upon testimony or evidence. The Bible is the only book of testimony given from God to man for the purpose of creating that faith in the human heart. Read in connection with this John 20:30-31.

The 11th chapter of Hebrews is a book of examples of faith. For instance, our faith in God is summed up in this statement, “through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.” (Hebrews 11:3). Our confidence in God as the Creator of the world is based upon the evidence that we have. Looking to another example, in Hebrews 11:4, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” Abel offered his sacri-

fice to the invisible God out of conviction as to a being unseen and with hope of receiving a blessing. Then look at Hebrews 11:5, and Enoch this time. "By faith Enoch was translated." He had testimony that he pleased God. Enoch believed that God is—thus the conviction of an unseen God. He also believed God to be the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. This is confidence to a hoped-for reward.

Well, we see the necessity of faith from Hebrews 11:6; "But without faith it is impossible to please him." In John 8:24 Jesus says, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." This faith being a necessity, we need to look and see how it is obtained.

Faith doesn't come as a miraculous operation on the heart. If this were true all people would believe in God as Acts 10:34 states, "God is not a respecter of persons." Faith is the belief of something heard in the case of God. There must first be something told to a person. God does not speak directly but through the word. Paul says it like this, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Then John says "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; 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." (John 20:30-31). Then in John 17:20, Jesus says "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

In Acts 15:7, we read "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." In Acts 8:12, faith was produced in the hearts of the Samaritans by preaching. Let's read this scripture. "But when they believed Phillip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women."

Can you Find the Verse?

1. Where the apostles ever called anyone reverend ? (Read Psa. 111:9; 2 Peter 3:15; Phil. 1:1).
2. Where the Apostles ever told sinners to get religion? (James 1:26-27).
3. Where the Apostles told sinners to pray for pardon at the mourner's bench ? (Isa. 1:15; Isa. 59:1-2 John 9:31; 1 Peter 3:12).
4. Where the Apostles ever told anyone that there is nothing in a name ? (Acts 2:38; Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:9; Matt. 18:20; John 3:18).
5. Where people were told baptism is not essential to salvation or forgiveness of sins ? (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:27).
6. Where Babies were ever baptized in the New Testament ? (Acts 2:38; Acts 8:37; Matt. 28:18-20).
7. Where the apostles ever sprinkled for Baptism ? (Romans 6:4; Col. 2:12; Acts 8:38; Mark 1:9-10).
8. Where there will be no resurrection of the dead ? (John 5:28-29; Acts 26:8).
9. Where God is too good to send the wicked to hell ? (Ps. 9:17; 2 Peter 2:4).
10. That Baptizing is an outward sign of inward grace ? (Acts 2:38).
11. Where the apostles voted on people as to whether they could enter the church or not ? (Acts 2:47; Rev. 22:17; Matt. 11:28; Acts 10:34).
12. Where the Apostles commanded the use of instrumental music in worship ? (Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15).
13. When the Apostles commanded or where an example is given of people taking the Lord's Supper once a month or annually ? (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).
14. Where sinners confessed or said, "I feel that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins." (Isa. 55:7).

The Distinctiveness Of The Church Of Christ

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

The church our Lord built and so beautifully depicted within Sacred Scripture is unlike any other institution in all the world. Upon Peter's courageous and comprehensive confession of his Deity, Christ made a sure promise that he would erect his church and the gates of Hades would be utterly powerless in prevailing against it. (Matt. 16:18.) No other institution in all the world can truthfully make this distinctive declaration as touching its origin. In John 10:16 Jesus declared there would be one shepherd and one fold or one flock. The one fold enjoys the unique distinction of having the one shepherd as its Chief Protector and Supreme Saviour. The inspired church historian, Luke, states that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47.) The church of Jesus Christ is the only institution to which the Lord adds the saved. All the saved are in the Lord's church. Those not saved are outside its distinctive boundaries. The church of Jesus Christ enjoys the distinctive privilege of having been purchased with the precious blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.) No other institution on earth has ever been purchased with the atoning blood of Christ except the church. In his great "church epistle" Paul states that God desires to receive his glory through the church. (Eph. 3:21.) Again no competing organization on God's green footstool can Scripturally lay hold upon such a glorious distinction as herein described. Truly the Godhead intended for the church of Jesus Christ to be distinctive. That it marvelously meets this design of Deity shall be the total theme of this stirring and intensely interesting topic.

DISTINCTIVE FROM ATHEISM

Atheism denies the existence of God. The church of Jesus Christ believes implicitly that Jehovah God "is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6.) The Bible clearly establishes his power in creation, preservation and providence and in the unique unfolding of the scheme of human redemption. The Bible is filled with overwhelming evidences of

his existence and a mountain high list of external evidences constantly proclaim his eternity. Inspiration classifies the atheist as a fool. (Psalms 14:1; 53:1.) The Hebrew word for fool here is "nabal" and means, according to Young, an "empty person." Only the empty head and the empty heart would deny such staggering evidence in favour of God's eternal existence.

The church is distinctive from atheism in that it accepts without reservation the Bible as the Word of God. God has spoken to humanity. (Heb. 1:1-2.) He has spoken to us by his Son and given a clear commandment that we should hear him. (Matt. 17:5; Heb. 12:25.) God's message is inspired. (2 Tim. 3:16-17.) Holy men penned that message by the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet. 1:22.) Verbal inspiration is the high view which the Bible claims for itself. (1 Cor. 2:13.) Atheism reneges here in all these fundamental facets. Atheism denies the divine derivation of the Bible. To atheists there is no God that existed prior to the Bible, that produced it and protected it from its avowed and persistent enemies.

The church of Jesus Christ is distinctive from atheism in that it accepts creation as outlined in Genesis 1 and in scores of other biblical references. Atheism rejects both the Creator and his creation. Without any logical basis the atheists have bowed down before the twin gods of their own devising—time and chance. Give them enough time and they think all is possible in the realm of evolution. Chance is all powerful in their Godless system. The church of Jesus Christ is distinctive from atheism and this difference really matters.

DISTINCTIVE FROM IDOLATRY

The church of Jesus Christ is built on the all pervading precept that there is one God and only one God. (Isa. 44:6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Cor. 8:6.) Idolatry contends for a multiplicity of gods. Paul found Athens "full of idols". (Acts 17:16.) One writer said it was easier to find a god in Athens than a man. To the Corinthians Paul mentioned that the world accepted "gods many, and lords many..." (1 Cor. 8:5.) Tourists in modern Athens walking amid the ruins of the ancient Acropolis or treading the excavated streets of first century Corinth still see many reminders

of Grecian idolatry of former eras. In his comments on Isaiah 17:1 Adam Clarke quotes Midrash to the effect that ancient Damascus of Syria once possessed three hundred and sixty-five streets with each street having its own god. Each of these Damascene gods had its own day of worship thus making the entire year one of constant worship. (Adam Clarke, **Adam Clarke's Commentary One-Volume Edition**, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1967, p. 577.) Idolatry did not cease with the passing of ancient eras. Its sophisticated forms are seen in the current worship of power, pleasure, money, prestige, fashion, popularity, the female figure, etc. Perhaps these are even more dangerous than when men fell before gods of gold, shrines of silver and carvings from wood, stone and brass. The church of Jesus Christ is distinctive from both ancient idolatry as well as from its modern counterpart. This is a distinction that matters.

DISTINCTIVE FROM JUDAISM

Judaism rejects Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, ignores the New Testament, still clings to a greatly adjusted form of levitical worship and the conservative element still yearns for a coming Messiah. In strong contrast the church of Jesus Christ is built upon the very foundation that Jesus is Christ the Son of the living God. (Matt. 16:16, 18.) The New Testament is the only constitution of the Lord's church. The church of Jesus Christ distinguishes between the Mosaic law with its Levitical priesthood, animal sacrifices and shadows and the Christian system with its Messianic high priest, his blood atonement on the rocky hill of the skull and as being the very substance of the good things prophetic seers envisioned in the Old Testament. Instead of hoping for the first appearance of the Messiah as Judaism does, the church of Jesus Christ awaits his second coming. There is a real distinction between Judaism and the church that Jesus built and this distinction matters. It greatly mattered at the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 and it still matters today.

DISTINCTIVE FROM ROMAN CATHOLICISM

The church of Jesus Christ is distinctive from Roman Catholicism in that it recognizes as **binding authority the sacred scriptures and the sacred scriptures only**. Perfection

abode within the Holy Scriptures centuries before any Pope sat upon the Vatican throne or any universal church council was convened to exercise legislative powers. All church council decisions and Papal decrees are nothing but human decisions and carry no weight of divine wisdom or authority at all. The church of Jesus Christ is also distinctive from Roman Catholicism in **rejecting in totality papal infallibility** and the entire pyramid form of ecclesiastical authority. Furthermore, the Lord's church is distinctive from Roman Catholicism in that it accepts the **priesthood of all believers** and not of a selected few. (1 Pet. 2:5; 9; Rev. 1:6.) Another distinction is vividly observed in our avowed intent to **keep church and state separate**. Our cherished freedoms must be preserved. They must be kept protected from such spiritual despots as Roman Catholicism on the one hand and atheistic Communism on the other hand we have religious schools among us that stress our principles of Biblical belief but we support them out of our own pockets and do not contend for governmental support. Against the ruthless invasion into our personal rights and cherished freedoms by those who wish to see church and state married we must stand as a solid phalanx.

DISTINCTIVE FROM PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONALISM

The church of Jesus Christ accepts the Bible's teaching that there is to be one fold or one body and one only. (John 10:16; Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:20.) Protestantism believes in many folds or bodies. They have thus changed the **Biblical one** into the **Protestant many**. Protestantism accepts many standards as religiously binding. The church of Jesus Christ believes the Bible should be our only standard. Many churches, many ways to heaven and a multiplicity of binding authorities constitute present day Protestantism. One church, one way and one authority are Scriptural foundations upon which the church in the Bible currently stands. These are distinctive differences and they truly matter.

DISTINCTIVE FROM MODERNISM AND LIBERALISM

The church of Jesus Christ believes there is an absolute standard, that God Almighty has set that standard, that his standard is the Bible with its verbal and plenary inspiration, that it is an inerrant record of Jehovah's mind to mortal man and that

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this standard is as changeless as its Eternal Author. It is our deep-seated conviction that truth can be known, that we can know that we know this truth and that when this truth is known, loved and reverently obeyed freedom from sin results. Modernism and liberalism reject these eternal verities. These distinctive differences truly matter.

CONCLUSION

The church of the first century would never have been persecuted if it had acknowledged freely its differences with Roman religions, Greek gods and goddesses and Jewish prejudices but had contended that the differences were of no real consequence. Quite to the contrary they taught the difference between truth and error and declared with undying and uncompromising conviction that the difference mattered. The Lord's church would never cause the least ripple on the waters of complacent society if only differences were pictured but quickly contended that the differences do not matter in the least. But the differences between truth and error, between right and wrong, between purity and impurity and between freedom from sin and slavery to Satan do matter. The church described in the Bible is distinctively different. The author of this article is delightfully happy this is true. What are your sentiments along this line? As an eternity bound traveler how do you answer?

TO:

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