

THE BIBLE TEACHER

Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity

Vol. 32

August 2001

No. 4

EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”

Christ just didn't die. But He died for us! The Bible teaches at Romans 5:8. Whether one want to accept the fact or not; whether one believes or not; whether one knows or not, the great truth of the Bible remains the same, that Christ was nailed to the cross, by the will and the determined purpose and fore-knowledge of God for the whole of humanity. The death of Christ, God's Son, was for a great and specific cause. God, in His death or through His death, demonstrated His love for each and every person. If we believe that Christ died for us, then we know that God loves us, indeed. Each time when we think, read or hear about Christ's death on the cross, it reminds us of the love of God. When Christians, on every first day of the week come together, to worship God, they never forget to take part in the Lord's Supper, which consists of two elements Christ had specified, the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine or grape juice. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ Himself hours before His death; and He had asked His followers to take part in it as it would remind them of His death and sacrifice. A little portion of the unleavened bread reminds a Christian that Christ's body was sacrificed on the cross for the propitiation of man's sin.

Likewise, the fruit of the vine reminds one of the blood of Christ which He had shed from the cross for the remission of sins. (Matthew 26:17-29; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Christ's death on the cross and His subsequent resurrection from the dead, after three days, is called the Gospel or the Good News for the whole humanity. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). This Good News, the Bible says, must be preached everywhere among all mankind. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). When this Gospel of the death of Christ was firstly preached over two thousand years ago, in the city of Jerusalem, to a great multitude of people, as many as three thousand amongst them believed in Christ; and as they asked the preachers, or the apostles of Christ, as to what must they do? They were instantly told to repent or change their mind and be baptized in water for the forgiveness of their sins; which they immediately accepted and did. Thus they were saved from their sins by the Gospel of Christ, and Christ added them to His church, which is the spiritual body of Christ, in which all His saved people are. (Acts 2:37-47). In the book of Hebrews, chapter 5 and verses 8 and 9 we read "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and having been perfected, He became author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." Jesus Christ is the author of salvation to all who obey Him. God demonstrated His love by the death of His Son on the cross. Christ died on the cross for our sins. We must obey His commandments to be saved from sin and its consequences.

The Thief On The Cross

J.C. CHOATE

The scriptures clearly and repeatedly teach that one must be baptized to be saved. Christ himself said that one must believe and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16). Peter said that it is necessary to repent and be baptized to have remission of sins (Acts 2:38). In 1 Peter 3:21, Peter wrote by inspiration that baptism saves, just as Noah and his family were saved by water. We are also told in God's word that baptism

puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:26,27) and **into the church** (1 Corinthians 12:13). The New Birth also involves baptism since one is born of **water** and of the **Spirit** (John 3:5). In the light of all of these scriptures, *how could any one say that a person can be saved without baptism?* But there are many who do just that!

Much of the denominational world teaches that the thief on the cross was saved without baptism. The record says, *"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"* (Luke 23:39-43).

Although nothing is said about the thief having been baptized, yet he may very well have been baptized. We are told by Mark that *"John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins"* (Mark 1:4,5).

One could therefore well conclude that the thief was baptized and then later got involved in the thievery that led to his crucifixion. This would not be the first or the last time that a person fell back into sin after repenting.

But suppose he was not baptized. That doesn't prove anything. It certainly doesn't prove that one can be saved today without baptism. That thief lived in **another period of time** and **under a different law** than we live under today. At that time Christ was still alive and He certainly had the right to forgive the man and to promise to save him in the coming kingdom. But with Jesus' death on the cross, a new law was ushered in, the law of Christ, as revealed in the New Testament. We have been living under that law since the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We cannot go back to the law that was in force before the death of Christ and obey that law and expect to be saved. We cannot change laws to suit ourselves.

The fact is, **there is something wrong when we go to the**

scripture and try to off-set one command by claiming to follow another. There is no such thing as the Lord telling us that we must obey certain commands to be saved, and then for us to look for a scripture or an example of someone being saved without doing what the Lord has commanded, and for our "findings" to cancel the necessity of obeying Christ.

It was stated in the first part of this article that the Bible clearly teaches that one must be baptized to be saved. At the same time, it should be pointed out that nowhere does God's word say that "baptism only" saves. Neither does the Scripture teach that one can be saved by "faith only," "repentance only," or by "confessing Christ only". Rather, the word of God tells us in command, as well as by the examples of conversion in the book of Acts that one must **hear and believe** the gospel of Christ, **repent** of one's sins, **confess** that Christ is the Son of God, and **be baptized** for the remission of sins. Read Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:10; and Mark 16:16.

No, we are not talking about "water salvation," but *we are talking about the salvation that the Lord offers when we comply with the terms or conditions that He has laid down in order for us to be saved.* Christ is the saviour and He has every right to tell us what we must do if He is going to save us. We are not in position to tell Him what we will do or not do to be saved. It doesn't matter who says we can be saved without being baptized, or how many may teach that one can be saved without being baptized, the fact is, **the Lord says that we must believe and be baptized to be saved.** He is the authority, and that settles it, once and for all! When we believe in Him with all of our heart, we are going to do whatever He has asked us to do, and that without question or debate.

Another important lesson in baptism is that when we die to our sins, and we are buried in the waters of baptism, to be resurrected from a watery grave to a new life in Christ, we are picturing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6).

Don't be a thief and steal from the lost a command for salvation that the Lord Himself has given.

Search for Truth Rearing Children

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"I've never been happier!" Rachel said, between laughter and tears, as she and Andrew prepared for bed. "to see our own Timothy being baptized into Christ is the fulfillment of a precious goal!"

"I agree," Andrew said, hugging Rachel. "All of us have so much to be thankful for, to know the truth. How blessed Timothy and Titus are, that they have the advantage of being brought up according to God's word, and that they can avoid so many of the problems and dangers faced by other young people."

At breakfast the next morning, Timothy's face was serious. "Mother," he said, "I know you've always taught me the verse, 'Evil company corrupts good habits,' and I've tried to be careful about choosing friends. But there's one boy in my class at school. I don't know what to do about him. sometimes he's such a bully that I really dislike him. But sometimes I feel sorry for him. I think, deep inside, he doesn't know how to behave or what to do. I think his mom and dad are divorced, or maybe it's just that his dad's not at home much. Anyway, he hasn't had much help from his parents."

"With so many problems in the homes, it's no surprise that children are all mixed up," Rachel agreed. "What are you asking? for permission to make a friend of this boy, if you can?"

"I think so," answered Timothy. "In the past some of my friends have attended Bible classes with us, and some of them even brought their parents so that they learned the gospel. But now that I'm a Christian, I feel even more responsibility to help my friends. After all, if I'm old enough to be a Christian, they are, too. And one of my earliest memory verses was Jesus' statement, 'By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much—and you always emphasized MUCH—fruit; so you will be My disciples.' Maybe Jeremy really is a lost cause, and I can't help him, but I want to try. I promise not to fall into his kind of life, so don't be afraid of the 'bad association!'"

"I have more confidence in your spiritual strength than that, Timothy, and I'm glad you want to help Jeremy. I'll help any way I can—maybe you'd like to invite him to stay with us over the weekend, and to go to worship with us. And I'll be praying for you wisdom in talking to him," promised Rachel.

The following week Timothy made opportunities to speak to Jeremy; to be on the same side with him in whatever sports and games they played, and he suggested that they study together to prepare for up-coming exams. "Why d'you want to waste time like that?" ridiculed Jeremy. "Who cares about dumb exams? I've got more important things to do!"

"But I thought you liked science and wanted to prove to Mr. Merkle that you could make the top grade on this exam."

"Na—That's just talk!" Jeremy answered, trying to dismiss the whole subject. "Why don't you come with me? Some of the other guys're having' a party. Let's crash it!"

"No, I can't do that. I have to study. And, really, I want to study, because I know that whatever I put inside my head now will be the tools I'll have to work with all my life," explained Timothy. "I want to have a good life, and the best way to do that is to prepare—which makes exams important! My Mom said she'd cook pizza tonight. Why don't you call home and ask if you can spend the weekend with me? That'd give us lots of time to study and to play some ball, too."

"O.K. O.K. You talked me into it," agreed Jeremy. "I'll stop off at the house and get some clothes—but I'll have to call later. Nobody'll be there till my Mom comes from work tonight. She'll be glad I'm staying' over with somebody, though—less trouble for her!"

The weekend proved to be a good one. Titus joined Timothy and Jeremy in their games, and they also did a surprising amount of studying. Jeremy had a good mind, and he learned quickly, enjoying the feeling of achievement. "Maybe I *will* make the top grade," he laughed. "Goin' over these things, I'm rememberin' more than I thought I would."

"Maybe you will," admitted Timothy, laughing too, "but not if I can beat you! I'd like to be head of the class myself!"

That night, long after the lights were out, Timothy was surprised when Jeremy began to talk quietly in the darkness. "You wouldn't like spendin' the weekend at my house," he said. "My Dad's not like yours. He's not there much—good for us—'cause,

when he is, he's always drinkin' or high as a kite on drugs and you never know what he'll say or do. Mom tells him to stay away, but he never listens. Before the divorce they used to fight all the time. I'd wake up in the night and hear her screamin' and throwin' things at him, tryin' to run him off. and then I'd hear him beatin' her. It was a scary thing for a kid."

"I would have been scared, too," admitted Timothy.

After a few minutes of silence, Jeremy said, even more quietly, "Maybe that's why I got tough. I didn't want him—or anybody else—ever to beat me like that."

"But you didn't like your dad being tough in a mean way, did you?" asked Timothy.

"No—I hated it, and I hate him!" Jeremy blurted out.

"Then why do you do to other people the very things you hate?"

There was a long time of silence. Finally Jeremy answered, "I don't know. I never thought about it like that."

There was another time of silence before Jeremy asked, "So why is your family so different from mine? Even my mom fusses at me all the time but, here, nobody's been mad at anybody this whole weekend!"

"I guess we'd rather be happy with each other than mad," said Timothy. "But the real answer is more than that. You know, we study a math book to learn math, and the more we study, the better we are at math. There's a "life" book, too, and the more we study it and learn to do the things it teaches, the better we are at life! To a smart guy like you, does that make sense?"

"Yeah—but now you're goin' to start handin' me that goody-goody religious stuff. That's just so you can go to heaven—if there is a heaven! Who needs that stuff now?" Jeremy asked, ridicule coloring his speech.

"Who said it's goody-goody religious stuff, and only to get us ready for heaven? That just shows you don't know a thing about it!" exclaimed Timothy indignantly. "Every day I find uses for the lessons my parents have taught me from the Bible. That's what they live by, and that's what I live by! If we didn't have the Bible, our lives would be in such a mess we wouldn't know which way to turn!"

Again the silence, and finally Jeremy asked, "Like mine?" Another silence. "O.K. O.K. I'll come with you to these Bible

classes and see what it's all about. Maybe my mom will come, too. Believe me—she's a miserable person and bent on making life miserable for me! She needs help, too."

I Don't Care What Jesus Says

FRANCIS DAVID

Few years back brother J.C. Choate told me about an incident, when he had to hear these unusual words from a religious lady who was talking to him about some biblical matters. J.C. was showing her the verses from the Scriptures. In the midst of their conversation Brother Choate said: "This is what Jesus said," but she immediately replied him by saying: "I don't care what Jesus said." Sometime when we are discussing biblical matters we get so agitated that so often, we forget what we are uttering. We need to be careful what we say and how we say. The Bible tells us that we must control our tongue (James 4).

As I was thinking about this incident, I thought within myself that today thousands of people are saying the same thing. Maybe not verbally but through their actions and by not obeying what the Lord says to them. If we really love Jesus and want to obey him then what he says we will do it without any hesitation. Jesus said: "If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make our home with him." (Jn. 14:23).

Jesus our Lord while on earth claimed that He would build His church, or assembly and that gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18). We read in the Bible that He fulfilled his promise and built the church (not a building), but his body of people. The church is a called out body of people. It is the spiritual body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27). This church is made up of those who have believed and are baptised (Acts 2:47; Mark 16:16). Today, many people just don't believe that there is only one church which belongs to Him (Eph. 4:4; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). They don't care what Jesus said about building his church. For them all denominations are right and it does not matter what you believe and in what church you are. The Lord wants you to be in His body. His body is His own church. Are you in his

church? or you just don't care!

Jesus in Mark 16:16 said these words: "He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. There are people today who say they don't care what Jesus said about baptism. Our Lord was very clear when he said that one must believe and be baptised in order to be saved. We must be baptised in the watery grave for the remission of our sins. This baptism is a burial in water (Rom 6:3,4; Acts 8:26-28). When we are baptised the Bible says that we are added to one true church and that is the church of Christ. (Acts 2:47). Do you care what Jesus said about baptism?

Jesus said, one must be born of water and Spirit (John 3:3-5). This way one can enter into the kingdom of heaven which is the church. When one hears the words of the Spirit and then baptised, he is automatically added to the kingdom or the church. Paul the apostle says: "We are baptised into the one body" (I Cor. 12:13). This body is the church (Col. 1:18). There is only one body (Eph. 4:4; Eph. 1:22-23). There is only one way to be saved and that is the Lord's way. I would urge you to investigate and find it yourself what is right or wrong and don't just say: "I don't care what Jesus says or what the Bible says, try to do what Jesus says or the Bible asks you to do."

Feeling Good About Sin

J.K. GOSSETT

Jesus came to the earth and endured the cross to save the lost "from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). After the Lord's ascension and coronation, he sent the Holy Spirit unto the apostles in order that the world might be convicted of sin (John 16:8). This conviction resulted from the preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:22-37). Nevertheless, many religionists today wink at sin and treat it as a triviality.

The 20th century is a time of "feel good" religion. God forbid that the immoral, the ungodly, the reprobate, should experience anything akin to guilt. Criminals are often set free, being assured that their evil deeds simply reflect childhood trauma. Sinners are

too infrequently given heaven's decree, "Repent and be baptized."

Many feel good about sin because they are simply "following a multitude to do evil." How often is it said, "Everybody is doing it," as though this made sin less than evil. The truth is, there are "7000" who have not bowed to the world and its repulsive, disgusting, sinful practices. The Biblical standard for morality and righteousness is lofty but reachable. Even in this, our day, men can live above the moral and religious filth of the earth.

Others feel good about their life of sin because they are prospering financially. They feel self-sufficient. Their philosophy is: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). "Thou fool" is God's description of such (v. 20).

Finally, some try to justify and feel good about their sins by telling themselves and others of their good intentions. Someday they plan to return to Christ and the church. Reader, if their describes you, be warned that there may not be a tomorrow. The Scriptures place great emphasis upon seizing the opportunity of today. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). Paul wrote in a similar fashion to the Hebrews: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Let the Bible Answer

ROBERT MEREDITH

Why do the churches of Christ not use instrumental music in worship? This is perhaps one of the most frequently asked questions that members of the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16) receive. Church history shows us that instrumental music in worship was not introduced until around the fifth century. This alone is a great argument against its use because, if it had been

authorized, the early church surely would have used it in their worship, just as Judaism used it. The fact that the early church did not use instrumental music in worship shows us that there is no authority for it. Religiously, there is one of two approaches that people can take. Either they say, "What is wrong with it?" or they ask, "Where is the authority for it?" Christianity and the Word of God demand authority for what one does in worship of God. The Apostle Paul wrote, "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Col. 3:17). This statement tells us that one must have authority from God for what he does or teaches religiously. Let us turn to the New Testament Scriptures.

Jesus said, "*God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). To worship God in spirit means with the proper attitude and being mentally involved. To worship God in truth means as guided by the word of God (John 17:17). One must do what God says and only what God says to do. In Colossians 3:16, one reads, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*" The command as given by the Holy Spirit is to sing with grace in your heart. The instrument to be used is one's heart; and the command is to sing. This command also requires congregational singing because if I am not singing, then I am not teaching and admonishing as the Lord wants.

Some will say, "But God did not say not to." However, God did say what to do, and He only said sing. One must respect the silences of the scriptures. For example, in Hebrews 7:14, one reads, "*For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood.*" In the Old Testament, Moses said that the Levites were the priestly tribe. When he said they were, that eliminated all the other tribes from being the priests. Moses did not have to tell each one that they were not priests because he said the levites were. Likewise, God does not have to tell us everything we are not to do because He has instructed us what to do.

In spiritual matters, God demands that we follow Him (Col. 3:17). The Bible is our only source of authority (Ps. 119:105; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible commands us to sing, not play. There

are no New Testament examples of the use of instrumental music in worship, nor is there any necessary inference of its use. Therefore, the church of Christ only worship as God has directed. Read Leviticus 10:1-2 for an example of some who went beyond what is written. (Rom. 15:4).

What Think Ye Of Christ? Whose Son Is He?

THOMAS F. EAVES, SR.

The apostle John tells of certain Greeks who came to Philip and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21). This is a very noble request and Christians throughout the world today desire that all men see Jesus and follow Him (1 Corinthians 11:1) because He is the only way unto Jehovah God the Father. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). Even as Pilate asked, "What is truth" (John 18:38), some today are asking, "Who is Jesus?" Jesus was an historical figure. From non-Biblical literature, we can learn much of Him.

WHAT DID THE LORD GOD SAY OF JESUS?

At Jesus' baptism, God acknowledged Him as His Son. "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, 'This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16-17). At the transfiguration of Jesus, God spoke from heaven and said, "This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him" (Mark 9:7).

WHAT DID JESUS SAY OF HIMSELF?

From the Bible, we learn of Jesus through His own teachings. When answering the high priest's question, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed," Jesus replied, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61-62). In conversa-

tion with Philip, Jesus stated, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" (John 14:9).

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT JESUS?

The Bible declares that Jesus was with God in the beginning (John 1:1) and that all things were created through Him (John 1:2; Colossians 1:15-17). The Word of God also points out that He was an apostle (one sent from God, Hebrews 3:1). He is declared to be the High Priest (Hebrews 3:1) Who offered His own blood for the sins of mankind (Hebrews 9:11-12; 10:12).

WHAT DID THE CONTEMPORARIES OF JESUS SAY ABOUT HIM?

When a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night, he stated, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3:2). When Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is," they replied, "some say John the baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophet" (Matthew 16:14). It is worthy to note that Jesus reminded the people of some of the most godly men who ever lived. When Jesus next asked His disciples, "But who say ye that I am, Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' " (Matthew 16:16). After Peter's confession, Jesus stated, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). Peter revealed what had been given him of God.

WHAT DO PEOPLE SAY ABOUT JESUS TODAY?

Generally speaking, many individuals hold Jesus Christ in high esteem. He is regarded by many as a good man, and He was. The Scriptures tell us that He never disobeyed God's will for Him (II Peter 2:21; Hebrews 4:15).

Some proclaim that He was a great prophet of God. This, of course, is true, as it is clearly taught in God's Word (Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:22). In Matthew 16:18, He prophesied the coming of the church and in John 12:32-33, He prophesied His death and the manner of death He should die.

Many declare without reservation that Jesus was one of the greatest teachers that ever lived and without a doubt, this is true (Matthew 7:29).

Many passages of Scripture speak of the miracles Jesus performed (John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22), and therefore, He is described as a miracle worker.

He was all of these: a good man, a prophet, a great teacher, and a miracle worker. **BUT, HE WAS MORE THAN THESE!** He was the Son of Jehovah God (Hebrews 1:1-14; John 3:16; Mark 14:62). There are many today who desire to acclaim Jesus as a good man, a prophet, and one of the world's greatest teachers **BUT NOT** the Son of God. If Jesus was not what He claimed to be, the Son of God (Mark 14:62) then He was a liar? If He lied about Who He was, He was not a good man; He was a false prophet and a hypocritical teacher! Praise God that He was Who He claimed to be, the Son of Jehovah God Who provided salvation (Acts 4:12) through His great sacrifice (Romans 3:21-36).

WHAT DID THE ENEMIES OF JESUS SAY ABOUT HIM?

Those who did not follow Jesus and denied that He was the Son of God accused Him of leading the multitudes astray (John 7:2). Others who rejected Jesus accused Him of being a Samaritan with a demon (John 8:48). On one occasion, the Pharisees called Jesus a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners (Luke 7:34).

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

Those who refuse to accept Jesus today become enemies of the Son of God. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (Matthew 12:30). The individual who hears the words of Jesus and does not obey them is likened unto the foolish man who built his house on the sand (Matthew 7:26). The man who heareth the words of Jesus and obeys them is like the wise man who built his house on the rock (Matthew 7:24). Only the house (life) which was built on obedience to the teachings of Jesus stood when the storms of life assailed it. Jesus makes a promise, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will the Father honor" (John 12:26).

Read carefully what the Son of God teaches about

becoming His follower.

1. Faith in Him as the Son of God (John 8:24).
2. Repentance of sins (a change of mind which leads to reformation of life) (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19).
3. Confession before men that He is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10)
4. Baptism into His death (Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4).
5. A faithful, dedicated life as a servant of God (Romans 12:1-2; Revelation 2:10).

Hear the wonderful words of Jesus which bring abundant life on this earth (John 10:10) and eternal life with Him, His Father, and the angels of heaven (John 14:1-4), and obey His will for you that heaven may be your eternal home.

Christian Relationships

WALTER SWAIN

In Romans 1:18-32, the apostle Paul describes the "descent of man." He tells how man fell from a belief in God to the depths of depravity. This descent came in stages. First was the rejection of God (verse 21). They turned to their own reasoning (verse 22), which led to idolatry (verse 23). Which, in turn, produced moral degradation (verses 24-27). The specifics of this degradation are listed in verses 28-32.

In reading this list of sins, one is struck with the awareness that almost all of them involve relationships with others. At the "bottom of the barrel," men could not get along. Mankind was unable to maintain relationships with one another that would allow them to live in peace and harmony with one another. Without a belief in God, man found himself unable to live with others on planet earth.

With a basic rejection of God by man today and the spread of humanism and secularism throughout our society, it is apparent that man again has this serious problem—we don't know how to get along. Relationships seem strained in every area of life. Husbands and wives cannot get along. Parents and children clash with one another. At work, school, play, and

elsewhere people are continually at odds with one another.

Perhaps this is why Christ's great Sermon on the Mount deals almost exclusively with teaching us how to relate to one another. Perhaps this is why most of the epistles of the New Testament stress right relationships. Much time is even spent in these books teaching Christians how to get along in the church. How often are we reminded to "love one another"?

Christian relationships are based on an unusual love. The church at Corinth was torn with division and strife. Paul's answer to this was love (I Corinthians 13:1-8). The description of what this "love" was to be (verses 4-7) speaks of how we are to relate to one another. The beloved apostle John often urged us to "love one another" (I John 4:7, 11, 21). Jesus not only told us to love God, but to love our neighbour (Matthew 22:39). He even commanded us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44-47). All our relationships must be based on love.

This love includes a respect for authority. For people to relate properly in any area, some must be subject to others. Thus, all come under the authority of Jesus (Matthew 28:18). Each is to submit to the authority of the government under which they live (Romans 13:1f), as long as it does not negate that of God (Acts 5:29). Wives are to submit to the authority of the husband (Ephesians 5:22). Children are to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). In the church, we are to be under the authority of the elders (Hebrews 13:17). In each case of authority, those in authority are commanded not to abuse their authority, but to act in love. Each of these authorities must be recognized if we are to live in peace and harmony.

But, Christian love goes one step further. It goes the "extra mile" (Matthew 5:38f). It shows a deep concern for others above self (Philippians 2:4). The Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12 stresses the most fundamental of all Christian relationships; that is, that our actions to others be guided by how we would want to be treated by others. We are to return good for evil (Matthew 5:38f), and to react to the actions of others by returning good rather than by retaliating with evil.

Good relationships result from one treating others as God treats them. We are to love and respect all others equally. We are to seek to do them good and help them all that we can. We must never retaliate with evil or seek to "get even." Such actions

will create peace and harmony in all areas of life. We must respect God's established authorities and submit to them peacefully. Doing these things we can live "at peace with all men" (Romans 12:18).

What Held Christ On The Cross

HOWELL BIGHAM

There were several things that held Jesus on the cross of Calvary. One such thing was nails. As we study John 20:25, we read of Thomas speaking to the other disciples, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." The nails, indeed, were driven to hold Christ on the cross. However, let us realize that it took more than just nails to hold the Savior on the tree of Calvary! In searching the Scriptures, we find four other things that held Christ on the cross: They are:

1. THE WILL OF THE FATHER HELD HIM THERE

As Christ prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane, He uttered the words "Thy will be done" (Matthew 26:36-44). The Lamb of God prayed, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). As we study the Old Testament, we read that Isaiah speaks of Jesus as being oppressed and afflicted, "yet He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). The Lamb of God (John 1:29) could have called down twelve legions of angels to prevent the multitude, chief priests, scribes, and elders from taking Him by force (Matthew 26:53). However, in studying the Word, we find Christ obeying the Father's will and went of His own will to be slain for the sins of man.

2. GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN HELD HIM THERE

Perhaps the best-known verse of the ages is that of John 3:16. This verse teaches us the extent of God's love for man by

the use of the phrase, "For God so loved . . .". Christ understood the love of God toward man in that He "humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Not only do these verses teach us of the love of God toward man, but also I John 4:8-10 illustrates the great love of God. John, the apostle of love, wrote, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Yes, God's desire that man might be reconciled to Him held Christ on the cross.

3. THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD HELD HIM THERE

Paul, in Ephesians 3:9-11, teaches us that God's eternal purpose was that His Son should redeem man. In studying about the Savior, one notices that Jesus left the glory of heaven so that He could reconcile man to God with His blood (Philippians 2:5-8). John teaches that God sent Christ to be a "propitiation for our sins" (I John 2:2). Therefore, as God and Christ are one in purpose (John 17:21), we know from the Scriptures that indeed the eternal purpose of God held Jesus on the cross.

4. THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM HELD HIM THERE

The Hebrew writer teaches us that Christ was One "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). The Savior of man looked beyond the suffering of the cross to the joy that was before Him; that of bringing us back to God through His blood and that of His ascension to the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 1:3; I Peter 3:22). It was indeed the joy of Christ to shed his blood for us (John 15:11-14) that we might be saved if we obey the Gospel of Christ that sets us free from our sins (John 8:32).

It took more than just nails to hold the Savior on the cross. It took (1) the will of the Father, (2) God's love for man, (3) God's eternal purpose, (4) the joy that was set before Him to hold Him there. To those who are still in the world, what holds you there? (Galatians 3:1). Will you not obey that which is found in the Bible to be saved from your sins? Let us all study the Word and

understand that Christ hung on the cross willingly that we might through obedience to the Gospel receive the eternal crown in heaven (Revelation 2:10).

We Must Win Souls And Strengthen Them

G.F. RAINES

The Book of God says:

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30).

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

It is not enough to win souls. Those who are won must be thoroughly instructed in order that they may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, giving the Great Commission to His apostles said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul, being exceedingly interested in their spiritual welfare wrote: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But, I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly" (2:19-24).

While Timothy was at Ephesus, Paul solemnly charged him saying:

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:16).

"Preach the Word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:2-5).

Paul F. Barackman has well said:

"Every teacher of the Christian message needs first of all to examine his teaching lest he fall into substituting wordy discussions for solid values. He needs, next, to examine his motives that he be not carried into self-exaltation . . . Christian teachers ought to be as concerned for the spiritual health of their disciples as physicians are concerned for the physical health for patients."

The Ancient Landmarks

JOHN GIBSON

It is in vogue today to disparage the achievements of earlier generations.

Colleges and Universities often look with disdain upon the founders, presidents, and faculties which had the vision, endured the hardships, and educate the young people entrusted to them. There seems to be a perverse pleasure in debunking the life and character of former leaders, and poking fun at the "good old days."

We tend to assume that anything new is better. So it was when I was in elementary school. The classes which went before me studied phonics and they knew how to spell. But, the notion caught on that a class in phonics was old-fashioned and ought to be dropped from the curriculum. I, along with many others, have suffered as a result of that dreadful mistake. My grandchildren, armed with the same strong emphasis on phonics my parents

received, can out-spell me any day.

It's easy for me to see the wisdom in the proverb which states, "Remove not the ancient landmark which your fathers have set."

In the church, it is important to preserve the ancient landmark which our fathers have set. We do not mean, of course, to insist upon a blind adherence to tradition for its own sake, or decry the new methods available to us of carrying or applying the Gospel to our modern world.

We do mean, however, that there are certain things about the church and its message which are absolute and unchangeable, and which can be removed only at our spiritual peril.

We dare not tamper with the "ancient landmark" of Christian doctrine the "faith once delivered to the saints." We have a sure foundation in the apostolic doctrine, of which Jesus Christ Himself is the chief Cornerstone.

This doctrine is as fixed and unchangeable as is the nature of Him Who gave it. The Faith is not relative; it is not progressive; it is not modified by changing times or circumstances.

The "ancient landmark" must remain.

From The Past A Stick In The Mud

G.K. WALLACE

Sometimes I am called a square. To being a square, I plead guilty. I have always believed and still believe that fairness, justice, and trustworthiness are essential to character. How did anyone ever come to the conclusion that to be arrogant, foul, vile, dirty, and undignified is the choice culture of the day? Such are not a matter of culture but of morality (Colossians 3:1-11).

It is hard for me to believe that I am a "square peg in a round hole" or that I have the "dirty end of the stick" because I believe in order and not chaos. The worship of God as directed by our Lord was always orderly and never spontaneous. God is not a God of confusion but of order. Orderly reverence was ever a mark of the early church and any other procedure is forbidden

(I Corinthians 14:33).

Do I mistake the shadow for a substance because I believe in courtesy and not rudeness? Is the lack of refinement and dignity to be subdued in favour of an offensive manner of action? It is required of all men that they be kind, gentle, patient, and compassionate (Colossians 3:12-14; II Peter 1:5-7).

Am I leaning on a broken reed if I believe in creation and not destruction? Have I put the saddle on the wrong horse if I cooperate with the establishment? Many folk, today, say they will have nothing to do with the establishment. Let me ask—If you wanted a new car, where would you go to get it? Only to the establishment. If you need a doctor, lawyer, teacher, mechanic, police protection, or roads on which to travel, where would you turn except to the establishment? If you need groceries, desire to eat in a restaurant, or to cross the country in an airplane, would you ignore the establishment? Many dirty, filthy folk would do well to become “squares” and make doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants, mechanics, and businessmen and women. If they do so, then they will be a part of the establishment. Institutions are marks of civilization. Only the jungle is free of institutions. It is well to help keep institutions in harmony with divine principles, but government cannot function without them. In fact, our government is an institution. It is not a mark of progress to ignore my relation to my government (Romans 13:1-7).

Am I “putting new wine in old bottles” when I preach “law and order” instead of anarchy? The law on tables of stone is the panacea for violence and crime in our land. The good Lord said, “Thou shalt not steal.” That does not mean that if you cannot get what you want, that you are free then to steal. Morality is a result of teachings and not the location in which one lives. Jesus was poor and yet He was pure (Matthew 8:20). Character is not a product of culture. Ethics is not determined by the situation.

Do I “strain at a gnat and swallow a camel” if I insist that the supreme rule of life is “work” and not “charity”? It is wrong, if able to work, not to be productive. The first law God gave to man was to work (Genesis 2:15). Those who will not work are unworthy of help from others (II Thessalonians 3:10).

Yes, I believe in order, courtesy, gentleness, obedience, hard work, and morality. Too, I proudly confess to being what the subculture calls “a stick in the mud.”

Dealing With Temptation

CHARLES BOX

Temptation comes because the devil is real. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The good news is temptation can be resisted.

Christ provides a way of escape. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Temptation is not removed, but God provides a way of escape for those who desire it.

Christ destroys the works of the devil. "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15). Christ's death made it possible for satan to be resisted.

Christ expects Christians to resist the devil. "Resist him, be steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (1 Peter 5:9). The Gospel is our defense against satan. "Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11). Is your heart prepared for the battle against satan by being filled with God's Word?

The devil will lose in the end. "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Matthew 25:41). If your life is satan-controlled, you lose also. Only those on God's side win. Whose side are you on?

Nor Things To Come

TOM KELTON

Paul concludes the great eighth chapter of Romans with these words: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (verses 38-39).

This passage has always been a favourite of mine—a shelter in a time of storm, a beacon in darkness, an encouragement in despair. But, only recently, I discovered what I think is one of its most important and most-neglected phrases.

"Nor things to come."

Things to come hold no paralyzing terror for those in Christ. God's love does not come and go. He will not let anything get in its way. Because this is true, we should live with an unquenchable confidence, not so much knowing what or when, or where, as Who.

Fear causes us to hold back and to hoard our talents and resources. It is the enemy of sharing, cautioning us to hold on to that crust of bread rather than to cast it on the waters.

Too risky, fear says.

But, faith says, "Nor things to come."

It is the future that we worry about the most. Things present, we somehow cope with, however distressing. Nine-tenths of fear hides in the future tense. Fear lives not in the known, but in the unknown.

Faith is always for the unexplored place, the experience we have not yet had. A man who already has something doesn't need to hope and trust that he will get it (Romans 8:24).

Abraham "went out, not knowing whither he went." What he did know was with Whom he went. That was enough.

From Genesis to Revelation, the good word is, "Fear not."

Neither things present.

Nor things to come.

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