

# THE BIBLE TEACHER

*Pleading for the Restoration of Pure New Testament Christianity*

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## EDITORIAL

### ***What Does The Bible Teach?***

***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”***

Every year during the month of December it is not unusual to find decorated and illuminated stars hanging outside the houses of many people, those who believe in Christ. They want to show or tell that they believe in Christ and are happy to celebrate His “birthday.” What happens before or after that season is over, is another matter. During the month of December people are usually in Christmas mood. They want to be more religious, loving, giving, generous, and compassionate. Is this what Christ meant that people ought to do, when He said, at Matthew 5:16: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven?

Our light is our influence. How we live and behave. Our conduct, how we conduct before others. Our dress, how we dress when we go outside. How we use our tongue when we open our mouth before others. And of course, our deeds, or things we do. Everyday, each one of us is writing a chapter in the book of our life. This is exactly the Voice from heaven meant when He asked John to write in Revelation 14:13: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit,

that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them." Our works or deeds are seen and observed by people now, and, of course, they will continue to follow us, or they will leave their influence, after our departure from here.

Jesus Christ taught that our light must so shine *each day*, that by observing our life, works or deeds people may be so influenced that they may glorify our Father God in heaven, that is, they may realize that we belong to Him. But what kind of influence people leave when they smoke and drink and use foul language, before their children, or family members and friends, and before people in general? Peter wrote: "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:11,12). Listen also to Paul: "That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." (Philippians 2:15).

Let us not make our light shine, but let it shine. This, to be sure, forbids ostentation and boasting. There is only one life to be lived. Why not live to glorify God?

## ***Calling on the Lord's Name***

**J.C. CHOATE**

The story of Saul, later called Paul, is well known among believers in Christ. He was born and reared in Tarsus, a Jew, a Pharisee, and a Roman citizen. We first read of him in Acts 7 in connection with the stoning of Stephen. There is no indication that he took part in the stoning but the record says that those involved laid their clothes at the feet of a young man by the name of Saul.

In Acts 8 we are told that Saul made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and binding men and women and committing them to prison. Going on the Acts 9, we read, "*And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the*

*disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to go to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1,2).*

On his way to Jerusalem the Lord spoke to him from heaven, asking why he was persecuting Him. Saul replied, "*Who art thou, Lord?*" and the voice answered, "*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*" The Lord went on to explain to him that if he continued he would only hurt himself. At this point, Saul asked what he should do, and he was told that he should go into the city of Damascus and there it would be told him what he should do.

While this encounter was taking place, Saul's traveling companions heard the sound of the voice but were speechless with wonder because they, themselves, saw no man. When Saul arose from the ground he realized that he was blind, so he was led into the city where he remained for three days, praying and without sight, eating and drinking nothing.

In the mean time the Lord appeared to a gospel preacher by the name of Ananias and asked him to go to Saul because he had seen in a vision Ananias coming to him and laying his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Of course Ananias had heard about Saul and his reason for coming to Damascus, and was afraid to go. The Lord replied, "*Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake*" (V. 15,16). Ananias then went and laid his hands on Saul to restore his sight, and said to him, "*And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16).

Now there are those who would say that Saul was not saved through his obedience in baptism, but by "calling on the name of the Lord," which they take to mean that he was praying to the Lord *to save him from his sins*. Of course, *calling on the name of the Lord* does often have reference to prayer, but actually in this case it does not have the meaning of **praying for forgiveness and salvation** at all. How do we know? Because God had told Ananias that Saul was praying, but he was not saved as a result of those prayers because when Ananias came he told him that he should not wait any longer but that he should

*arise and be baptized and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* "Calling on the name of the Lord" had reference to Saul's response to the Lord's commands. Through his obedience, through his actions, he was asking the Lord to honor His promise to save him, as recorded in Mark 16:16.

There are many preachers today who teach emphatically that all one has to do to be saved is to commit their lives to Jesus and to ask for the forgiveness of their sins. Those preachers assure their listeners that the Lord will save them and make them His children. Then they ask believers to repeat what they call "the sinner's prayer." How sad to think that millions of people are deceived into thinking that this is all that is necessary to be saved. Of course the Bible no where teaches such a procedure, and "the sinners' prayers" is not to be found in the Scriptures!

Just as Saul was told to arise and be baptized to wash away his sins, Christ said that all sinners must **believe and be baptized to be saved** (Mark 16:16), and Peter told a group of believers that they should **repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins** (Acts 2:38). Peter also said that **baptism saves** (1 Peter 3:21) and Paul says that we are **baptized into Christ** (Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3,4), and Christ said that one must be **born of water and the Spirit** to enter the kingdom of God or the church. (John 3:3-5).

My friends, no where do these writers talk about being saved or becoming a child of God through prayer. Prayer is a wonderful blessing of God but *it is for those who have already become children of God*, not for those who **need to become** His children.

*Especially For Women*

## *Search for Truth Discovery!*

**BETTY BURTON CHOATE**

The taxi had stopped and let them out at the address Andrew had given. Andrew and Rachel looked at each other,

excitement glowing in their eyes.

"This is it!" Rachel whispered in awed tones. "The sign says 'The Church of Christ Meets Here!'"

"They went to the entrance of the building and found the door unlocked. "Perhaps someone will be here already," Andrew said, opening the door. "The schedule said that the worship period begins at nine. . . Yes, someone's coming!"

"Good morning! I'm Anthony Yarrow, and this is my wife, Anita."

"Oh, yes," smiled Andrew, relieved to hear the name of the man with whom he had corresponded since Rachel had found his radio program. "I recognized your voice from the broadcast! I'm Andrew Kewani, and this is Rachel."

Like long-lost family members the two couples hugged each other. "We're so happy you could come!" exclaimed Anita. "We want you to get to know the Christians here."

"And we want to hear about the church in other places," Andrew urged. "We've been so excited ever since we heard the program and realized that there really are others in the world who are obeying the same gospel Peter preached on that Pentecost day, and being added by God to that same church."

But further talk had to wait until later. The auditorium was filling, as people were seated and then quietly bowed their heads in prayer. One brother began to lead the group in a softly-sung hymn.

During most of the worship period, tears glistened in Rachel's eyes, and many times she and Andrew exchanged glances, realizing that everything about the worship was exactly the same as in Bandra. But how sweet was the realization that they were assembled in the presence of God with members of their spiritual family which, until now, they had only *hoped* existed somewhere else in the world!

Anthony's very moving lesson was based on Hebrews 12:18-24. "We come into God's presence as his children, to worship and glorify Him. The writer of Hebrews contrasts the Israelites' experience with ours. He says to us, *'For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.*

*(For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")'*

"As children in God's family, our feelings as we come into His presence to worship Him are so different from the Israelites. The one who was inspired to write the letter to the Hebrew Christians said, *'But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the Firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.'*

"Today—just now—we should be conscious of the fact that we as a body of people have entered into God's presence in spirit to worship and honor Him. Not only are we in His presence, but these verses say that we have come to the assembly of the church of the Firstborn, worshipping our Father with all of those faithful brothers and sisters whose names have been registered in heaven along with ours.

"We have come to the New Jerusalem, to the very throne of God as described in revelation 4. We are surrounded, in spirit, by an innumerable host of angels who are singing, *'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!'* (Revelation 4:8). And, *'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!'* (Revelation 5:13).

"We have come before Jesus, our Savior and Brother, who sealed the covenant of the New Testament between God and ourselves with His own life's blood. With what reverence and awe we should enter such company, where we as sinful humans have no right to be, except through God's love and mercy and forgiveness!"

The lesson was then brought to focus on the memorial supper of Christ's death. Rachel's mind turned back to the day, so many years ago, when she and Andrew had begun on the long journey of seeking the truth. She remembered the terrible feeling in her heart the evening Andrew had come home from work to say, "We're lost!" And she remembered the sweetness in

her soul when Andrew had raised her from the waters of baptism and she knew they were now God's forgiven children. "How precious these years have been," she thought. "Thank you, Father, for such great love. Thank you for bringing us to this day and to this place, so that we can know more of our spiritual family while we still live in this world."

After the dismissal prayer, Andrew and Rachel were introduced to the congregation, and an explanation was given for their presence. There was a general mixture of laughter and tears in the greetings as everyone hugged and welcomed them. "We're so excited!" Anita said, hugging Rachel again. "Anthony and I can't wait to visit the Christians at Bandra—and to tell you about the congregations of the Lord's people that exist all over the world!"

"Rachel," Andrew spoke softly as they lay in the darkness of the bedroom that night in Anthony and Anita's house, "this is a little taste of heaven, isn't it?"

"Yes," Rachel murmured. "After all those years of thinking we were alone in trying to follow only the Bible, trying to believe and practice just what those early Christians did, how wonderful it is to know that there are actually Christians in most countries of the world, and that we number into some millions! How wonderful to look forward to that new heaven and earth where all of us can be together and with God, forever!"

"How wonderful!" echoed Andrew, and he began to pray: "Father, we never dreamed of such a day as this! When we understood the truth and knew that in order to follow Your word we would have to leave the people and doctrines and churches that were familiar to us, and to stand alone, we were willing to accept that separation. How thankful we are that You blessed us, through these years, with finding others who had a love for Your truth, and that we've had the strength of a growing body of brothers and sisters. Now, today, we've opened our hearts to many hundreds of thousands that we have not seen, and will not see in this life, but they are people that we love because all of us are Your children. Thank you for the blood of your Son which binds us together in Your love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

# ***Duplicate Gospel***

**FRANCIS DAVID**

If you go to the market for shopping, you will find lots of duplicate things. You can find many duplicate goods in the market which have the name of some famous brands. There are shops where you can find many duplicate electronic gadgets. There are duplicate Sanyo, Sony and National Panasonic things are available. When buying, you need to be careful. Once I wanted to buy a famous brand of shoes. We went to the market and in one shop, we asked for Liberty shoe. The shopkeeper showed us a pair. It exactly looked like Liberty but I noticed the spelling on that pair and it was not Liberty but 'Liability'. The liability was written in same liberty style. There are some shoe shops which sells Bata duplicate shoes. There will be brand name on the shoe which will be written in Bata style, but it would be Buta and not Bata. The other day one of my friends said he wanted to buy a toothpaste at the Train station and he bought one, but what he discovered it was not Colgate but duplicate of Colgate and it was marked on the tube in Colgate style 'Colgeate'. We need to be careful. There are hundreds of things in the market available but they are duplicate and not genuine.

When we come to the spiritual side, we need to be careful because there are many duplicate gospels in the world. There are false teachers who are spreading the duplicate gospels and these gospels are based on their own beliefs and philosophies. In apostle Paul days; there were people who were turning away from the true gospel to these duplicate gospels but Paul had to admonished them by saying: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. (Gal. 1:6-9). Paul is trying to tell these people that there is only one gospel and they need to be careful not to bend towards other duplicate gospel.

Today, what we see, there are people who are preaching



and spreading the duplicate gospel. They say and claim that what they are preaching is based on the Scriptures but actually they are not. They teach and practise all kinds of doctrines and sometime they trouble the true sincere people. We must know that these false preachers teach and preach in such a way that people believe it and thus are being deceived. The Word of God tells us that we must not believe each and every preachers, but we must test them. In I John 4:1 John says: "beloved do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets (Preachers) have gone out into the world." Friends, whatever we accept religiously we must try and test it. This is what Paul said to the Christians at Thesslonica, he says: "Test all things; hold fast which is good." (I Thess. 5:21). We must test the doctrines and compare those with the word of God and then accept it.

The duplicate gospel will tell you that there are many churches in the world and it is upto your choice, whichever you want. But the true gospel tells us that there is only one church which was built by Jesus Himself and He is the owner and Master of the same (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The duplicate gospel will tell you that you can be a Catholic, Protestant, Lutheran or Baptist and so on but the true genuine gospel tells us that we need to be only Christians. There are three places in the Bible where the name Christian is found. You can read in your Bible Acts 11:26; 26:28 and I Peter 4:16. When we wear the name Christian we honor the name of Christ.

According to duplicate gospel, the plan of salvation is based on faith only. The Bible tells us that if a person wants to be saved and want forgiveness of sins then he or she must believe in Jesus, repent of his sins, confess Jesus as the Son of God and then be baptised in the watery grave. (Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4). There are other number of doctrines which are being taught by the preachers of the duplicate gospel. We urge you to come back to the Bible and investigate by your self and accept the one true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must rightly divide the word of God. Timothy was instructed by Paul to do this: "Do your best to present your self to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15). Rightly dividing the word of God means to reject the duplicate gospel.

# *Let The Bible Answer*

ROBERT MEREDITH

How does Jesus' blood save? Often, one hears questions concerning the blood of Christ. The Bible tells us what we need to know. Therefore, let us turn there.

God set forth in the Old Testament time that blood was to be used to make a sacrifice for sin. Abel, Noah, Job, Abraham, and others all offered animal sacrifices for their sins. These sacrifices were a shadow of the sacrifice that would be made by Christ. Under the Mosaic dispensation (from Moses receiving the ten commandments to Jesus' death) many thousands of animals were offered. The Hebrew writer tell us, "*For the law (of Moses—RM) having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect*" (Heb. 10:1). These sacrifices simply were a type of the true sacrifice. The sacrifice of animals could never take away sin (Heb. 10:4) and, thus, man needed the sinless sacrifice to redeem us (Heb. 9:22).

Jesus willingly came to earth and died, paying the penalty for sin (Rom. 3:23-26). God was not obligated to save man, but extended his unmerited favour or grace to us. Jesus' blood provides redemption for man. Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, wrote, "*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*" (Eph. 1:7). Jesus' blood was the purchase price of the church (Acts 20:28). The Christ shed His precious blood for you and me. He died for all! (I John 2:2; John 3:16; Heb. 2:9).

The Heavenly Father loved us so that He developed the scheme of redemption. The Word came to earth being born of the virgin and executed the Father's plan by shedding His blood for our sins (I Pet. 2:24). The blood has been shed, but it must be applied or it does not do you any good. His blood cleanses those who come in contact with it in gospel obedience (Rom. 10:16). The apostle John tells us that Jesus' blood washes away our sins (Rev. 1:5). Also, Saul of Tarsus was told, "*Now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,*

*calling on the name of the Lord"* (Acts 22:16). Therefore, one's sins are washed away by Jesus' blood when he is baptized into Christ and this is how he calls on the name of the Lord. Once one contacts His blood in baptism (Rom. 6:3 tells us we are baptized into His death, that is the benefits of His death). His blood continues to cleanse the Christian who walks in the light (1 John 1:7).

Without God's amazing grace, all would be lost because all sin (Rom. 3:23). Jesus' blood was shed fulfilling God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10-11). God's grace has been extended and, thus eternal life is available through Christ's blood.

## ***"But I Don't Want A Divorce!"***

**J.K. GOSSETT**

"But I don't want a divorce." Good! Hopefully, you're saying this when you are not in the process of getting one. After your spouse has hired a lawyer and the papers have been filed, it is usually too late. Married couples must plan to stay together! They must decide that they don't want a divorce before some problems bring them to that dreadful point. After all, this is what the covenant of marriage is all about . . . remaining together until death do us part.

All marriages have problems which must be addressed. Two people never see eye-to-eye on every issue, and disagreements come. Some are minor, others are severe. It is refreshing to hear a married couple facing difficulty say, "we don't want to get a divorce. We want to work this out and put it behind us." If that is your desire, then here are some things that will help you keep your commitment to each other.

Don't marry someone you feel you will have to change. Marry someone you like just the way they are, because that is the way they will be! A wedding will not change your dislike about the other person, unless the man dislikes bride's last name.

Put your mate before every other human being, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends, and even children must play

second fiddle to your mate. It is sad that some married couples put their children before each other. Actually, the greatest thing parents can give their children is the security which comes from a mother and father who love each other more than anyone else.

Learn to express love for your mate. Love never goes out of style. It is not wrong for mates to be tender with each other. From the wedding day to the golden anniversary and beyond, mates need each other's love and care.

Live within your means. It is easy not to do so. Building up huge debts tends to breakdown any marriage. So often today, one marriage partner acts irresponsibly financially and the other retaliates by doing something equally irresponsible. The result is financial difficulty.

Learn these important words. I am sorry and please forgive me, a phrase not heard very often in many homes. Men, especially, are prone to dismiss their wrongs without seeking forgiveness.

Build the self-esteem of your mate. The tendency is to blast each other with insults and put downs. Our self-worth in the home is determined mainly by the way our mate treats us. Becomes a public relations firm for your mate. Be sold on your mate and let him/her know it.

Share the same interest and goals. This is becoming more difficult in a society that encourages individualism and doing your own thing. Doing things together builds the marriage. However the most important shared goal must be getting to heaven. When that is your primary goal there won't be any divorce.

## ***The Mind of God***

**CHARLES E. COB**

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

God is on the throne as the omniscient One. He is "above all through all and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6). He does not need

the counsels of men. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?" (Romans 11:34).

What mere man has the knowledge, power, wisdom to TELL God? One may reply. "But who would want to do that"? It is done by "religionists" every day; those who think or feel that somehow God didn't know what He was doing and, therefore, men need to change His arrangements. Though it is not always verbalized, yet there are those who by their attitude and practice seek to change God's plan to please and placate themselves and their followers. Woe be unto those who manifest such a spirit!

Opposition to the way of God comes from man's adversary, the devil. It is the devil's plan to change the plan of God and lead men astray. He makes his diabolical schemes as attractive as possible so that men might be deceived.

When Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church. . ." (Matthew 16:18), He was announcing the plan of God. The thought of God surely did not include the multiply number of "churches" that have reared their heads all over the world. Shame upon the human race, guilty of sin, who have been offered the haven of salvation, but have corrupted it by slashing God's plan into pieces.

The thoughts of men may be predicted upon the assumptions of "higher education." But, does that change the mind of God? Men may decide that "more is better" when the thought of God is "there is one body" (Ephesians 4:4) and that one body is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Men may decide that God's grace covers all men—regardless of what they do, say, or think. The grace of God, however, is dependent upon man's willingness to obey God (Matthew 7:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:8-9). When human mind understand that men are "saved by grace through faith," then it is that men will be much closer to understanding the mind of God.

We, as a struggling, sinful people do not need more "churches," more diverse, divisive doctrines, more religious—sounding blarney, we need to accept totally, completely the mind of God in all things that we may please Him Who calls us by the Gospel into His kingdom and service.

# *Who Am I?*

**T. PIERCE BROWN**

In Exodus 3:10-11, we find God saying to Moses, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

In this and the past generation, it seems that millions are trying to find out who they are, where they came from and what their purpose is, or where they are going. It seems that millions of dollars are being spent in space and oceanic explorations to find answers to questions which God has already plainly revealed. It may be that Moses' problem was very much like ours. He had been trying to run away from himself instead of facing up to who he was and living up to his potential. In our short life of three quarters of a century, we have found persons who make very serious mistakes in answering the question, "Who am I?" On the one hand, there are those who seem to think that they are persons with practically all authority in heaven and on earth. Their answer to almost any question is the final and complete answer. If you question their conclusion on almost any subject, you are an idiot, and if it is a Bible subject, in addition to that, you are a liberal and false teacher.

On the other hand, there are those who so devalue and denigrate themselves that they seem unable to function properly to get any job done that God asks of them. If there is a sick or needy person who need visiting, the response is, "Who am I? I have no talent or ability in that area." If a Bible class needs a teacher, the response is the same. It is especially evident if it is suggested that there are lost souls that need salvation.

We are made for a purpose. Until you listen to God and find out who you are and what your purpose is in life, you will be stuck out in the desert, useless both to God and man. What Moses eventually discovered was that by himself, he was about like a zero. Ten zeros all in a row are still but zeros. However, with One in front, those ten zeros become one billion. When God

has a job for you, it may well be that He will provide ten other zeros like you if you will simply let God be in front, guiding and directing your every move. Follow Him. (Luke 9:23).

## ***Surrender To Jesus***

**CHARLES BOX**

The message of the Bible is designed to bring mankind to a strong faith in Jesus Christ and to a complete surrender to His will. Strong faith is necessary because "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Saving faith leads to surrender. Jesus died for us "that those who live would live no longer for themselves, but for Him Who died for them and rose again" (II Corinthians 5:15).

Surrender to Jesus means self denial and cross bearing. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24).

Surrender to Jesus means seeking first God's kingdom and righteousness. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

Surrender to Jesus means giving yourself as a living sacrifice to God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Surrender to Jesus means doing the will of God. "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Surrender to Jesus means sharing the good news with others. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he

who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Surrender to Jesus means walking in a new life. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4).

Surrender to Jesus means that we recognize God's ownership. "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Surrender to Jesus means living by the Spirit, not by the flesh. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:12-13).

Surrender to Jesus means serving others. "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28).

Surrender to Jesus means practicing pure religion. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Surrender to Jesus means bearing the burdens of others. "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2).

Surrender to Jesus means doing good toward all men. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Surrender to Jesus means going about doing good. Jesus is our Master and we follow His example. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the



devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).

Surrender to Jesus means seeking the salvation of the lost. Jesus is our Savior and we must continue the work. "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Surrender to Jesus means daily teaching and preaching of Jesus. As the disciples did in the first century, we must do today. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42).

A surrender of oneself to Jesus means to stand up for Him wherever you are and whatever the circumstances of life may be. Surrender to Jesus by leaving sin, obeying the Gospel, and living a righteous life. This will bring happiness here and in eternity.

## ***How We Sin***

**WALTER SWAIN**

On the night before His death, Jesus promised the apostles that after His ascension to Heaven He would send them the Holy Spirit to "convict the world of sin" (John 16:7-11).

Such conviction is necessary if the world is to be saved, for most of the world is totally ignorant about sin. They do not know what sin is. They do not realize the terrible consequences of sin. And they do not know (or care) how sin is committed. Yet, to be saved, one must know these things. Thus, the need to convict the world of sin.

The world must come to know that sin is any disobedience to the will of God. John says "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). The Greek word for sin is *amartia*, which literally means "to miss the mark." We sin when we fail to "hit the mark" in doing the will of God.

Also, the world needs to know of the terrible nature of sin, and its dire consequences. It must realize that sin is hated by God Who cannot even look upon sin. His justice demands that all sin be punished. It needs to know that sin brings curses upon man and results in the final curse of eternal punishment in hell.

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin separates man from God in this life and results in eternal separation in the next. Those of the world must come to see that sin lies behind all of the ills of man. From the Garden of Eden to this day, sin continues to have its terrible affect upon man.

Thirdly, the human race must become aware of how we sin. There are at least four ways we commit sin and miss the mark.

(1) We sin in **THOUGHT**. Jesus clearly stated this in Matthew 5:28. Notice He said one has already sinned in the mind by lusting. Genesis 6:5-7 declares that the people of Noah's day had their minds filled with evil continually. Again, Jesus indicated in Matthew 15:18-19 that sin originates in our thoughts.

(2) We can sin in **WORD**. James speaks of this in James 3:1-12.

Many other New Testament passages condemn sins of the tongue. Lying slander, swearing, abusive language, and gossip are some of the sins of the tongue.

(3) We also sin through our **ACTIONS**. Sexual immorality is often condemned (I Corinthians 6:18). Abuse of others, idolatry, factions, wrath, and malice are some ways one can sin through one's actions. We also sin this way by worshipping in the wrong way and adding things to worship not commanded by God. Cain in Genesis, Nadab and Abihu in the Old Testament, Annanias and Sapphira in the New Testament all sinned by not worshipping God correctly.

(4) We sin by **OMISSION**. James wrote, "To him therefore who knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). We sin when we fail to do what God has told us to do. Jesus Himself was baptized because of this principle; not because He was a sinner, but because not to obey this command would have made Him one.

Sin is, indeed, a terrible thing. But, the world must come to know what sin is, the terrible consequences it brings, and how we sin. This conviction of sin will, hopefully, lead them to repent of its and bring their lives into agreement with God's will.

# ***Being A Servant***

**TOM KELTON**

Jesus was a servant and told His disciples to follow His example. And in following, they, like Him, would be subject to persecution and suffering. Paul spoke often of himself as a servant of Christ and taught his converts that the faithful carrying out of the various responsibilities of life was true service to the Lord (Colossians 3:22-4:1; Ephesians 6:5-8). He taught them that they were privileged, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His name's sake. This was their lot and destiny (Philippians 1:29; I Thessalonians 3:1-4).

As we seek to follow the servant pattern laid down by our Lord, it is well to remember that Christ served God by serving men (Mark 10:45). Paul told the Corinthians that he was their servant for Jesus' sake (II Corinthians 4:5). However, it must be remembered that while both Jesus and Paul served men, neither of them ever regarded those they served as their masters. Both held themselves accountable only to God. Paul wrote: "But with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or any human court, I do not even judge myself. . . . It is the Lord Who judges me" (I Corinthians 4:3-4). So, being a servant will cause us to render humble service to men, yet in doing that we need not come into the bondage of men-pleasing, for though we serve men, we own no master but our Lord.

The teaching of both Jesus and Paul reminds us that there is a darker side to the service of Christ. There is always the possibility of suffering for His name's sake. We should not be surprised if some of us, like Paul, are called to "complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church" (Colossians 1:24).

If this is our lot as a servant, the Lord will bless us in our service.

## ***Why Heaven Should Be Our Aim***

**JERRI MANASCO**

Heaven is a lovely word to the child of God! When we

consider the problems, trials, and heartaches of earth, heaven becomes more and more of an enticement. Why, though, should we make heaven our aim?

### **HEAVEN IS GOD'S DWELLING PLACE** **(Psalm 11:4; 20:6; Ecclesiastes 5:2; Matthew 6:9)**

Of course, this does not mean that He is confined to heaven in a spatial sense (Isaiah 66:1-2, Jeremiah 23:24). It does suggest to us that God is real and that heaven is a real place and not just a figment of human imagination. The fact that heaven is God's dwelling place should provide the incentive to want to go there.

Since God is perfect and His love is matchless and His glory magnificent, then isn't this reason enough to want to be there? The anticipation of living with Him whose wonderful grace has saved us (Romans 5:20) is a powerful motive for wanting to live there!

### **HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF REJOICING**

Jesus said, "I say unto you . . . joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). How grand such a place must be that joy rings gloriously when *just one sinner* turns to God! Wouldn't you like to live in a place that puts so much emphasis upon righteousness?

### **HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF HOPE**

Paul speaks of "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven" (Colossians 1:5). This earth offers no promise of hope. It is a hopeless existence when death, sickness and sin reign supremely. Thanks to God that He has offered deliverance from this hopelessness and helplessness in Christ Jesus (I Corinthians 15:57; Romans 7:24-25). The present vanity of man robs us of so much that God wants us to enjoy. The prospect of eternal life, forfeited by Adam but regained in Christ, is enjoyed in the heavenly realm.

It is so sad that so many are forfeiting this prospect of joy and hope through their careless attitude toward heavenly realities. "HOPELESS" is the word inscribed over the lives of the multitude (Matthew 7:13; Ephesians 2:12). "HOPELESS" is the result of the meaningless meandering of so many fellow travelers

through this valley of darkness. Heaven is a place where hope is fulfilled isn't this enough to entice you to want you to go there and be one of the inhabitants thereof?

### **HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF RESERVED INHERITANCE**

I love and appreciate Peter's hopeful words to the Christian when he writes that we have been begotten "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4). The joy of presently being a Christian is not to be compared with any other lifestyle; the greater joy of anticipating the matchless inheritance reserved in YOUR NAME in heaven is even more persuasive.

There are earthly inheritances with huge financial benefits but these are subject to corruption and destruction. Fire, storm and theft can quickly erase even the most gilded of earthly inheritances. But, that which God has for us is one of the persuasive promises He uses to encourage us to go there. Jesus reminds us that we need to be more aware of the folly of gold as we lay up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21). Many will devote a lifetime trying to insure that their name is included in "Uncle Louie's Will" but give no thought at all to whether their name is in the book of life (Revelation 20:15).

Heaven is a real place no matter what the modern skeptics have to say about it. Heaven, is not just that "other wordly" place that Christians seek to enter. Christians are very much concerned about problems in "this world" and are very much aware that present problems need to be addressed. However, it is the very fact of these present troubles that motivates Christians to seek heaven and to do all they can to get others to go there, too.

## ***The Forgotten Invitation***

**JOHN G. SHAVER**

When we invite someone to some function, we are asking them to be present and to participate in that endeavour. Our lives are literally filled with invitations to many functions. Invitations to attend baby showers, weddings, hunting trips, fishing trips, and outings to mention a few. Many things we

perform in our every day lives are in response to invitations offered to us by our friends, neighbours, and loved ones, and we do not have to think twice about accepting them because they appeal to us. Do you know that the Bible contains many invitations? They are not invitations from human to human as are our invitations, but from infinite to infinite, from God to man. Some of the greatest, most meaningful invitations ever offered are offered from God to man (Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 14:16-17; Revelation 3:20; Revelation 22:17). All of these precious invitations are inviting man to be present and to participate spiritually in the blessings that God has prepared for those that love Him (I Corinthians 2:9-10). As previously stated, we have many invitations extended to us from God through His infallible Word, the Bible. As Isaiah, the Messianic prophet of old penned, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. . . ." (Isaiah 1:18). Let us reason together concerning "The Forgotten Invitation."

In Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount, referred to by some as the Great Manifesto of the Prince of Peace, Jesus laid down the principles of discipleship (Matthew 5:1-17). Near the end of this magnificent discourse, Jesus extended the following invitation, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be which find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). The "strait and narrow way" is the "crowdless" way, for Jesus plainly contrasts the number that will choose the "broad way" with the number that will choose the "narrow way." We are now living in an atmosphere that has become "crowd-conscious." We are now living in a society where society and government have become "crowd-conscious," because everything is based upon majority rule. As sad as this is, some in the church have let this philosophy of "majority rule" affect them in their religious convictions and practices. I am becoming more and more convinced that there are movements in the churches of Christ in our day and time who are chasing after "numbers" at any cost, rather than leading precious souls to Christ using the Gospel message (Luke 19:10; Romans 1:16). Many of the church today have digressed to this "numbers at any cost," and the "ends justifies the means. "There is grave danger in this kind of thinking, because the quest for "great numbers"

has weakened every phase of the work of the church in our day and time, especially in the pulpit! The result can be summed up in one word . . . Compromise!

Many congregations have been caught up in the "crowd psychology," more and more. Many congregations have quit having Gospel meetings because, they no longer attract "great crowds." Others refuse to become involved in personal evangelism because the majority of the church will not get involved. Again, there is grave danger in the "crowd-psychology." Have you ever considered how many did not believe the preaching of Noah. The Forgotten Invitation—(Genesis 6:5-8, 22; Hebrews 11:6-7; 1 Peter 3:15-21)? Have you ever considered how the "great-crowd" felt during the days of Noah when God closed the door of the ark (Genesis 7:16)? Noah preached for one hundred years and the "great-crowd" philosophy did not dictate to God one time in that day and age, so what makes one think that there has been a change in God's plan in our day and time? Have you considered what impact the "great-crowd" philosophy had on God when they said, ". . . let Him be crucified . . ." (Matthew 27:23, 26)? Let me assure you, dear reader, the majority had never dictated religious policy to Almighty God (Acts 10:35). How would you have liked to have been in the "great-crowds" we have just mentioned?

It was a "crowd-less" way then and it is a "crowd-less" way in our day and time. Ancient Israel had disregarded God's covenant, authority, and a multitude ("great-multitude") fell in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:1-11). It seems that the evidence is mountain high and indisputable that the way of the "crowd" and their ways are frowned upon by God. Consider the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), when great numbers of people were present in the city of Jerusalem. It was only fifty days after the death of Christ and they would be familiar with what Jesus had done, and what He had promised His disciples (John 13-17). Twelve men that day spoke in languages that they had never studied, the Gospel of Christ was preached and about three thousand precious souls obeyed that Gospel (Acts 2:1-47). Possibly 3% were saved, but 97%, "the great-crowd," rejected the saving Gospel. God's way has always been the "crowd-less" way.

There are three basic reasons why this is so. First, it is a way of agony. There is pain involved when one turns from sin to

God because one is turning away from something that he at one time really loved. But, when we give ourselves to God, we realize that the pain of giving up something that we had once loved has overcome. The blessings of Christianity far outweigh anything that the world has to offer. A man will not change his way of living until he is afflicted with the misery of knowing that he is lost and that he is grieving the great heart of his Creator. I am convinced that repentance is the most difficult command in the Bible to obey! It may require one to give up his friends, neighbours, wealth, pleasures of this life, and in some cases, his family (Matthew 10:37; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 11 Peter 3:9).

The second reason is that the "crowd-less" way is the way of loneliness and isolation. Many friends, neighbours, loved ones, and even family members may reject one because he obeys the Gospel. Many want the prestige that comes from being recognized as a part of the "crowd." This is a particular problem with young people, but the Bible gives the answer (Ecclesiastes 11:9; Ecclesiastes 12:3, 13-14; Exodus 23:2). The question, "Will this harm my influence as a Christian," will usually give one the right answer.

The third reason that God's way is a "crowd-less" way is because it is a costly way. The young ruler was not willing to pay the price (Mark 10:21-30). The Lord's disciples were astonished because they saw the force of the Lord's teaching. Many times man is not willing to pay the price. Notice Peter's statement: "Lo we have left all, and have followed Thee" (Mark 10:26). How many of us could answer with the same vigour as did Peter? "We have left all . . .!"

The narrow way is a way of commitment, and unless we can say that we have left all, we have not really accepted the invitation of Jesus. Jesus lost a convert, but He refused to accept him without total commitment. Many are trying to follow Jesus without the commitment that is needed to be successful. When one invests all that he has in service for the Lord, interest will be paid on that investment (Mark 10:29-30). When has anyone ever lost anything he invested in the Lord? "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not a vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

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