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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

"... God shows no partiality."

There is but only one God. He is the God and the Creator of whole universe; of the peoples of all nationalities and races. God has not created many religions but He has revealed His only one will for all humans. Peter was a Jew, as were most others Christ's disciples, before becoming follower of Christ. When Peter came to Cornelius' house, who was a Gentile, Peter told him "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." (Acts 10:34,35). When Paul had come in Athens, he stood in the midst of the Areopagus and told the people there that: "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'

Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:24-31).

God shows no partiality. He wants all people everywhere to repent or change. He loves all people alike. "For God so loved the world," says the Bible at John 3:16, "that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." One of the personalities of the Divine Nature, which is God, left heaven and came down to earth; assumed human flesh; became a man; and by the foreknowledge of God died on the cross, taking upon Himself the sins of humanity, to propitiate for the sins of the world. (Phil. 2:6-8; Acts 2:23; 1 John 4:10). He died for the whole world. He loves the whole world. He wants whole world to be saved from sin and for all to have the eternal life in heaven.

His gospel, the good news of His death and burial and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4), is for all. He wants all to believe in Him and repent of all wrong, and then be baptised (buried in water) for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5). He has but only one church, which He Himself built (Matt. 16:18), for which he shed His blood, according to Acts 20:28. The Bible teaches that His church, His one church is His spiritual body and that He is the Head of His one church (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18). And, to this one church He Himself adds all who believe in Him and obey His commands to be saved. (Acts 2:41,47). And, finally, God will be impartial in His judgment of all. Christ made this statement: "He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). How wonderful it is to know that we have an impartial God, who has made us all in the same way, who has given us only one Saviour and who saves us all from our sins in the same way. He shows no partiality.

The Loss Of One May Mean The Loss Of Many

J.C. CHOATE

How wonderful it is to see a person obey the Lord and to become a Christian, a child of God, a member of the Lord's family which is His church. The scriptures tell us that when one obeys the gospel, the Lord saves that person and adds him to His church. (Acts 2:38, 47). If that person remains faithful to the Lord for the rest of his life by worshipping God each first day of the week (Acts 20:7), following Christ daily (1 Corinthians 15:28), living a good moral life (Ephesians 4:24-32), then finally heaven will be his home. (Revelation 2:10). A vital part of living this faithful life is that the Christian is to teach and influence his family, friends, and others so that they may go to heaven too.

Even though this is a beautiful picture of a wonderful life, it is a sad truth that some fall from the faith along the way. Often those who are young in years or young in their spiritual life will fall. Sometimes it is older people who succumb to temptation and the ways of the world. They become lost again, and unless they repent and turn back to the Lord they will die in sin and end up being lost for all eternity. Others fail to continue to worship God on a regular basis and simply drift away. One of the greatest causes of saved people being lost is that they choose to marry a person who is not a Christian. In a small percentage of such marriages, the non-Christian is converted, but in more than 80% of the cases the Christian who was weak enough to marry outside of Christ grows weaker as time passes. Eventually he has either left religion altogether or he has joined the denomination to which his mate belonged.

It is my prayer that if you are a Christian you will never depart from the Lord. If you do, the Apostle Peter said, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:21,22). What is Peter saying? That when

one becomes a Christian and then leaves the faith it is like a dog returning to his vomit and a hog that was clean going back to wallow again in the mire. In other words, the Christian goes back into sin, becomes lost again, and sets a bad example to all who can be influenced by him. Peter's conclusion was that it would have been better for such a person never to have known the way of truth. Why? Because, first, it is much more difficult to bring him back to the truth than it was to convert him in the first place. And, second, through his behaviour, not only will he be lost but he will surely be responsible for members of his family being lost—the children, grandchildren, and many generations to come. In the final analysis, how many hundreds of souls may go to hell, simply because of that one weak Christian back in the ancestral line?

Again Peter said concerning the Christian, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5-11). Peter is saying that if the Christian will grow, and continue to grow by adding those attributes to his life, he will never fall. However, if he lacks these things he becomes blind to all that the Lord has done for him. He cannot see clearly the way before him, and has forgotten that he has been forgiven of his sins. In that case, he will be lost, and will lead many others to be eternally lost with him.

Brethren, let us be faithful to the Lord all the days of our lives so that when we leave this world we can go the heaven. Let us not only be faithful for the sake of our own souls but also for the sake of many other souls, family members and friends included. Surely you don't want to be lost, and you don't want those who are close and dear to your heart to be lost.

If you are not a Christian, read and study the Lord's word, believe it, and obey it so you can be saved and so you can have an influence on your family members and friends, for their eternal good.

If you are not a faithful Christian, please repent of your sins and return to the Lord before it is too late. Surely you want to go to heaven and you will want your family members and loved ones to go to heaven too.

Especially For Women

The Essence Of Truth

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

"Law"—the body of rules or principles *prescribed by authority* or established by custom. "Truth"—the state or quality of *being true*; a spiritual or philosophical *verity*.

Truth is not truth simply because a law has been arbitrarily made by a body of people, *establishing* that it be so. There are basic truths that are *inherently so*, regardless of whether or not any man or law of man *acknowledges* them.

In this age of humanism, often the charge is made, "*That's just your Judaeo-Christian belief*" or "*Don't try to push your morals off on me!*"

Does this *blanket rejection* of the idea of "absolute truth" cancel the truths that do exist? When humanists have practiced open sexuality for 50 years, will there no longer be any physical or emotional consequences, because humans have *pronounced* this behaviour acceptable? Will the negative factors associated with immorality have then ceased to exist, simply because no one any longer counts it as "wrong"?

Is a thing right only because the code I accept has pronounced it so? Is "wrong" only the voice of my guilty conscience?

No, *there are basic truths that are inherently right*. They have always been right, everywhere, and they will always be right, everywhere. They are deeper and broader than the history

of man or his laws. They are *right* because they *are* right. And built into themselves are natural good results when they are followed, and natural consequences when they are ignored or disobeyed.

But the fact that these are inherent truths doesn't mean that all people have always acknowledged them.

For instance, it is wrong to lie. Some people, even some religions, some governments may permit dishonesty. There may be a nation-wide denial of this fundamental truth that it is wrong to lie. But it is still wrong to lie, and built into this basic truth are also natural results: a man who is known to be a liar suffers many and continual consequences of his lying. A nation that is plagued by a lying society is damaged and impaired in its attempts to progress. Eventually the breaking of this truth will break the offender.

It is inherently wrong to steal. If the laws of the land did not pronounce it so, would it still be wrong to take what belongs to another? Yes. Stealing is inherently wrong, and the thief will eventually bring himself down to destruction, breaking himself against the very truth he flouts.

It is inherently wrong to shed innocent blood. For many years the world has denied this truth, condoning the abortion of unborn babies. This same kind of logic led to the terrible holocaust in Germany. We have set our feet on the road to acceptance of doctor-aided suicide, then to euthanasia, and ultimately to selective termination of human life based on a pre-determined set of rules. When millions of mothers, fathers, and medical personnel have hardened themselves enough to brutally take the life of millions of unborn babies, we will reap a society so "logical" and hardened that undreamed-of atrocities will seem acceptable.

It is inherently wrong to break the family. God did not forbid divorce simply because He wanted married people to stay together. He forbade it because, inherent within the divorce situation and a natural consequence of it, are countless irremediable problems. Everyone involved suffers, often a lifetime of hurt, and especially are children scarred. Out of broken homes and repeated divorce and remarriage, grow physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, incest, hatred, anger, and often murder. Someone in a western countries said, "Our very

nation is presently in the throes of destroying itself through the destruction of the home. This is a prime example of a people and a nation denying an inherent truth—the sacredness of the family—and breaking itself to pieces on its cursed lie.”

It is inherently wrong to practice sexual immorality. God pronounced a truth: from the beginning, one man for one woman for life. Humans can observe this truth and benefit by its blessings, or they can break the truth and be broken by it.

Who gets venereal diseases? When there is absolute fidelity between a husband and his wife, has there ever been a case of venereal disease developing through their sexual relationship? Or a case of AIDS? Recent scientific reports show a much higher rate of cervical cancer among those women who live promiscuous lives than among those who are married and are faithful to their husbands.

Why are these facts so? Romans 1:27 states that those who break these inherent moral truths, “*receive in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*” Biologically, the bodies of humans are designed for morality, for faithfulness to one’s mate. When that truth is defied or ignored, the body itself suffers terrible and deadly consequences.

It is an inherent truth that God is the only God. Perhaps you would reason, “Now you have left moral truths and have gotten into the realm of religion.” No. If God does exist, He *is* the **ultimate truth**—not just a matter of “religion”—and to deny Him is the ultimate wrong.

God declares, and supports His declaration with a literal universe of evidence, that **He is God, the *only* eternal entity.** If His declaration is truth—fact—then we have no choice about who will be enthroned in our hearts. He exists—the Rock of reality. If we acknowledge Him, worship Him as our Lord, look to Him as the all-knowing One who can guide us, then all will be well with our lives. The inherent truth of His existence radiates blessings and life on those who own Him as God.

Contrarily, we can deny Him. Our denial has absolutely no effect on the reality of His existence. But as we deny and oppose that Rock of reality, we simply dash ourselves hopeless against inherent truth. Ultimately that opposition will destroy us.

So, it is not that **God** chooses arbitrarily to bless some and curse others, or to save some and condemn others. It is we,

ourselves, who determine what becomes of us, by our response to truth. Do we accept the Rock so that He becomes our refuge, or do we defy Him so that we dash ourselves against Him to our own destruction?

The statement is made in 2 Timothy 2:12,13: “. . . *If we deny Him, He will also deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*”

That scripture is simply saying that **God Himself is inherent truth; He cannot deny Himself!**

When Jesus walked this earth, He said of the unbelievers in the crowd: “. . . *You have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him' I shall be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word*” (John 8:55).

God exists. He is truth. The truths He has revealed to us in the Bible are not simply the thinking of the “Judaeo-Christian” system, to be ignored or followed according to the preferences of humans. Those revelations are inherent truth. We can enshrine God and those truths as life within us and be blessed eternally by them, or we can deny them and dash ourselves to death in opposition to them. The choice is ours.

Conversion of a Terrorist

FRANCIS DAVID

The Bible in the book of Acts tells us about a man whose name was Saul. This man was well educated and was full of zeal for the cause that he was working for. When He was a young man he started terrorising people of God. When Stephen the man of God was preaching about Christ, he was even involved when he was murdered by the people. We read “Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him, with one accord: and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witness laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. (Acts 7:57-58).

We read about this man again in Chapter 8, and here we see that he was persecuting the Christians. In verse three we read as it says: “As for the Saul, he made havoc of the church,

entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Saul thought what he was doing he was doing for the right cause. Sometimes, some people think that what they are doing is right, but they do not realise that their action is wrong and it is not good for them and as well as for the society where they live. In Chapter 22 of Acts we read Saul later realised his mistake and he confessed what he was doing is not right. He says: "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear my defence before you now. And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then he said: "I am indeed a Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. I persecuted this way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished." (1-5). The good thing about Saul is his realization, that his deeds were evil and he wanted to change himself.

When Jesus met Him, a great change was going to come into his life and we read that his entire life was changed when he came in contact with the Lord. The record says: as he was journeying, he came near Damascus and the time was about noon. Suddenly a great light from heaven shone around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? He was shocked to hear this voice and immediately asked: "Who are you Lord?" and the voice came and said: "I AM JESUS of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting." He asked, what you want me to do Lord? Now here we see, he was not told that he is changed now and he is saved from his sins, but rather he was asked to "Arise and go to Damascus, and he would be told there what he is supposed to do." He contacted one godly man whose name was Ananias, and he told him that He should not wait now but must be baptised immediately (Acts 22:16). As he was baptised, this was a turning point in his life. Saul now became Paul. His name was changed from Saul to Paul. He left all the bad, and evil deeds. He left his terrorism against Christians and now he was working

for God. He became one of the powerful servant of the Lord. He has written some wonderful letters to the Christians. Now he has started preaching about Christ. We read in the Bible that immediately after his conversion, he started his ministry "Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priest." But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ." (Acts 9:20-22). Later we see, Paul writes about his last days by saying: "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8). What a change in this man! The Lord can change you today, if you come to him with true heart. No matter how bad you are, he is willing to accept you. He says: "Come unto me all you labour and heavy laden, I will give you rest." Our Lord changed Saul's life and He can change yours. Wouldn't you come today and surrender yourself to Him?

Longing For God—3

THOMAS R. DOHLING

**PSALM 139:14 ' . . . I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY
MADE'**

A. The Human Body

The stomach is able to digest materials, which are compositionally much tougher than it is. We would have to boil our food in strong acids at 100°C to do with cookery what the stomach and intestines do at 37°C. One of the incredible things about the stomach is the fact that though it consists of flesh, it does not digest itself. One of the chemicals it contains is hydrochloric acid, and acid strong enough to dissolve a razor

blade.

The liver weighs about 1.362 kg and performs over 500 different functions. It filters enough blood in a single year to fill 23 milk trucks. The memory storage capacity of the human brain is equivalent to the information content of 20 million books. A computer that would match the memory capacity of the human brain would consume electrical energy at the rate of one billion watts, take up a huge amount of space and would cost about Rs. 98,000 crore to build!

B. The Real You—The Soul: Genesis 1:26-27

Physically we resemble the animals, we also have a body of flesh, we bleed, we have offspring, and so on, but there are parts of our being that have no counterpart in the rest of Creation.

(1) Where did we get our concept of 'right and wrong'? Where did we get our concern about fairness, obligation, and justice, what you 'should do' and what 'ought not to be done'? All humans do not have the same moral standards, we don't all draw the line in the same place, **BUT WE DO ALL DRAW THE LINE SOMEWHERE!**

(2) Where did we get our appreciation for beauty?

(3) Where did we get our ability to reason?

(4) Where did we get our 'religious nature'? The question is NOT, 'will man serve/worship something (one)?' The question is, 'WHAT/WHO WILL A MAN SERVE/WORSHIP?' (Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16).

C. Conclusion

On the basis of our study of tangible evidences, the questions that arise are:

(1) What is our goal in life?

(2) Are we seeking God to serve and worship Him?

(3) Are we hungering and thirsting for Him?

(4) Do we revere Him because of Who He is?

(5) Do we lovingly anticipate appearing before Him?

(6) Do we return His love by obeying His commandments?

Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" and "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:6,8).

When we sincerely, from a pure heart, hunger and thirst (long) for God, we shall find Him. It will be like finding the "pearl

of great price" or the "treasure" that would cause us to long for nothing else. The more we gaze at this Treasure the deeper our longing would grow because this Treasure is like no other. The apostle Paul said it this way: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Philippians 3:7-15).

Can we disregard someone who says:

"Even when you are old, I will take care of you, even when you have gray hair, I will carry you. I made you and I will support you; I will carry you and rescue you" (Isaiah 46:4)?

"Even if the mountains are removed and the hills displaced, my devotion will not be removed from you, nor will my covenant of friendship be displaced," says the one who has compassion on you, the LORD" (Isa. 54:10).

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry." (Matthew 11:28-30).

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know

me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep” (read the passage in John 10:14-18).

SHOULD WE NOT LONG FOR SUCH THE ONE WHO LOVES AND LONGS FOR US SO INTENSELY?

The Holy Spirit and the Word

DILLARD THURMAN

It is often difficult to lead people to see the close relationship sustained by the Holy Spirit to the Word of God in the salvation of sinful man. Many times people are led to believe that the Holy Spirit operates separate and apart from God's word to save man, and even excludes the power of the word in saving man from sin. The work of the Holy Spirit should never be minimized nor discounted, but we should learn where and how the power of the Spirit is exerted. Then we shall also more fully evaluate the power of God's word, for they unite in our salvation.

Whereas the apostle Paul referred to the word of God as *“the gospel of your salvation”* (Eph. 1:13), he by no means downgraded the work of the Holy Spirit. For it is shown that the Spirit has revealed and confirmed the gospel. Paul also wrote, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation”* (Rom. 1:16). But Paul also realized that the Spirit gave the gospel its power.

That we may have greater clarity in this matter, we have presented in our lesson some of the things which the Holy Spirit and the word of God both do, or accomplish, in the God's plan for man's salvation. A careful and diligent study will disclose that the Spirit works through the word. They are not rivals and competitors, but collaborate in our reconciliation to God. The Holy Spirit presented the gospel which discloses the terms of salvation. By the joint power, a man may be saved from sin. In Eph. 6:17, we read, *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* So, the sword of the Spirit of God's word. God's word is the weapon which the Holy Spirit uses in waging His spiritual warfare.

THE SPIRIT BEARS WITNESS

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). From this we find that the Holy Spirit bears witness. But Jesus said, *"Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me"* (John 5:39). The Scriptures (the word of God) bear witness, even as does the Spirit. As we look further, we find that the Spirit also testifies: *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning"* (John 15:26-27). Thus, it is made clear that the Holy Spirit testifies through the word of God. Aside from that word, given by the Spirit, there is no testimony.

THE HOLY SPIRIT INSTRUCTS

The Spirit has been employed to instruct man in God's will. *"Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands"* (Neh. 9:30). But instruction is also imparted by the Scriptures: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). So, we find that both the Spirit and the word instruct. For the Spirit uses the word to impart God's instructions. They do not work independently or separately.

THE SPIRIT CONVICTS THE SINNER

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, *"And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"* (John 16:8). Then, in Titus 1:9, it is written, *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers"* (Titus 1:9). From these two passages, we learn that both the Spirit and the word of God convict (or, convince) the world. But a careful investigation discloses that the Holy Spirit reproves through the word which He has delivered and confirmed.

There can be no spiritual life without the Holy Spirit, for *"The Spirit giveth life"* (2 Cor. 3:6). And James wrote, *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures"* (James 1:18). The apostle Paul wrote of the Corinthians, *"For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel"* (1 Cor. 4:15). The Holy Spirit gives life when one is begotten by the gospel which the Spirit has given.

BORN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5). So, one must be born of the Spirit. The spiritual birth is explained more fully in 1 Pet. 1:22-23, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."* So, one is born by the word of God, which is the *"seed of the kingdom"* (Luke 8:11). The Spirit operates through the word of God to produce a new creature of God's spiritual family.

THE SPIRIT SAVES MEN FROM SIN

The apostle Paul wrote, *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit"* (Titus 3:5). But joined with this is the admonition from James 1:21, *"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."* The Spirit saves us, and so does the word of God (Rom. 1:16). Thus, the Holy Spirit uses His word to save us.

THE HOLY SPIRIT SANCTIFIES

After showing the base state of the unsaved, Paul wrote, *"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Cor. 6:11). This power to sanctify (or "set apart") which is here credited to the Holy Spirit, is also exerted through the word of God, for Jesus prayed, *"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). People who respond to the influence of the Holy Spirit to be set apart, or sanctified, are responding to the word which the Spirit gave.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CLEANSSES

The cleansing power of the Spirit is also exerted through the word of God, for the Lord Jesus said: *"Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you"* (John 15:3). This cleansing is shown again in Eph. 5:25-26, *"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word"* (Eph. 5:25-26). This cleansing is accomplished by a washing in water which is taught in the word by the Holy Spirit.

THE HOLY SPIRIT DWELLS IN THE CHRISTIAN

The apostle Paul wrote, *"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his . . . But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you"* (Rom. 8:9-11). So, the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians. But Paul also wrote, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom"* (Col. 3:16). The Holy Spirit and the word of God both dwell in the Christian. And the Spirit dwells in us in correlation to the word which we imbibe!

THE HOLY SPIRIT STRENGTHENS

Another joint participation of the Spirit and the word of God is an imparting strength to the Christian. *"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"* (Eph. 3:16). But the apostle also said, *"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified"* (Acts 20:32). The Spirit strengthens, and the word of God builds us up. Surely we can see that the Spirit builds us up and strengthens us through the word of God.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In Rom. 15:13, Paul speaks of *"the power of the Holy Spirit."* It was by His power that light came into the world (Gen. 1:2-3). And the power in the creation is revealed in Heb. 1:3, as we read of God and *"the word of his power."* So, again we find the parallel.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE RESURRECTION

Also, in Rom. 8:11, the resurrection is said to be by the Spirit. And Jesus said in John 5:28-29 that it is by the word of God. Still there is no rivalry. This is not competitive action, but the Spirit of God moving and working through the word of God.

Many people are standing apart from salvation which the Spirit offers through God's word because they have been led to believe that the Spirit will work some miracle of faith within them. But God declares, *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom. 10:17). The first gospel sermon was presented by the apostles *"as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:4). But notice the result: *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"* (Acts 2:41). The Spirit gave the word of God, but that word had to be accepted in *"obedience of faith"* (Rom. 1:5) in order for them to be saved.

Room to Improve

JOHNNY RAMSEY

The Bible tells us that Christians are to grow and always abound in the Lord's cause (1 Cor. 15:58). Evidently, then we are capable of improvement in spiritual matters, as 2 Pet. 3:18 demands: *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever."* We can never please our Maker by a stagnant lifestyle. Sadly, there are some members of the Lord's church who seem perfectly content with the "status quo". They drift along, making no valiant effort to improve. The following cryptic analysis describes far too many people:

OPPORTUNITIES MISSED

*There was a very cautious man
Who never laughed or played,
He never risked, he never tried,
He never sang or prayed*

*And when one day he passed away,
His insurance was denied.
For since he really never lived,
They claimed he never died.*

When we are satisfied with less than our best, we hinder the cause of Christ and thus live beneath our privileges. The one-talent man of Matt. 25 is a classic reminder of this vain existence. The following challenge is always before us, "*Seek ye Jehovah and his strength; Seek his face evermore*" (1 Chron. 16:11). A clever person emphasized this point: "Anything free is worth what you pay."

It is abundantly clear that life is a search for what we deem important, and nothing is more valuable than genuine Christianity. We will always find time for those ideas that are dear to our hearts and souls. When we take time to assist others on the road to heaven, our own feeble concerns for self will vanish. Investing time and energy in the glorious cause of Christ will help us to focus better on matter that transcend secular pursuits. While living in Australia, I learned that the Sydney Bridge is parallel to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco as a landmark. Through the years, suicidal folk in both nations have jumped of those bridges to end their lives. One such man climbed the cables one night, intending to end his life. But he saw another man with the same intentions, and, forgetting his own troubles, he rushed to grab the other, pulling him to safety. the next day the Sydney newspaper had this headline: **Two Who Did Not Jump!**

When we stop being so self-centered and reach out to others' needs, we begin to grow in compassion and empathy. Such involvement will help us to improve and grow as servants of the Lord, "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever, ye do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Cor. 10:31).

We should always be content with what we have, but we should never be satisfied with our own attainments. There will always be room for more improvement in the magnificent kingdom of God. Spiritual growth starts with a proper desire, an attitude of concern and a deep determination to go on to perfection (Heb. 6:1). Nothing will be tolerated to stand in the way of real progress in the service of our King. We will not allow

Satan to deter us from a closer walk with God. As Paul wrote, "Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

The tremendous value of the Savior's cause demands our very best as this passage from Christ indicates: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in the field; which a man found, and hid; and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44). Let us strive, diligently and daily, to ever march onward and upward, to that beautiful home of the soul. We dare not slacken our determination or pace in our quest.

It All Depends

C.E. COBB

The possibility and hope of salvation depends upon one's attitude toward the Gospel which is the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

When we are instructed by the Holy Spirit through the written Word, how do we truly react/respond? What is our attitude toward that which the Scriptures teach?

When we are taught in the Word that there is one church, our reaction depends upon our attitude toward this teaching (Please note: Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:4). Do we seek to change the teaching or compromise the Word by accepting the unbelieving world's view of the subject? It all depends upon our view-believing the Word as it is or wresting it to placate the feelings of some who may be about us.

Our response to the teaching that women are to "keep silent" in the church (I Corinthians 14:34) and "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in Silence" (I Timothy 2:12). An outcry against this teaching does not change the teaching.

The Bible still teaches modesty for our time as it has always taught modesty in the past as set forth in the unchangeable New Covenant of Christ. "In like manner also, that women adorn

themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety . . ." (I Timothy 2:9). The Word also says, ". . . Keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22b). It all depends upon our attitude toward the Word of God as to whether or not we shall respect this teaching.

It all depends upon our attitude toward the teaching of the Bible concerning baptism as to whether or not there will be obedience or rejection. God is no respecter of persons and it has been declared that men must "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38).

When we stand before God in judgment, it will all depend upon whether or not we submitted to His will as to whether or not we shall enter into life eternal (Matthew 7:21).

We plead with men/women everywhere to accept the Word of God as it is and cease (if we have been guilty) of seeking to change the Word of God to please ourselves. Let us seek rather to please God. Our hope of life eternal depends upon our attitude toward God's Word for it is by His Word that we shall be judged.

The Significance of Blood

FRED DILLON

"Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22b). "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!"

Blood and its derivatives are so vital to all of mankind in our modern generation. Blood tests prevent so many serious maladies from harming mankind; blood transfusions give new strength to seriously ill patients during surgery; blood donors are needed to re-supply the shelves of hospital facilities, and we worry about blood pressure, low blood, high blood, and blood loss.

In the spiritual realm, the importance of blood is even more pronounced. The soul's salvation is absolutely dependent on the shedding of blood-Christ's blood. The existence of the church itself is contingent upon the outpouring of the blood from the

Lamb of God (Acts 20:28).

God has always made clear the importance of blood. He informed Noah in Genesis 9:4: "the life is in the blood." He also commanded that if one shed blood of another, he must pay the price of his own blood in punishment by dying at the hands of the "avenger of blood."

Abel, by faith, offered the firstlings of his flock to God and thus pleased God by a sacrifice of faith.

God provided Abraham a "ram in a thicket," when he was ready to sacrifice his own son Isaac as a blood offering to God.

The Hebrews saved the lives of their firstborn by sprinkling blood on the doorposts of their houses before they fled Egypt and the angry Pharaoh's army, while the absence of blood cost the lives of the Egyptian's firstborn in every house.

Moses, under God's direction, took the blood of calves and of goats and sprinkled both the book and all the people saying, "This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you" (Hebrews 9:18-20).

How much superior is the blood of Jesus. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by HIS OWN BLOOD, (emphasis mine-FD) He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12).

Thus, Christ became the "mediator" of the New Testament, and died for all under both testament (Hebrews 9:15-17). Today, men are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ "once for all."

God makes it so plain for us to understand: "In Whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Again, "God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

We remember this each Lord's Day when we recall the words of Paul: "After the same manner also, He took the cup when He has supped saying, this cup is the New Testament in My blood as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me" (I Corinthians 11:25).

So many Scriptures remind us of power of the blood:

Colossians 1:20—"And having made peace through the

blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in heaven, or things in the earth."

I Peter 1:2—"Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

I John 1:7—"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

When we become Christians, we are justified by His blood and remain in that state as we do His will as Peter stated in I Peter 1:19. We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

When men and women are baptized "into Christ" (Romans 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27), they have contact in a spiritual sense with the blood of Christ. His death, burial, and resurrection are magnificently reproduced when we are baptized into His death, Buried with Him, and raised to a new life.

"The operation of God." (Colossians 2:12-13), makes us part of the body of Christ, as citizens in God's kingdom, and as sheep in God's flock.

All of this was dependent upon the shedding of the blood of Christ Who gave His life on Calvary's cross.

Take Up The Cross

T. PIERCE BROWN

In reading Mark 8:34, the thought occurred to me that I do not ever remember hearing a sermon which really emphasized the two points in this verse that in order to follow Jesus, one would have to deny self and take up the cross. I have heard and preached many that would tell the blessings one would receive, such as forgiveness of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit, eternal life, joy and peace, but the absolute necessity of self denial and cross bearing, I do not remember hearing much about, though I have no doubt that many were preached. I hear, "I'm O.K.; You're O.K.," "How to Enjoy Life More," or even occasionally by some

"old time" preacher, "What Must I Do To Be Saved" including faith, repentance, confession and baptism, but not much from anyone on what is involved in following Christ.

It is my opinion that a large number of us do not even realize what "self-denial" means. I think I grew up thinking it was denying myself some things that I might want that were wrong to have. When I would pass the neighbour's watermelon patch on some hot summer day and knew he did not want me to get one (which was unusual, for most neighbours were happy to have a hungry boy get one melon if he needed it), self-denial seemed to mean that I would not take what I wanted.

In fact, I think I was probably preaching for several years before it really dawned on me that deny self is not to deny self some things but to deny self himself! The middle of sin is I! As the song indicates, we may start out with "All of self and none of Thee," but we must come to "none of self and all of Thee." We must deny self in order to be a Christian. Paul put it in Galatians 3:20, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." As shocking as the thought may be to some, it is my opinion that a person may go through the outward process of obeying the Gospel in order to get what he wants, the remission of sins, eternal life, all attendant blessings, and never really be concerned about denying self. To say it another way, one may be willing and ready to accept Christ as Saviour without accepting Him as Lord.

But, I wanted the primary thrust of this article to deal with "take up his cross." In general conversation, it is probably a very misused expression. If one wrecks his car, he may say, "It is just a cross I have to bear." If his wife nags him, he may think "I must bear that cross." Any sorrow, loss, or difficulty is spoken of as "my cross." Sometimes persons even use their own sins and shortcomings that get them into difficulties as a cross. "I have a high temper, but that is just one of the crosses I must bear." What a travesty on the proper use of the term as Christ used it!

Calm endurance under the vicissitudes of life may be a virtue lacking in many of us, but Christianity is not simply a form of stoicism. The cross is not something that just falls on us. The cross is something we "take up" a deliberate choice of something we could have escaped, except for the fact that we deliberately chose to serve Christ, and as a result suffer that difficulty,

tribulation, persecution or trouble.

When you and I take upon ourselves the bearing of one another's burdens because of our Christian relationships, that might be said to be "taking up the cross." When we are ridiculed, laughed at, persecuted, maligned because we are fighting the good fight of faith, this is taking up the cross. But, if we are merely ridiculed because we act in a ridiculous fashion; laughed at because we are funny; rejected because we are stubborn, hateful or mean, we have no right to assume, "I have taken up my cross and followed Jesus."

Although it may be possible to deny one's self without taking up the cross of Christ, it seems impossible to take up the cross without denying one's self. The reason is that taking up the cross involves giving up any pleasure or desire of self when such becomes necessary in order to follow Christ.

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I Sunny David, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and behalf.

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