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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”

Here, in this passage of the Scripture from Matthew 10:28; Christ was teaching about the fear of God. More than anything or everything else man ought to fear God. Because ultimately man has to face God in His judgment. Man or whatever power be on earth can only kill or destroy the body of a man, but cannot harm or destroy the soul of a man. However, God is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

According to Genesis 1:26-27 man was created in the beginning by God in His own image and in His own likeness, thus, man is a spiritual being. The apostle Paul in his sermon to the people at Mars Hill told that we are the off-spring of God (Acts 17:29). Speaking of God, at John 4:24, Christ said, “God is Spirit.” When man was created by God in the beginning, Genesis 2:7 tells us, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Thus man is two separate entities, that is, body and soul. As long as man lives on earth he lives together as a body and a soul. But God has appointed for all men to die

once. (Hebrews 9:27). And at that point the spirit of man leaves the body, and the body dies. (James 2:26). Speaking of death, the writer at Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."

Where do people go after they die? The body may be buried or cremated, but the soul goes to Hades, which is the intermediate place or state for the souls. This is where the rich man of Luke 16 went, where he was in torments in Hades according to Luke 16:23. But Christ also went into Hades, as Peter quoted, prophet David saying, in Acts 2:27 & 31. But Christ was in Paradise of Hades as we read in Luke 23:43. Paradise is the place of bliss. Hades therefore is divided into two compartments, and there is a great gulf fixed between them, so that no one can cross over. (Luke 16:26).

On the day of judgment when Christ will appear all will be resurrected (John 5:28,29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Bodies, not souls need resurrection. Just as to a dead seed that is sown in earth, God gives a new body when it comes up, so will He give new and incorruptible body to each one on the day of resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:36-44). On that day Hades will deliver up the souls (Revelation 20:13). Souls will reunite with their new resurrected bodies and will thus stand before Christ to be judged. On that day, before the Lord there will be only two category of people, the saved and the unsaved. The unsaved will go into everlasting punishment and the saved ones will enter into eternal life. (Matthew 25:46). While Hades is the place for the departed souls, and is temporary, only to exist until all will be resurrected (Revelation 20:14). Heaven and hell are eternal and are forever and both soul and body will enter there to experience either eternal life of joy or everlasting punishment.

The message of the Bible is Good News, and it says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). God want to give the joy of eternal life in heaven to all. Only the loving fear of God will motivate man to do what He says man must do to prepare himself to enter the joy of heaven.

Indian Evangelism

(No. 2)

J.C. CHOATE

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

"For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak" (1 Thessalonians 1:8).

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

The church of Christ now exists throughout India. It is well established in the major cities, with several congregations in most of them. It is also to be found in hundreds of other cities and villages all over the country. There are several Preacher Training Schools, and some secondary schools, technical schools, and colleges are operated by members of the church. Orphanages have been established to care for homeless children. Any number of monthly magazines are published, hundreds of books have been printed in many languages, several radio programs are broadcast from Colombo, Sri Lanka and at least one weekly TV program is aired from Chennai. A few congregations have elders, and more and more meeting houses are being built.

But this is just the beginning of what we hope the future holds. We need *hundreds* of congregations in the huge metropolises of this country, and there should be congregations in *all* of the cities and villages, not just some of them. We need to print more literature, including Bible correspondence courses and tracts in many languages, and distribute them every where. We need hundreds and even thousands of gospel preachers who can be challenged to take the gospel of Christ to the whole nation. We need men and women to work among the hundreds of tribal groups all over the country. We need to challenge our youth to serve the Lord, and our brothers and sisters and families need to be trained to think in terms of supporting those who would give their lives to the Lord.

Who will go to the North, to the South, to the East and Northeast, and to the West? Who will go to those cities where the church does not yet exist and to the many villages that need the gospel? Who will go to the rich, to the poor, to the educated, and to the uneducated? Who will go to the tribals? Who will go to those who live along the rivers and to those in the coastal areas of the country? Who will go to those who live in the forests, in the jungles, and in the deserts? Who will go to the farmers and to the business people and to those who work in the factories? Who will ride the buses and trains to reach lost souls? Who will organize students in the colleges and universities to study the Bible? Who will train themselves for professions in which they can influence those with whom they associate within those fields?

My brother, my sister, there are so many opportunities out there to teach and to influence souls to obey the Lord and to plant His cause and to spread His teachings. Don't wait for someone to take the lead, but **you take the initiative**. Make up your mind that you are not going to sit and die but that you are going to accomplish something for the Lord while you live. Make some plans and set some goals for yourself and go out and accomplish them with God's help and blessings. That's what life for the Christian is all about! We need people with vision, with faith, with confidence, with a willingness to do things for the Lord that will count for eternity! What a thrill to be involved in such work, and to know that your life is making a difference for good.

Let me encourage you to choose a city and go there, with support or without support, with the intention of converting souls and establishing a congregation of the Lord's church. If there are family members or brothers and sisters in Christ who will help you with some support then that is fine, but if you don't have support, move to that city anyway and find some secular work to support yourself and then proceed with the Lord's work. You can do it, and you will succeed if you will work at it and have the faith and determination to move forward.

With your example and with many similar efforts, just think of the difference that can be made in this country within a few years. Brethren we have a job to do. Let's do it!

Teaching Our Children To Be Spiritual

BETTY BURTON CHOATE

In generations past, most people lived in rural areas, drawing their living from the ground or from other forms of manual labour. From sun up till sun down, the days had to be spent largely in work aimed at sustaining physical life. In much of the world even today, most of life is still spent, day-by-day, feeding, housing and clothing the physical body.

Yet within each physical body dwells the persistent, resilient spirit-being who is the real person. Throughout life that spirit-being tries to be heard, crying out his needs for spiritual nourishment, creating a sense of dissatisfaction and emptiness in the person who insists on concentrating solely on the demands of the physical body.

Parents, in order to be good parents, most realize that the new being their love has created is a dual being; that the little physical body they hold in their arms is only the house for the real spirit person who dwells inside. Therefore, though the baby cries for physical nourishment, never allowing the needs of that body to be forgotten, it is the responsibility of the parents to nurture and develop the spirit being even more carefully.

The "how" of doing this, and of keeping a balance while living in a physical, secular world is the challenge. Even in the ideal situation in which the father goes out to earn the living and the mother stays home to nurture the family, all of the physical responsibilities (the community involvement, the children's school's and extracurricular activities—the unending demands of the physical world) may seem to leave very little time for nurturing the spiritual person.

There are specific things that can be done on a regular basis, as unswerving commitments to spiritual development:

1. Being a faithful member of the Lord's church.
2. Never failing to be present for the assemblies.
3. Having a time of daily family Bible reading or study.

4. Beginning the day with prayer for God's help.

Many Christians who do all of these things realize, though, that their home still lacks the depth of spiritual tone it needs. How can they change spirituality from *a form to a living thing*? Much of the answer lies within our own perspective as parents. We convey far more to our children out of *the well of what we are* than out of the overt words or actions we choose for them as examples. In Matthew 23:4 Jesus said of the Pharisees of His day, ". . . *whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not according to their works; for they say and do not do.*" Without realizing it, parents may send two conflicting messages to their children regarding spiritual things. Their words may say that God is important, yet their manner of dealing with the spiritual realm may say that it has no real relevance to daily life.

Ask yourself these questions regarding the points of spiritual involving listed earlier:

1. Does "faithfulness" consist of little more than "going to church"?
2. Are the children told they "have to go" to the assemblies, yet no other reference is made during the week concerning the lessons learned or the spiritual or emotional or personal help gained?
3. Are prayers at the beginning of the day and before meals obviously no more than a form of words?
4. Is the daily Bible reading a "conscience form," a gesture which must be made?

If we want our children to be truly and deeply spiritual, that must be the perspective out of which we ourselves live. Consider these thoughts:

1. I must realize that being a part of the Lord's family changed my real status from physical to spiritual; and that daily, minute by minute, I function within that relationship with God. It determines not only what I do at ten o'clock on Sunday, but also how I respond to a problem on Monday, the patience with which I deal with frustrations, my honesty toward daily situations, my respect for authority, the purity of my thought and language. If my own perspective is my relationship with Christ, and if I freely and naturally attribute my behaviour to that relationship, then daily Christ-like thought and

- behaviour will be passed on to my children as a way of life.
2. Worship in the presence of God is an important thing to me. Therefore, seeing that perspective, my children will grow to realize what a privilege it is to be *allowed* to worship. They will hear, throughout the week, natural reference to points learned in the classes and the sermon. They will grow to understand that strength is gained from those corporate gatherings which will sustain them from one meeting to the next. Discussion of spiritual thoughts in relation to any and all daily activities must also be a part of family life.
 3. If, as I go through the days, my mind flows naturally from involvement in whatever I must be doing in the physical world to a communion of thought toward God, about my work or something else in my heart, prayer will be a living tool for me. Worded prayers, then, will not be stylized forms but relevant conversations to God which even my children will recognize as being crucial to their daily well-being. To pray about decisions, problems, thankfulness for an unexpected good thing, protection, and any other daily need or concern—and stopping to talk to God and place, any time, for any cause—will make prayer a natural part of the thinking of a child, and a useful tool in his days.
 4. It is a scientific fact that non-living matter cannot beget life, in the physical world. It is also a spiritual fact—a law—that non-living souls cannot pass life to others. The only way parents can ensure that their children be healthy spiritual people—living souls—is to be spiritually alive and healthy themselves. This leaves no room for a “form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:5). A living relationship with God has the power to change us from carnal souls to spiritual people who live and think, act and react, as His children, according to divine nature. This is what we must strive to be, in Him so that we can pass this precious life on to our dearest possessions—our children.

Life Is Uncertain Are You Covered?

FRANCIS DAVID

As I was passing through a street, I noticed a sign board, which had these words and they caught my attention. The words that caught my attention are these: "Life is uncertain, are you covered? This advertisement was from one of the insurance companies. Insurance business is a pretty big business and they are doing good business, all over the world. In our country, we have so many insurance companies, and now you can see many insurance companies are coming from foreign countries and doing business here. These companies attract lots of people giving them a hope for financial security. There are worlds of people who get insurance policies for themselves and as well as for their family members. These people know that life is uncertain and anytime anything can happen.

The word of God, inspired Bible tells us, that life is uncertain. In James chapter 4 verse 13 onward it says: "Come now, you say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make profit. Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for little while and then vanishes away." We must face the fact that life is uncertain. The Hebrew writer says: "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27). Many want to escape from this reality of life. There is no escape from death. It will come to all. How many times we think and assume that we have plenty of time, so let us enjoy and be glad. But we forget that life is uncertain. In Job chapter 14:1,2 we read: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He comes like a flower, and it is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."

We might be financially secured but are we secured spiritually? Do we think seriously the spiritual side of life. Are we secured spiritually with God through Jesus Christ? Isaiah the prophet says: "Your iniquities and your sins have separated you from your God." (Isa. 59:1,2). Seeing this, we must think about

our lives beyond the grave. There is a life beyond the grave. Your soul is precious and this will live after you leave this earth. The kind of lives we live upon this earth will decide our eternal destiny. There is a eternal life and eternal death. We can make our lives spiritually secured through Jesus Christ and His blood. Jesus Himself said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (Jn. 14:6).

My friend, you can cover yourself with Jesus's security. You can build your security on Jesus, the solid foundation. He can cover you through eternal security. Jesus died for you. As the Hebrew writer says: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone." (Heb. 2:9). Jesus has tasted death for you and He has promised to give you eternal security.

Today, you can have this eternal security by coming in contact with His precious blood. You can do it through obedience of the gospel. Jesus is the one who gives true peace, joy and happiness. What would you give in exchange for your soul? Jesus said: "For what is a man profiteth if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt. 16:26). God now commands all men everywhere to repent of their sins (Acts 10:34). The time is now to prepare ourselves to meet God (Amos 4:12). Death will surely come one of these days to us, we don't know when. You can plan now from today to get spiritually secured. If you do this you will be happy here while you live and you will have hope of eternal security. If you are willing to get this spiritual security, please let us know.

The Attitude of Repentance

RICHARD C. ENGLAND

God commands "all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). Repentance, as required by the New Testament, has long been defined as a change of heart that brings about a change in one's life. Obviously, it is not simply being sorry for

one's sins, for "godly sorrow worketh repentance" (2 Corinthians 7:10). Furthermore, repentance is not merely a change in life, but that which brings about the change (Acts 3:19; 26:20; Revelation 2:5). Yet, both the change of heart and the change of actions are so intertwined in the idea of repentance that it is not unusual to find the word used in both the Old and New Testaments speaking of either or both elements.

In the sense of changing one's mind from that which is wrong to that which is right, it is said of God that He "is not a man, that he should repent" (1 Samuel 15:29). Yet, with reference to turning from one course of action to another because of a change in man's action, it is said that God "will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced" (Jeremiah 26:13).

This does not mean that God changes His mind but that if man will turn from evil to good (or good to evil) God will change His action toward that individual according to the principle of punishment of sinners and blessing the obedient. "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). Whether a person is blessed or cursed depends entirely on the action of the individual. And if one sets out on one course and then changes to another, God will change His treatment of that person.

The view of God's command to repent should not be a rigid requirement that is difficult to fulfill. In fact, true kindness and understanding on the part of God are involved in making such a demand. Paul said that it is the "goodness" of God that leads to repentance (Romans 2:4). God knows that when someone becomes a Christian, he will not instantaneously cease from all sin and never again make a mistake. It is adding sin to more sin for a person to say he does not sin. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10).

"Sin" in these verses does not refer to an ongoing life of sin

without an effort to cease from it. It refers to sin of temporary ignorance, fleeting impulse or a momentarily unguarded weakness. God knows that overcoming sin, whether of commission or omission, is a constant process of growth rather than a singular event. Nevertheless, the attitude of repentance will characterize the faithful Christian at all times. As one continues to grow in knowledge and lives as best he can according to the light of the gospel, God will continue to forgive (John 1:7).

What a blessing it is to know that God said, "Repent." Had He said, "Never commit another sin," we would all be lost. The renovating and rear-ranging of one's life after becoming a Christian is somewhat like a lady cleaning a house after the grandchildren have been visiting. She first restores the furniture of its normal place. Then, she picks up all the things that have been scattered around the room. Having worked her way through the larger and most obvious things that need attention, she eventually gets to the smaller, more delicate matters like wiping small fingerprints and smudges off the figurines on the "what-not" shelf.

The penitent person whose determination is to turn from sin to righteousness will first begin to set in order the major things lacking in his life. Then, as time goes by, he will ultimately focus on controlling attitudes, impulsive words, secret thoughts and other such matters that need adjustment. As long as he is making this progress and is determined to do the very best he can to overcome sin, there is no reason for depression and discouragement, even if he becomes aware of a mistake he has made. On the contrary, there is cause for rejoicing in that God has promised that He will not even "impute" sin to such a person (Romans 4:8).

This wonderful teaching is not in any way supportive of the false doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. It is truly the opposite. The promise of continued forgiveness of sins applies only to one who puts forth a constant, determined effort to grow in knowledge and obedience. If one turns aside from walking in the light, the fellowship with God and cleansing from sin are no longer his, but if he continues in the light he enjoys the promise that the blood of Jesus Christ continually cleanses from all sin.

Thank God for His wisdom, mercy and kindness in requiring repentance rather than absolute sinlessness.

Let The Bible Answer

ROBERT MEREDITH

Is the church necessary for salvation? There are some who proclaim that one can be saved without the church. By this accusation they are saying that the church is not important. Let us turn to the Bible and see if one must be in the church to be saved.

The Bible tells us of the value of the church. The apostle Paul told the Elders of the Ephesian congregation, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28). The importance of the church can be seen in that it cost our Lord His blood. In Ephesians 5:25 Paul said that Christ *"gave Himself for it"* (the church). The church is the blood bought institution of our Lord. If one could be saved without the church, then he would be saved without the blood of Christ. But this is impossible (Heb. 9:22; Rev. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Furthermore, Paul explains in Ephesians 5:25-27 that not only did Christ give Himself for the church, but that the people who make up the church had been sanctified and cleansed when they were baptized in obedience to the word (Eph. 5:26). In verse 27, the Holy Spirit, through Paul's pen, reveals that the church is a glorious thing. Once again if one is saved first, then later he joins a church, then he is saved without being sanctified and cleansed (Eph. 5:25; Rev. 1:5) because it is the church who has been sanctified and cleansed.

Earlier in Ephesians 5, Paul reveals that Jesus is the Saviour of the body which is the church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). Since Jesus is the Saviour of the church, then one must be in it to be saved. My friends, the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and when one obeys the gospel (Rom. 1:16), then God adds the one being saved to the church (Acts 2:41,47; Col. 1:13).

The idea that one can be saved first then later find a church is completely foreign to the scriptures. First there is but one church and when one comes to Jesus and is baptized into Him

(Gal. 3:26-27), he is placed by God into the church (1 Cor. 12:13). To be in Christ is to be in the church, which is His spiritual body. It is indeed sad that some say they want Christ, yet adamantly oppose His body, the church. To refuse one is to refuse the other (John 12:48; Lk. 9:26; Lk. 6:46). Jesus pleads for you to come to Him (Mt. 11:28-30), obey the gospel (Rom. 10:17; Lk. 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38), and be added to the church (Acts 2:41,47).

Truth Can Be Shocking

W.C. QUILLEN

The truth is usually shocking when first learned, and the more steeped in error we are, the more shocking its discovery can be. Here we list some facts which may seem offensively blunt, but from the eternal point of view, they are shockingly and undeniably true.

1. If you do not know the Gospel of Christ, you do not know anything *lasting*. All earthly knowledge will pass away. There will be no use for such knowledge when the earth is gone, or when we are through with the earth. This should cause us to see the importance of Bible study and of absorbing that divine knowledge revealed therein, and also of sharing this treasure with others. We should value this sacred knowledge above all knowledge. We should be ashamed of our lack of it, and sorry that we have neglected it. Determine, then to obtain the only lasting knowledge!

2. If you do not have the salvation that is in Christ, you do not have anything *lasting*. In this age, men in their efforts to hold on to the physical life they now have, strive for the wealth of this wide wicked world, only to lose all, or leave it in death. Everything material will perish, and death will take us away from all things earthly. How important that we accept Christ as Saviour, obey His Gospel, become a child of God, any "lay hold on eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began!"

3. If you are not a Christian, you are not anybody *lasting*.

Many people are proud of what they are, when actually in God's eyes, they are nobody. The earthly great are removed by death as well as the small; before God, Who is no respecter of persons, he has no advantage. Nothing is more important to any man, woman, boy, or girl than to be a Christian, a child of the true and living God, — an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27).

KNOW the RIGHT thing, POSSESS the RIGHT thing, BE the RIGHT person.

"Let Your Light So Shine"

CLEM THURMAN

"Ye are the light of the world . . . Even so let your light so shine before men" (Matt. 5:14,16). God expects us to shine for Him, reflecting His glory in the lives which we live for Him. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light"* (Gen. 1:1-3). The first thing created, after the universe, was light. If plants are to grow, they must have light. Thus, in the food chain, all life—animal and vegetable—depends upon light. And, in the same way that light is necessary for our physical existence in this world, so is light necessary in the spiritual realm, if we would live spiritually.

Long ago the psalmist stated, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, And light unto my path . . . The entrance of thy words giveth light"* (Psa. 119:105,130). The word of God—what we now call "The Bible"—is the spiritual light from God which He has given to direct our way through this world which has been darkened by sin and degradation. This light is offered to all who grope in spiritual darkness, and can lead them to the shining portals of the city of God at last! From the depths of dark despair, this light can point one to the way of holiness and enable him to walk with

God. Just as the sun illuminates our path in this physical world, so this spiritual light illuminates our journey to that home of the soul.

GOD IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF LIGHT

All light emanates from God. He is the source of all light. The world was in darkness until God spoke light into existence. With regard to the spiritual realm, John writes, *"And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all"* (1 John 1:5). What if God had not spoken light into existence? Imagine having to live in a world utterly dark, always groping in abysmal blackness! But God lives in the radiance of light which He created, *"dwelling in light unapproachable"* (1 Tim. 6:16). The whole universe basks in His light.

Whether the light shines from the sun, moon or stars, we must remember that it all is *"coming down from the Father of lights with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning"* (James 1:17). It should also be noted that in the same way, all spiritual light comes from God. Those who become Christians, submitting to His will as revealed in His word are enlightened by the light of His word. *"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings"* (Heb. 10:32).

JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

None can reflect the light of God more brilliantly nor more perfectly than does His own Son, Jesus the Christ. John, the baptizer, introduced Jesus as the Christ by saying, *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men"* (John 1:4). Again it is said of Jesus, *"There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world"* (John 1:9). Jesus acknowledged the truth of both of those statements, when He said, *"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life"* (John 8:12).

So perfectly did Jesus reflect the Father that He could say, *"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"* (John 14:9). He stated, *"The Son of man came to seek and save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). His mission was to lead souls from the darkness of sin in the light of fellowship with God: *"I am come a light*

into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness" (John 12:46). Jesus Christ reflects from God the spiritual light that is to be further reflected through the lives of those who have become children of God: *"For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ"* (Gal. 3:26-27). When we are *"baptized into Christ,"* we are clothed with Him, and thus our light is not ours, but the light of God.

Jesus revealed that he was the light of the world yet men rejected Him. Why? *"And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light"* (John 3:19-21). His plea to them went unheeded, *"While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light"* (John 12:36). We should sing with the Spirit and understanding:

*All ye saints of light proclaim,
Jesus, the Light of the world;
Life and mercy in His name,
Jesus, the Light of the world.*

Paul writes of the Lord, *"Our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"* (2 Tim. 1:10). Truly, He is the light of the world.

"YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

The Christian is to let the light of God radiate from his life in Christ so that all men may see his good works, and be led to glorify the Father (Matt. 5:16). We are called to *"shine,"* but our light is not our own! Notice, as Paul describes it: *"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). It is the light of God, in our hearts, that shines in our lives as we live for Christ. That is the reason we are called by the gospel: *"But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"* (1 Pet. 2:9).

There is a clear contrast shown in the Scriptures with regard to one who has come to the light of the truth of God: *"Who*

delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Col. 1:13). The spiritual light of God is to shine in our lives, because we no longer are walking in darkness. As the Scriptures declare, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7).

This new relationship imposes certain restrictions, and also certain obligations. *"Do all things without murmurings and questionings: that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:14-16). What a change is made, as we are called to a different kind of life! Before becoming Christians, we were "once darkness, but are now light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). Therefore, the Lord exhorts us, "Walk as children of light."*

OUR LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Basking in the light of God imposes upon us certain responsibilities. The apostle Paul said, *"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 13:47). We need to radiate the light of the gospel to this darkened world of sin. "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom. 13:12). One purpose of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is stated thus: "How that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23).*

If he can, Satan will keep the whole world in darkness. As Paul wrote, *"Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (2 Cor. 4:3-4). If Jesus, the light of the world, is to dispel the darkness which Satan promotes, it must be because those who follow Jesus shine with His light (2 Cor. 4:6) in order to "give the light of*

the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

As the world looks at us, as Christians, it needs to see the true light of God reflected in our lives, so that it can truthfully say: *"The darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth"* (1 John 2:8). Yes, as Jesus said, *"ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine"* (Matt. 5:14-16).

Proper Perspective

JOHNNY RAMSEY

The way we view life makes all the difference in the world we carve out for ourselves. Incentives and motivation form the structure of our conduct and existence. The apostle Paul cogently reminds us: *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God"* (Rom. 8:6-7). The Lord reminds us, in Heb. 5, that when we are not discerning or perceptive, we are shallow and useless in the cause of Christ. The ability of become ardent soldiers of the Lord is based on our perspective for living. When we grovel in the gutter of sin and shame, we are worthless in the arena of holiness and dedication. A tombstone stated:

*As fades the leaf and morning flower,
So fade our lives each passing hour.
As dews melt before the sun,
So pass our lives one by one.*

What we do in this life to prepare for eternity is based upon our purpose and commitment now. The following simple formula for success really works. You can have anything you want, provided you:

1. Know exactly what you want
2. Want it hard enough
3. Confidently expect to attain it
4. Persistently determine to obtain it, and
5. Are willing to pay the price of its attainment.

The reason over one million divorces occur each year in America is that too many husbands and wives have totally different perspectives, goals and ambitions. People ought to iron

out these matters prior to marriage. When a Christian marries a person of the world, a gigantic gap between the two automatically arises. Unequal yoking (2 Cor. 6:14) in any area of life causes conflict. Proper values form the foundation of success. *"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"* (Amos 3:3).

Losing ourselves in God's work is the key. The Lord said, *Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it*" (Luke 17:33). Our perspective concerning why we are on earth will determine whether we are optimistic or pessimistic. Paul wrote, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil. 4:13). But without the Saviour, we can do nothing (John 15:1-5). A powerful song tells us:

*O what a night was that which wrapped
The heathen world in gloom;
O what a sun which rose this day
Triumphant from the tomb!*

What the heavenly Father did for us should cause us to bask in the light of the glory of Christ. *"Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Cor. 5:21). Again, *"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17). Proper evaluation concerning truth and error naturally reminds us of Psa. 119:104, *"Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore, I hate every false way."* May we ever have the desire to be so wise.

Reconciliation

FRED DILLON

"And all things are of God Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:18).

The word reconcile means to "make friendly again or to settle a quarrel." It makes us extremely happy to know that husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters

and even nations have become reconciled to one another.

Those of us above sixty years of age can well remember when the United States, Britain, France and our other Allies were engaged in mortal combat with Germany, Italy, and Japan. Cities and towns were destroyed, millions of people slaughtered as bombs fell on the European nations and later the deadly atomic bombs on Japan.

Not many years later, the United States spent millions of dollars rebuilding the German and Japanese economies and they now have become our closest trading friends.

Reconciliation is a wonderful thing, but have you been "reconciled" to God, through Christ?

Reconciliation is surely a wonderful achievement at any level, but when it is between man and God Almighty through Christ, then it has its greatest work.

The greatest need for man has always been to be reconciled to God. It was true for Adam, for Moses, for the psalmist David as he touched our hearts with the spirit of repentance in Psalm 51.

Sin has separated man from his Maker (Romans 3:23). And since, "all have sinned" and all continue to sin, the task of reconciliation will continue as long as human kind exist on this planet.

In Romans 6:23, we are told the tragic consequences for man, unless reconciliation has been accomplished in our lives.

Sins of commission (I John 3:4) and sins of omission (James 4:17) both place man in a hopeless situation, separated from Almighty God and minus the blessings we may have in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Man, therefore, is doomed to eternal destruction without reconciliation (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

God provided reconciliation to Himself for all men through His wonderful grace made possible through the suffering and death (the shed blood) of Christ (Hebrews 2:9). "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Christ became God's Lamb to take away the sins of the world and His atoning blood was shed for all of our transgressions. Jesus became and remains our Mediator, Saviour, Redeemer, Advocate, and Intercessor with God Himself.

In addition, He gave us the "Word of reconciliation," (II

Corinthians 5:19), and with it, the "ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:18). Now, we have the duty of reconcile men back to God with the everlasting Gospel, His Word of reconciliation.

Through Christ, we are to call all we possibly can back to friendship with God, reconciled by the blood of Christ in accordance with the Word of reconciliation which is true, all sufficient and able to save the souls of anyone who will receive it (James 1:21-25).

This "Word of reconciliation" of which Paul spoke in his epistle to Corinthians must be taught and preached by Christians (Matthew 28:18-20).

This Word must be believed in order for a soul to be saved (Romans 1:16).

And, it must be obeyed in repentance, confession, and baptism for anyone to have reconciliation with the Almighty (Matthew 7:21; Revelation 22:14).

God's people have been assigned the task of teaching and preaching the Word of reconciliation. All nations, comprised of those who are God's highest creatures must submit in obedience to the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16).

The One Who "knew no sin" has become sin for us in order that we might be reconciled to God.

The ministry of reconciliation is ours today, just as it belonged to the obedient Christians in Acts 8, as they (though persecuted even unto death) went "everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4).

You and I must be involved in this ministry of reconciliation using the engrafted Word as the Word of reconciliation that souls around us may be "reconciled to God."

Forgiveness Brings Rejoicing

CHARLES BOX

A man from Ethiopia provides a wonderful example of conversion to Christ. From this man, we see that rejoicing in God's forgiveness follows baptism into Christ (Acts 8:38-39).

Observe these three truths concerning the Ethiopian:

Heard the Message

The Ethiopian heard the message concerning Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. He had read “. . . He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation, His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth” (Acts 8:32-33). Philip used this as a beginning place to preach Jesus to Him (Acts 8:35). This man came to believe Jesus had died for sinners! Do you believe this great truth?

Baptized Immediately

The Ethiopian was baptized immediately by being buried in water. “So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:38). The reason he was baptized was to get into Christ. Baptism is the time when the death of Jesus saves one from sin (Romans 6:3-5). Have you been baptized into the death of Jesus to be saved?

Went on His way Rejoicing

The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing after his baptism. “Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39). Rejoicing in forgiveness always follows baptism into Christ. Baptism is when one becomes a child of God.

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). After baptism into Christ, there is reason to rejoice—forgiveness. Have you been able to rejoice because of forgiveness of your sins in Christ?

“You Can't Understand it”

JERRI MANASCO

How many times have you heard someone say, “You just can't understand the Bible”? There is a Scripture that is abused in order to prove the inability to understand the Bible. Peter has

written that in some of Paul's epistles are "some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Peter 3:16).

It is not only Paul's writings that are twisted but "other Scriptures" as well. This passage does not say that Paul's writings cannot be understood; it is implied that thorough study of what he has written is in order. The result of a failure to do this will be destruction. Several things are in order for us to note.

Note that it is the "unlearned and unstable" who twist Paul's writings! Note also that if Paul's writing, as well as the "other Scriptures" can be "wrested," then there is something in them that God intends us to comprehend as being absolutely true. How can one pervert something that has no definite meaning? How can one twist a Scripture if it has no innate meaning that can be comprehended? Furthermore, Peter emphatically declares that those who "wrest" these Scriptures do so to their own destruction. How can that be so if these Scriptures have no understandable meaning? Peter precisely shows that there are Scriptures that not only can be but must be understood as God wants them to be; we must get out of them what God has put into them! It is indeed a pity if God does not have the ability to give us a Book that we can read with profit. It is indeed a remarkable concept of God's righteousness to contend that He will permit men to face their own destruction over some writing that they cannot understand!

Why do people say that one can't understand the Bible? There are several reasons why this would be so. For one thing, many have been told by their preachers and religious leaders that they must have the expert touch of the "clergy" before the Bible can be understood. Quite frankly, in all honesty without attempting to be offensive about this, I would have to observe that in all too many of these situations it is the fear of some "clergy" that their "parishioners" will learn the truth and forsake the traditional church doctrines they hold so dear (cf., John 12:19; Acts 5:28).

Some resort to the statement, "Too many smart people disagree on the Bible. That shows you can't understand it!" This sort of reasoning is not reasoning at all but failure to realize the true nature of the Bible. The fact that a lot of smart people

disagree proves only that a lot of smart people disagree. It does not prove that they are right in disagreeing (see I Corinthians 1:10). God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 4:33); His Word must not be blamed for the confused state of religion today.

Others have been told that they need the special instruction of a "Spirit-led, Spirit-inspired" preacher or that they must have the miraculous enlightenment of the Spirit before they can get the message in the Bible. However, it was Paul (the one whose writings were said to have in them things "hard to be understood") who wrote, "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3-4). He was not addressing this to expert theologians or "clergy" but to the church in Ephesus. The key to understanding is **READING** the Bible. This suggests another reason some don't understand the Bible; they don't take the time to read and study it.

Consider thoughtfully some valid questions relative to the understanding of the Bible. If the Bible cannot be understood, then:

1. How could Paul's writings be the model for all other teaching (I Corinthians 14:37)?
2. How could the Bible provide the benefits listed in Psalm 119:7-11?
3. How could the Bible make wise unto salvation, be profitable, and make the man of God perfect (II Timothy 3:15-17)?
4. How could the Bible give understanding (Psalm 119:104)?
5. How could the Bible be a light and a lamp (Psalm 119:105)?
6. How could one take heed to the Bible as a guard against sin (Psalm 119:9-11)?
7. If the Bible cannot be understood, then why did God give it to us in the first place? Why did He guide men into the writing of it if the Bible is not an understandable book? There are too many dangerous conclusions to be reached if the Bible cannot be understood.

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