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EDITORIAL

What Does The Bible Teach?

“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins . . .”

What a glorious thought! God, in Christ, Himself is the propitiation for man's sins. Man has accomplished many great tasks. Man is able to do many many wonderful things. But no man has the power to forgive sins committed against God. And all have sinned against God. God is love. But God is also just and righteous. His righteousness does not permit Him to embrace sinful man. In fact, one of the prophets declared: “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:1-2). God can save man from sin; but not in sin. Man must first free himself from sins. Is it possible for man to do that? What can man do to save himself from his sin? Man's sins are against God. But God can't hear him or accept anything from him as long as man is in sin. Man was in a great dilemma. He needed salvation from his sin, but was himself unable to achieve that. He sought to worship the Great Spirit, God, to appease Him. He built many religions to reach Him. He built places of religious significance to go there and offer sacrifices to the Supreme Being. But God would not hear man in sin and neither will accept from sinful man anything. Man was

helpless and destined to perish in hell because of sin. But God loved man whom He had in the beginning created in His own image and after His own likeness. Therefore, to save man from sin He Himself came down on earth from heaven in the Person of Jesus Christ. According to the Bible: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1&14).

The just God did not let sin go unpunished. He loves man but hates sin. His love wanted to save man from sin so that man may not live eternally separated from Him in hell. But the sin of man was the barrier between man and God. For God to reach man to save him, it was necessary to punish man for his sin first. Through Jesus Christ, God accomplished that very thing. The Bible in Hebrews 2:9 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." Christ was put to death in the divine scheme of things to punish each man and each woman for their sins. That act would constitute the atoning sacrifice on behalf of rebellious of man. This was a great act of God for human redemption. Though Christ was crucified at the hands of the lawless men, yet ultimately He was delivered up by the determined counsel and the foreknowledge of God, as was stated by the apostle Peter in Acts 2:23. The death of Christ was a fundamental element in the divine plan of God for human salvation. Jesus Christ was an offering, for sin in order that the divine justice might be satisfied. He bore our griefs and sorrows, and for our transgression He was wounded. That was the substitutionary nature of the death of Jesus Christ. Indeed, He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1 John 2:2). The remedy of Jesus' death is available potentially for all. God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6). Christ did not die only for some elect ones. There was no limited atonement in the scheme of God. All have the privilege to believe in Christ and to repent of sins and to confess Him the Son of God and be baptized for the remission of sins to be saved. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-39; 8:35-39). Indeed, God so loved the world!

God Is No Respector Of Persons

J.C. CHOATE

Man is prone to be a respector of persons. This is done in many ways. Distinctions are made on the basis of colour, language, economics, education, position, country, religion, and many other things.

Racial prejudice is one of the strongest feelings in the world. There are those who think that they are better than others. In years gone by when slavery was common, some even went so far as to teach that slaves did not have a soul, that they were like animals, and were to be treated the same as work animals. It is hard to believe, but in some parts of the world slavery still exists in one form or another. Of course all of this is contrary to the teaching of God.

There are those who think that racism can be removed from society by the passing of laws. It would be wonderful if this could be done so easily, but it cannot be achieved in that manner. Racism is a type of sin, and like other immoral and sinful acts and attitudes, it is here to stay as long as the world stands. This is one of the weaknesses of man.

Of course, as Christians, we should oppose racism with all of our being. Others who are not governed by God's word may have feelings of prejudice and racism, but that does not excuse Christians if we are guilty of such attitudes. We should ask ourselves, how would we feel if there were those who discriminated against us because of our race or nationality?

The Bible teaches that God is no respector of persons. Paul said, *"For there is no respect of persons with God"* (Romans 2:11). God created man and woman, and through them He was the creator of all humans. He gave each one a soul and sent his Son to die for all, so why would anyone think that God values one human above another? Christ said, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved"* (John 3:16,17).

The Lord has promised to save all who will believe and be baptized. (Mark 16:16). He does not love one person while hating others. He has not promised to save one soul while refusing to save others even though they have done what He has asked them to do.

If one is a faithful Christian, God has promised to hear him and to be with him. On the day of judgment He will judge one and all in the same manner, on the basis whether or not they have done His will. He will not save one because of the colour of his skin, another because of his financial situation, another because of his language, and others because of some other distinctions. Neither will He condemn one on the basis of the colour of his skin, because he is poor, or because of his nationality. He will save those who have obeyed Him and have been faithful to Him, and He will reject those who have refused to obey Him, or who have obeyed Him but have not been faithful to Him. (Matthew 25:31-46).

On the occasion of Peter preaching the gospel to Cornelius and his family—Gentiles—the record says, *“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him”* (Acts 10:34,35). Speaking to the church at Colosse, Paul said, *“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons”* (Colossians 3:25).

James said, *“But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law of transgressors”* (James 2:9).

Paul reminds us, *“But why dost thou judge thy brother or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment of Christ”* (Romans 14:11). Again he said, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Will you be ready to meet the Lord, with a heart free of prejudice toward others, and a heart cleansed by the blood of Christ? Now is the time to prepare.

Worship of the Church of Christ

FRANCIS DAVID

The church of Christ reject the human creeds and traditions of men and only try to follow the New Testament. We must speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). The Bible is the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16). We must not go beyond what is written in the Bible for us. (1 Cor. 4:6). Our worship must be based on the Scriptures. When we worship God, the almighty, we pay our honour, respect and adoration to HIM. We must worship God in spirit and in truth, and this is what we read in John 4:24, "God is Spirit and his worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We as Christians, members of the church, when we worship, we do not go through some rituals and formalities. When we gather for worship, we should be serious and should not behave like spectators but rather participate because we are all worshipping the almighty. In our worship we do the following acts we must do this with all sincerity and honesty.

1. We sing to the Lord. In Old Testament we read, people used to sing praises to God. David always enjoyed praising God through singing. Through our singing to the Lord, we express our joy and happiness. James says, "... Is anyone among you cheerful? Let him sing psalms. We must sing with the spirit and understanding. Writing to the Christians about singing apostle Paul says: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. The early Christians sang spiritual songs in praises to God. We read that they sang with their heart and mind. In Eph. 5:19, we read Paul tells Christians: "Speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." We need to make melody in our hearts and minds and not on the manmade mechanical instruments. The New Testament is silent about instruments music being used in the worship of the church. We are governed by the New Testament. Christ has nailed the Old Law to the cross. In Col. 2:14 we read as it says: "having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having

nailed it to the cross.”

2. Prayer. Prayer is the part of Christian life. Jesus prayed a number of times. Paul says: “I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding.” (I Cor. 14:15). We must pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17). In our worship, we have prayers said by different brethren. Only men lead in prayer and not the women. The women must keep silent in the churches, that means they should not come in the leadership. Paul writes to the church at Corinth by saying: “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive as the law also says.” (I Cor. 14:34). Our prayers should not be vain repetition. Matt. 6:7, Jesus said: “But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” When we pray, we pray to our God, we talk to Him as our Father. When we pray we must pray for our brethren, for the sick, for our country and for all the work that is being done to spread the cause of Christ.

3. We remember the Lord's death every first day of the week. The Bible tells us that Christians came together to break bread on the first day of the week. (Acts. 20:7). In the Lord's supper, we have unleaven bread and fruit of the vine or grape juice. The bread reminds us the body of Christ and grape juice reminds us the precious blood of our Lord. In I Cor. 11:26, we read, as Paul says: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. We partake in this with all seriousness. Those who eat this bread and drink of this cup of the Lord in unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. (I Cor. 11:27).

4. We have the preaching from the Bible. In the church some of our members those who are able to teach take the Bible class and preach from the word. All the members are required to hear to the sermons carefully. Those who teach and preach are required to prepare the lessons well. The Bible teaches us to study the Bible. In 2nd Timothy 2:15 we read: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” We encourage each and every member to study the Bible.

5. We give our means for the work of the Lord. All members are required to give according to their income or as they have

been prospered. (1 Cor. 16:7). The money is being used for the preaching of the gospel, to support the preachers and to help the needy. We teach the membership not to give grudgingly or of necessity. We give our offering for the work cheerfully. The Bible tells the Lord loves the cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).

This is the worship of the church of Christ. We strive to worship according to the Bible. We do not add or subtract from the Bible. The Bible says: "If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Rev. 22:18,19).

We must worship willingly, there should be a willingness in our heart and mind for worship (2 Cor. 8:12); Our worship should be orderly and all must engage in it decently (1 Cor. 14:40); It should be with all reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28); Let our worship be with all sincerity. (Phil. 1:10). We need to be humble before the almighty as we worship him. (1 Pet. 5:5,6); and above all we must worship him with pure mind and heart. (John 4:23,24).

If you would like to worship with the church of Christ, please contact the one nearest to your area. Our worship is very simple, based on the Scriptures. We encourage you, if you are not a member of the Lord's church, to believe in God and Jesus (Heb. 11:6; John 3:16; Acts 16:31); Confess Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10); Repent of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38); and be baptised in the watery grave (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 19:5); When you do this you will be added to the church of Christ by the Lord Himself. (Acts 2:47). Let us worship God as it is revealed in His word.

Created In Christ Jesus For Good Works—2

THOMAS R. DOHLING

In 1 Corinthians 3:6-15, Paul says: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused it to grow. So neither the one who

plants counts for anything, nor the one who waters, but God who causes the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters are united, but each will receive his reward according to his work. We are coworkers belonging to God. You are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master-builder I laid a foundation, but someone else builds on it. And each one must be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than what is being laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, each builder's work will be plainly seen, for the Day will make it clear, because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test what kind of work each has done. If what someone has built survives, he will receive a reward. If someone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

The apostle Paul says to Titus the evangelist in Titus 3:14: "And let our people also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." (Here is another way that our people can learn to engage in good works to meet pressing needs and so not be unfruitful.) By engaging in good works, Christians meet the pressing needs of all and are fruitful for Christ.

Romans 6:22: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Philippians 1:11: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (1:9-11—I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.)

Finally, Colossians 1:10: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

(1:9-12 For this reason we also, from the day we heard, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects: *bearing fruit in every good deed*, growing in the

knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, with joy giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saint's inheritance in the light.)

Christians are called to bear fruit in every good work; they need to be salt and light of the world. Remember, our Lord said in Matthew 5:16 "let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honour to your Father in heaven."

Christians and Government

ROD RUTHERFORD

May a Christian serve in the government? May Christians vote in elections in their country? May Christians salute the flag of their nation and sing the national anthem? These questions are asked because Christians are aware that some politicians are dishonest and some government officials are corrupt. What does the Bible say?

When Jesus lived upon the earth, His nation (Israel) was ruled by Rome. The Jews hated the Romans. Roman officials often were corrupt and oppressive. On one occasion when the Pharisees wanted to get Jesus in trouble, they asked Him a question: "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not" (Matthew 22:15-22)? If Jesus said it was wrong to pay taxes, He would be in trouble with the Roman rulers. If He said it was good to pay taxes, He would be in trouble with the Jews. They thought He was trapped. Jesus asked them to bring a Roman coin to Him. He asked them whose picture and name were on the coin. They replied, "Caesar's." Then Jesus replied: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Every Christian lives in two kingdoms (nations). One kingdom is spiritual. The other kingdom is physical. We are citizens of the kingdom of Christ, which is the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18,19; Colossians 1:13). At the same time, we are citizens of an earthly nation such as Zambia, France, China etc. We must be good citizens in each kingdom. We have duties to

fulfill in each kingdom.

The apostle Paul also lived during the time that Rome ruled much of the world. He was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29). Nero, one of the most corrupt rulers who ever lived, was on the throne when Paul wrote: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:1-7).

The apostle Peter also commanded Christians to "... submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bond servants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Peter 2:13-17).

Sometimes the question is asked: "What if the government commands Christians to do something which is against God's laws? What if the government forbade Christians to worship God? What should we do?" If there is a conflict between man's law and God's law, then God's law must be obeyed! The Jewish officials arrested the apostles for preaching Christ. They said to them: "Did we not strictly command you that you should not teach in this name? And look you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this Man's blood on us! But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey

God rather than men' " (Acts 5:28,29). We must obey both God's law and man's law. If there is a conflict, then God's law must be obeyed even if we must disobey man's law. This is the only exception!

Some say worldly people can serve in the government, but Christians cannot. The Bible does not teach this. God has just one law. It is for all men. If it is wrong for a Christian to serve in the government, it would be wrong for anyone. If it is right for a non-Christian to serve in the government, it would be right for a Christian to do the same.

Surely, there are many temptations to do wrong if one has authority over his fellow men. It is easy to abuse power. There are also temptations to get rich by using one's authority in a dishonest way. Christians must be honest and fair in all their dealings with their fellow men. This is true in business. It is also true in government.

Must a Christian pay taxes? May a Christian show respect for his nation by saluting the flag and singing the national anthem? May he vote in an election? May he serve in a government or political office? The answer to all these questions is "yes." However, a Christian must put God and His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). He must also be honest in all things (2 Corinthians 8:21).

"What Is Man?"

CLEM THURMAN

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? (Psa. 8:3-4). To answer the question, "What is man?" philosophers have searched the world and universe. The evolutionist would make man just an animal—"an improved ape" maybe, but still just an animal. Some philosophers would make man "the genius of the ages." The Greek philosopher, Plato, declared, "Man is a featherless biped." That is about as simple as you can get, but it still doesn't answer the real question of the psalmist.

What is there about man that makes God *"mindful of him?"* Leaving God out, there is no answer to the question, *"What is man?"* If the evolutionist is right, and man is just an animal, then why not "dog-eat-dog" as a lifestyle? If man is "the genius of the ages," then he certainly doesn't need to worry about consulting a higher power for directions! So our society deteriorates, *"But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived"* (2 Tim. 3:13). But the above are not the pictures which God paints of man.

The Scripture says that God IS *"mindful"* of man. Why? What does God see in man that makes Him mindful of us? The answer is in His word, as he gives His view of man.

MAN AS HE WAS

If we want to know about man, we must consult the One Who made him! *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . . And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Gen. 1:1,26-27).

The God Who created the universe, also created man, and, as Paul said later: *"He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God . . . for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his off-spring"* (Acts 17:26-28). God is the "source" of man, and we are His offspring! That is why God is mindful of man.

When God made man in His own image, man was perfect: *"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee"* (Ezek. 28:15). Man was made in *"the image of God"*—with intellect, sensibility, emotion, volition. Of all of the creation of God, only man could bring glory of God through obedience of His will. Animals act by instinct, reacting to outward conditions according to the desires which God placed with them. But man has the ability to control his desires and do what is even unpleasant, in order to achieve a

given purpose of his Creator. Only man has the sensibility and emotion of God. A beautiful seascape or mountain scene will not long hold the attention of even the "smartest" animal. But man can contemplate them for hours, and then can duplicate them with pictures that enable him to enjoy for years!

Man "as he was" was "*perfect*" created in the image of God, an obedient creature, doing the will of God and glorifying Him through obedient love: "*This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man*" (Eccel. 12:13). But then the scene changes.

MAN AS HE IS

When God created man in His Own image, He placed him in the Garden of Eden. He gave man a job, so that his life would have purpose: "*Dress the garden, and keep it*" (Gen. 2:15). God also told Adam, "*Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:16-17). I don't know how many kinds of trees were in that garden, but Satan picked on that one! He persuaded Eve, then Adam, to eat of that tree, and they sinned. When man ate of that fruit (Gen. 3:1), he became "Man As He Is"—a rebel against God, transgressor of His will, servant of Satan and target of hell.

The rebellious attitude of Adam and Eve has been copied by their children—right down to you and me! "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. . . . There is none righteous, no, not one . . . For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God*" (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:10,23). This has been the history of man: Adam, who introduced sin into the world; Cain, the first murderer; Noah's generation, whose "*every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually*" (Gen. 6:5). The selfishness, lying, cheating, stealing, murder and the "dog-eat-dog" attitude carries over to our society today. "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (1 John 1:8). That is man as he is.

Man "as he is" is answerable for His actions, and thus is also the object of punishment. "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die . . . The wages of sin is death . . . Sin fulgrown brings forth*

death" (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23; James 1:15). Sin will not go unpunished. Adam was driven from the Garden of Eden because of sin, the wicked generation of Noah perished in the Great Flood and a rebellious Israel was not allowed entry into the promised land of Canaan.

What a bleak outlook, if these were the last scenes of man which God shows us. But "man as he is" became the object of God's great love and mercy and grace. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life . . . For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly . . . God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8). Why did God send His only begotten Son to die for man? What was there about man that made God "mindful" of him? God saw man "as he was," and he knew that, through Christ, man could be restored to that former state and condition.

MAN AS HE CAN BE

Another picture of man emerges, because of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross. *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich"* (2 Cor. 8:9). God loves man, not because he was a sinner, but in spite of it. God saw that man could be made to change into something better than he was. And this is why Christ died: *"He died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again"* (2 Cor. 5:15).

Man can regain, through Christ, what he lost through sin. Man, who was made "in the image" of God (Gen. 1:26) departed from God because of sin. But, in Christ, man can be forgiven and then *"renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him"* (Col. 3:10). What man lost in Eden, man can regain at Calvary. As the apostle Paul wrote of the Scriptures, *"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory of glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit"* (2 Cor. 3:18).

Man, in Christ, can be made free from sin—the thing that separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2). What God saw in man

that made Him "*mindful of him*" was "man as he can be." As the Lord Jesus said, "*The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost . . . He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Luke 19:10; Mark 16:16). The apostle Paul wrote later, "*Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life . . . But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness*" (Rom. 6:3-4,17-18).

This is "man as he can be"—an obedient child of God, no longer living as the animals, with a "dog-eat-dog" nature dominating his life. Whereas "man as he is" is a rebel against God, "man as he can be" is obedient to God and loving to his fellow man. Christ is "*the author of eternal salvation*" to those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9), and only those who are "*led by the Spirit*" are the children of God (Rom. 8:14). God's purpose in creating man in His own image, to bring glory to God by service to Him, can only be fulfilled in man's "*obedience of faith*" in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). As the apostle Paul wrote, "*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 "*put on Christ*," His attitudes of love, concern, obedience to God, etc., are the attitudes that rule in our lives.

MAN AS HE SHALL BE

The last picture of man which unfolds in the Scripture is "man as he shall be." Because man has volition, the power of choice, he shall be judged for his actions. "*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment*" (Heb. 9:27). This is man as he shall be. Nothing is said about the animals being judged, but man will be. In spite of evolutionist, man is not an animal and will be held to accountability for how he lives and what he does. "*For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be*

good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Man "as he shall be" has two possible eternal destinies—and man gets to choose which! No one can choose for you, nor can you choose for anyone else. *"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Rom. 14:12). Each of us will stand alone at judgment, except that those who are *"in Christ"* will have Christ standing up for them (1 John 2:1-2). And whether you hear *"well done, good and faithful servant"* or *"depart from me, ye that work iniquity"* (Matt. 25:31-46) will depend on the life you are now living.

There is something in man that caused God to *"be mindful of him."* Something that separates man from the beasts. Something that makes man so valuable to the Eternal God of the Universe that He was willing to send His Son into the world to die for man. In other words, "man as he was" was worth something to God because of what He could again be. And this is why God is still *"mindful"* of man today. Man can again be worth something to God.

Reader, if you are "man as he is"—a rebel against God who is living for yourself instead of living for Him—God is reaching out to you by sending His Son to die on the cross to bring you back to Himself. Will you not search diligently the message of God to you and become "man as he can be"—a faithful and dedicated Christian who lives daily for Him?

Remember, it is sure that you will be "man as he shall be"—standing before God in judgment to hear your sentence that will determine where you will spend eternity. God gives you the choice, as He said to Israel long ago: *"I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live"* (Deut. 30:19).

"From A child you have Known the Holy Scriptures"

RONNY JOHNSON

If you had the privilege of being reared in a God-fearing home where the Scriptures were revered, you have been

specially blessed. The young preacher Timothy was just such a person. Paul said to him, "that from a child you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15).

Timothy is a good example of Proverbs 22:6. "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Timothy's mother and grandmother trained him up in the way of righteousness by teaching him the Scriptures. This built faith in him. Paul remembered Timothy's unfeigned faith which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice (II Timothy 1:5). Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

Lois and Eunice didn't wait until after Timothy was a teenager and had sown wild oats. They knew that could have imprisoned him in sin where God's Word is debarred. Peter spoke of those "having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin" (II Peter 2:14). If Timothy had not known the Scriptures from childhood, he might have been permanently distracted by sin.

It is important for us to know the holy Scriptures from our childhood because:

- (1) It is God's will. Moses said, concerning the words which he commanded the people that day, "You shall teach them diligently unto your children . . ." (Deuteronomy 6:7). Ephesians 6:4 says, "And you fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
- (2) Children have no prejudice against the truth. They are open-minded and receptive, like the Bereans who received the Word with all readiness of mind (Acts 17:11).
- (3) It is good for us to learn truth before we have learned sin and error. Before the pleasures of sin have been experienced (Hebrews 11:25).
- (4) It is good for us to know God's truths about things before we've made costly mistakes like—
 - (a) an unscriptural marriage. Jesus said that Moses suffered the men to put away their wives because of hardness of their hearts but that from the beginning it was not so (Matthew 19:8). If Mickey Rooney and Liz Taylor had known this Scripture

from their childhood, they might not have married so many times. Notice that Jesus said "from (not at) the beginning it was not so." That means that adulterous marriage has always been wrong.

- (b) joining an unscriptural church. Acts 2:47 says, "the Lord added to the church . . ." Jesus had promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). Information about this church is found throughout the New Testament. Knowledge of these Scriptures from childhood should keep us out of churches that are not found in the New Testament. Denominationalism is akin to idolatry (Ephesians 4:4-6). This may sound like a harsh analogy, but subscribing to a man-made church is similar to worshipping a man-made god.
 - (c) getting into youthful mischief which could cripple or kill us. The Scriptures admonish us to obey our parents (Ephesians 6:1) and not follow after a multitude to do evil (Exodus 23:2). Reckless behaviour and running with the gang could get a person maimed or dismembered or put in prison.
 - (d) forming detrimental habits like smoking, drinking, doing drugs, unlawful or forbidden sex. Bad habits are hard to break and they keep on dragging a person down.
- (5) We learn joy and comfort from reading the Scriptures (Romans 15:4; I Thessalonians 4:18). Timothy learned this wholesome delight early in his life and it gave him a dependable support against life's problems.
- (6) We learn direct-from-God information about origins and the human constitution of body, soul, and spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23). Thus, we can resist doctrines like organic evolution and soul sleeping.

"From a child . . ." It is good to know the Scriptures at any age, but it is better to have known them from childhood. Remember the importance of that while rearing your children.

Notice the emphasis on the Word of God (II Timothy 3:14-4:2).

The Scriptures aren't ordinary; they are special. And they are from God, making them holy, or sacred. They are the

"oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). They are to be revered and complied with, without changing them (Revelation 22:18-19).

Goodness And Severity

T. PIERCE BROWN

In every generation, there are those who seem to think they know more about God than is revealed in the Bible. We hear that a loving God could not possibly condemn all the good people who have failed to obey Him. For those who are willing to listen, Paul should help to clarify that. "Behold, then, the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee God's goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt he cut off (Romans 11:22). Throughout the Bible, the same picture is presented over and over. Skeptics seem to think that God should make special provisions for them.

In the story of the plagues when Israel was about to come out from Egyptian bondage, those who sprinkled the blood of a lamb on the doorposts were promised that the firstborn in their family would not die. How good a person may have been, or how much his parents had done for suffering humanity, or how high he was in the social structure did not matter. The grace of God was extended to all that would accept it on His terms. One could laugh at the idea that there was any value in the blood, but that did not change God's decree, nor limit His grace. It seems so evident that one feels almost silly to have to bring it up, but we doubt that one person in a million would assume that putting the blood on the door was a work of merit which earned them the freedom from the death of the firstborn. Nor was anyone of which we hear so blind that they would say, "I accept the fact that the lamb has been slain for me, but since I know that I cannot work myself out of bondage, and that if I am saved from death, it will be by God's grace, so there is no need of my putting the blood on the door posts." It is amazing almost beyond belief that there are so-called scholars who use that kind of language about our salvation. That some who claim to be gospel preachers, or connected with the Lord's church, is even more amazing.

It is possible to damage the Cause of Christ, even if we do not teach false doctrine, by failing to emphasize properly what God emphasizes, or by emphasizing unduly what God teaches on some subject. For example, one may preach on the wrath or severity of God in such a fashion as to make it seem that God's primary desire is to punish sinners. We may do that without teaching any false doctrine. On the other hand, one may speak so much, or in such a way, about the love and grace of God that those who hear get the idea that since love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8), it does not really matter what a person does or fails to do.

It is probable that in many instances those of us who felt that we needed to combat the false doctrine of salvation by faith only have preached about the importance of baptism until some have felt that getting baptized was about all that mattered. We have known of persons who had relatives in the hospital at the point of death. They had lived a reprobate, ungodly life, and as far as we could tell, had not repented. But those relatives impressed upon us that we should try to get the person baptized, so that could feel sure about his salvation. Of course, since we have no way of knowing for sure if the person is penitent, if he wants to be baptized and indicates that he trusts in the Saviour and wants to obey Him, we would baptize him. I do not even know if the persons who respond during a gospel meeting are really penitent, but most of the time, assume that if they have listened to my preaching, they know they should be, so I baptize them without much question in most cases.

My point is that our preaching should be balanced. We should emphasize the importance of everything as close to the way God did as we can.

When Jesus taught that loving God and our neighbour were the two most important commands, and our preaching makes it sound as if teaching against false doctrine and giving of our means are the most important, we are moving in a dangerous direction.

It is my judgment that many of us should start emphasizing more the goodness and love of God Who gave His Son to die for Us. Others of us should emphasize more the importance of obeying the Gospel and being sound in doctrine. All of us should emphasize both the goodness and severity of God in the same

way the Bible does.

Religious Sinners

CHARLES BOX

The title "Religious Sinners" sounds like a contradiction of terms. Religious means, "characterized by adherence to religion; pious; godly." Sinner means, "one who breaks a religious law or moral principle; especially through a willful act." But, can men be religious and yet sinners? Please observe Jesus' statement concerning some who would worship Him. "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). People may be religious sinners by:

WORSHIPPING THE WRONG GOD

The problem of worshipping the wrong God is an old and a difficult problem. God commanded the Jews, "I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20:2-4). In the New Testament, Paul wrote, "For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and through Whom we live" (I Corinthians 8:5-6). One is a religious sinner who worships the wrong God.

WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD IN THE WRONG WAY

Many worship the God of Heaven but their worship is not acceptable. Cain is an example. He worshipped the true God but in the wrong way (Genesis 4:1-16). Many today worship without partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of each week (Acts 20:7), or by adding all kinds of mechanical instruments to the singing (Ephesians 5:19). Some also worship with women preachers in spite of what the Bible says (I Timothy 2:1-12). One

is a religious sinner who worships the true God but in the wrong way.

WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD BUT NEVER HAVING OBEYED THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Cornelius needed to obey the Gospel (Acts 11:14) as did the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39) and Lydia (Acts 16:14-15). All of these were good people; they worshipped the true God but they had never obeyed the Gospel. In many assemblies of the Lord's church, there are good men and women who are regular in attendance who so urgently need to obey the Gospel of Christ. They should remember that one is a religious sinner who worships the true God but never obeys the Gospel of Christ.

WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD BUT NOT LIVING UP TO THE GOSPEL

Ananias and Sapphira lied (Acts 5:1-10). Simon was guilty of the pride of life (Acts 8:18-22). Some of the Corinthians were carnal and immoral (I Corinthians 3:13; I Corinthians 5:1). Christians must learn to be different from the world (Galatians 2:20). One is a religious sinner who worships the true God but doesn't live the Christian life daily.

God admonished His people to grow in Christ so heaven can be their home. "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance, godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-11). Are you worshipping the true God, in the Bible way, having obeyed the Gospel and are you daily living the Christian life? It is time to be serious about our souls!

Complete In Him

FRED DILLON

"And ye are complete in Him which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10).

When does a human being live a "complete life?"

If it depends on length of life, then Methusaleh surely would qualify! The Scriptures reveal that he lived 969 years on the earth, but the only other information we can glean from the record is his parentage, his son, and that he died.

Jesus, our Savior and Lord, lived on this planet in the flesh only some 33 years, according to the New Testament record, and yet John tells us, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

The "complete life," then, isn't dependent on how long we walk on this earth, but on our relationship with Him Who was involved in the creation of all things (John 1:3).

When we consider the activities of this life, whether they be economical, social, political, or religious in nature, they all pale in comparison and significance when contrasted with our submission to God's will (Romans 12:1-2).

I have been afforded opportunities, some call it privileges, in my lifetime as a soldier, newspaper reporter, editor, and Gospel preacher to talk with a President, several Senators, Congressmen, and Governors, none of whom were Christians in the light of Bible teaching. They may be long remembered and revered by the citizenry for their earthly achievements, but were their lives complete? The Lord will be the sole and final authority on that.

Jesus, in His sojourn here in this realm increased in wisdom, stature, and in favour with God and man (Luke 2:52). The Lord desires His people to grow also, to "grow up into Him in all things which is the head" (Ephesians 4:15). Otherwise, our lives will not be "complete" in God's sight.

After we enter the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13), through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism as taught repeatedly in the New Testament, our Savior and mediator with God has given as His last will and testament to make ourselves complete in Him to fulfill His will. It involves adding the Christian

graces (II Peter 1:5-11).

It involves putting on "the whole armour of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17).

It encompasses bearing the fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

Surely it demands continual growth by walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

It involves living "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10b and I Corinthians 15:58).

It elevates the life of a servant to behaviour for one who would please Him for Whom and with Whom we labour here.

This is why humility and submission become so important in being "complete in Him." We must, as Jesus exclaimed, "Be converted, and become as little children" to enter the kingdom of heaven. We must, as James urged, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:7-8). "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up" (James 4:10).

You desire completeness, a complete life, a fulfilled life?

Hear the Gospel of Christ (John 6:45).

Believe the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16).

Obeys the Gospel of Christ (II Thessalonians 1:7-9 and Hebrews 5:8-9).

"Walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25).

Your life, then, can be and will be complete!

Why is one complete in Christ? The answer is that in Christ are all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3).

In Him, we have salvation (II Timothy 2:10).

In Him, we have redemption and forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13-14).

In Him, we have eternal life (I John 5:11).

In Him, we are not condemned (Romans 8:1-2).

In Him, we have eternal rest from, our labours (Revelation 14:13).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:12).

Our purpose here in this life is to fulfill the will of the Master in our lives. Nothing else will accomplish what God has purposed for us.