

The Gospel Preceptor

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Psa 119:104

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“Nots” in the Devil's Tale Continue Today

Jess Whitlock

Most Gospel preachers have delivered a lesson based on a play of words concerning the temptation in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). Herein, Satan very cleverly added the little three-letter word, **not**. His deceptive ploy continues today. Paul cautioned “that we may be no longer children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Eph. 4:14).

The churches of men are upset with the powerful truth of Jesus Christ when He declares, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Now, that is easily understood. You would need at least two PhDs to misunderstand that truth. Almost the entire denominational world rejects the Lord’s teaching in Mark 16:16. So, Satan has come to their rescue by resurrecting his favorite means of deception—the use of that word **not**.

The *Simple English Bible*, states in the margin, “Verses 9-20 do **not** appear in two important manuscripts.” Satan is alive and well on planet earth today.

The *Revised Standard Version*, simply ends the Gospel of Mark at Mark 16:8 and offers this footnote: “Other texts and versions add as 16:9-20 the following...”

The *New Testament of Inclusive Language Bible*, has this, “The following (Mark 16:9-20, JW) does **not** appear in the oldest manuscripts.”

The *Living Bible*, chimes in. “Verses 9 through 20 are **not** found in the most ancient manuscripts...” As a rule, those manuscripts are never identified for us.

The *New International Version*, joins the crowd of unbelievers in this fashion: “The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do **not** have Mark 16:9-20.” Notice please, those ancient witnesses are **not** identified for the reader. In the NIV, the name *Jesus* is omitted 38 times, *Christ* is omitted 43 times. *Lord* is omitted 35 times, and the name *God* is omitted 31 times. Ask yourself, “Why”?

The *Jerusalem Bible*, also yielded up this: “Many manuscripts omit verses 9-20 and this ending may **not** have been written by Mark...” Satan not only wants you to **not believe** these words emanated from the Christ, but that Mark is **not** the author of the Gospel bearing his name.

Even the *American Standard Version (1901)* has a similar footnote to so many others at Mark 16:9-20 (usually with a space separating those words of the text) and has this, “The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities omit from verse 9 to the end...” So, is it safe to say that Mark 16:16 is **not** there??

Alas, the *New King James Version* is not immune. At the end of Mark we find this: “Verses 9-20 are bracketed in NU-Text as **not** original. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other manuscripts of Mark contain them.”

At long last we have identified for us the two manuscripts—Codex Sianiticus and Codex Vaticanus, two of the most corrupt and unreliable manuscripts available to us, and one of those was found in the trash can! (All emphases of the word *not* in this article are mine–jw).

“By What Authority Doest Thou These Things?”

Nana Yaw Aidoo

Introduction

After the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem on a donkey, He went into the temple, drove out the traders and then began to teach and heal. As He was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people, confronted Him and asked Him a question; “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” (Matt. 21:13). These people knew that for Jesus Christ to be involved in the religious acts in which He was involved in, He ought to have been authorized to do so. In response, Jesus Christ asked a question that shows that only two kinds of authority exist. He asked; “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?...” (Matt. 21:25). The two kinds of authority that exist were set forth in the words, “from heaven, or of men?” Anything we do in religion is either from heaven/God or of men. There is no middle ground.

We Need Authority for Everything Taught and Practiced in Religion

Just as Jesus Christ required authority to act in religious matters, we also ought to have authority for everything we practice and teach in matters divine. Paul wrote; “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col. 3:17). By analyzing this text, we see that the word *whatsoever* means everything/anything. To try to take **some** things out of the word *whatsoever* is proof of either ignorance or dishonesty. Also, *in word or deed* means in teaching or practice. Furthermore, the phrase, *in the name of the Lord Jesus* means by the power or authority of the Lord Jesus (Acts 4:7), who has been given “all authority... in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18 ASV).

To do a thing “in the name of the Lord Jesus” doesn’t mean we can select whatever suits us in religion and say, “I’m doing this in Jesus’ name.” To do something in Christ’s name means that He has first authorized it. No one can act “in the name of the State” unless the State authorities have authorized the person to so act. One might say he is acting in the name of the State, but unless the State has authorized him to act, his action is in vain (Brewer).

Once again, we need to realize that whatever we teach or practice in religion is either from God or of men. To do that which God has not authorized, is to remove ourselves from fellowship with God, as Adam and Eve learnt in the most forceful way, when they were banished from the Garden of Eden. When Adam was placed in the garden, he was told what to do and what not to do. He could eat of every tree in the garden except of that which was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The reason why Adam could not eat of that tree was because **God said so**. “Thus the principle was established in the very beginning that when God speaks, man must hear; when God commands, man must obey” (Early Arcenaux).

Bible Authority, Biblical Silence and Inherent Right or Wrong

However, after God has legislated on an issue, some still go ahead and do whatever pleases them. Bring their presumptuousness to their attention and two questions that are very popular with all innovationists would be asked. These are;

- Where does the Bible say we can’t do it or where is it explicitly forbidden?
- What is wrong with it?

This approach to law, whether constitutional or religious is the philosophy or approach called “Liberalism.” Liberalism is the philosophy of no standard. To the liberal, anything that the law does not specifically forbid is allowed and thus a free approach to law is advocated. We submit that this approach to divine law is eternally fatal and we propose to show the errors that inhere in the questions above by appealing to the record of Christ’s encounter with the Pharisees and the Scribes in Mark 7.

Contrary to what many people think, Mark 7 clearly proves that the Pharisees and Scribes were anything but strict keepers of the commandments of God. God commands and has always commanded strict and exact obedience to His word (cf.

Josh. 1:7; Heb. 8:5; Rev. 22:18-19), something the Pharisees and the Scribes **did not do**. Rather, they were extremely zealous for human traditions that had been passed down to them, which they had elevated to the level of God's law (Matt. 15:3, 6). In Mark 7, the human tradition they highlighted was the washing of hands. This was not a mere washing of hands but a washing of hands for religious reasons. These men had noticed that the disciples of Christ did not partake of this religious rite of the washing of hands (Mark 7:2, 5). They thus approached Jesus Christ over this issue and He responded in clear terms that showed that the Pharisees and Scribes were rather the ones sinning against God (Mark 7:6-23).

The first thing of note is that, there was nothing in the Law of Moses that explicitly forbade the Pharisees and the Scribes from washing hands for religious purposes. Absolutely nothing whatsoever! Where in the Old Testament did anyone read the commandment, "Thou shalt not wash thine hands for religious purposes?" However, even though they were involved in that which was not explicitly forbidden, Christ, by quoting from the Prophet Isaiah, said; "This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6-7). By involving themselves in that which God had not authorized, there was a conflict between God's Word and man's tradition and thus they were sinning against God, yea worshipping in vain, even though what they were doing was not explicitly forbidden by God in the law. Apparently, they had forgotten the part of God's Word which reads; "Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:5-6). By doing that which was unauthorized by God, they were committing the presumptuous sin of adding to God's word.

The principle is thus affirmed; **God's silence or the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive**. When God has not spoken, to act is to sin. Even though God had not explicitly forbidden the religious rite of hand washing, His silence on it did **not** authorize the practice. They were worshipping God in vain not because God had explicitly forbidden the religious practice of hand washing (He clearly didn't) but because God did not authorize it.

The Jews did what has been done repeatedly by professed followers of Christ; they introduced practices which were not authorized by the word of God. They became fixed customs. Then years or centuries later they began to contend that these practices were authorized by the word of God all the time. Men do not like to admit that their religious practices are without divine authority (Arcenaux).

Second, notice if you would that there is nothing wrong with the washing of hands. What is wrong with washing hands for any purpose? Would anyone contend that there is anything inherently wrong with it? Yet by bringing this **harmless** act into the worship of God, it was condemned in no uncertain terms by Jesus Christ as sinful. We are reminded of this proverb by the wise king of ancient Israel; "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Therefore, the right question to ask in religious matters is **not**, "what is wrong with a said practice?" but rather, "where is the authority for the said practice?"

What About Matters of Expediency?

Some, who realize the truthfulness of this biblical teaching, seemingly in a bid to ease their consciences, then go ahead to brand everything and anything, a matter of expediency. Point out an error and they will quickly respond; "It is a matter of expediency." By so doing, they suppose the issue is to be laid to rest. Apostates in the Lord's church in times gone by, used this argument so-called, in their introduction of mechanical instruments of music into the worship of our Lord.

What then is an expedient? An expedient is simply that which aids. Of an expedient, which he called an aid, James Bales noted; "What is an aid?...It is a means of carrying out a command when the means have not been specified.... The aid expedites an act which is commanded, but does not authorize something which is unauthorized" (as

cited by Dub McClish). In matters divine, expedients aid us in obeying lawful or authorized obligations. Paul wrote; “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not” (1 Cor. 10:23). The apostle clearly shows that even though some things might be lawful, they cannot serve as expedients for the simple reason that they do not edify. **However, before a thing can be said to be expedient, it must first of all be proven to be lawful and after it has been proven to be lawful, it must then be proven to be something that edifies.** We see then that expedients must come within things that are lawful and thus, for something to be an expedient, its use must first of all be lawful or authorized. There can be no expedient unless there is **first of all** a lawful or an authorized obligation.

This principle is clearly seen in Genesis 6, when God commissioned Noah to build an ark. God gave the obligation to build and then specified materials and measurements to be employed. However, notice that God did not mention things like hammers, nails, saws, stones etc. These things are expedients since they aid in building. Thus, Noah could have employed these without sinning for the simple reason that they were authorized under the command or obligation to build. They qualified as expedients because there was **first of all** the obligation to build. The principle thus stated is this; **for anything to qualify as an expedient, there must first of all be a lawful or authorized obligation to expedite.** An expedient without an authorized obligation is no expedient at all but is a presumptuous addition to God’s word.

Can something be said to be an expedient when it introduces an additional element to what God has authorized and/or alters the authorized obligation? If a Jew who had been authorized to sacrifice a lamb used a pig in addition to or instead of a lamb, would he have been justified before God if he claimed the pig were merely an expedient? Would his action not have constituted an alteration of the authorized obligation, a substitution of God’s divine will? Pigs like lambs are also animals, or a different kind of animal, and so a pig in this instance would not qualify as an expedient. However, note that a knife in this illustration would qualify as an expedient because of the obligation to **sacrifice** a lamb. By using a knife, the worshipper still only sacrifices a lamb. Thus we see that the knife, even though not mentioned, would be authorized because there was **first of all** the obligation to sacrifice. Expedients are implied in their obligations and so the issue of biblical silence does not apply to expedients but only to obligatory matters or matters that God has legislated.

Some Examples to Illustrate the Bible’s Teaching on Expedients

Let us now apply the Bible’s teaching on expedients to some specific examples. We shall look specifically at church buildings, song books, musical instruments in worship and singing groups. From the foregoing, the most important question ought to be; **what obligations do these things expedite?**

First, concerning church buildings, we see that there is the obligation to assemble (Heb. 10:25), which necessarily requires a place to assemble. Church buildings obviously provide a place to assemble. Thus, we see that church buildings are authorized because there is **first of all** the obligation to assemble. When church buildings are used, all that would have happened is assembling.

Second, concerning song books, we see also that there is the obligation to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and to do so decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). Song books provide a means by which this obligation is met. Once again, we see that song books are authorized because there is **first of all** the lawful obligation to sing. When the song book is used alongside nothing else, all that would have happened is only singing.

Third, concerning mechanical musical instruments, the most important question obviously ought to be; **what obligation does the mechanical musical instrument expedite?** As far as music in **Christian** worship is concerned, God Almighty has authorized all who would worship Him in spirit and in truth to sing. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15). Thus, the answer to the question above cannot be “the obligation to sing” because we do not sing with musical instruments but with the lips (Heb. 13:15). Clearly, the obligation which would expedite a musical instrument in

worship is the obligation to **play** or to **make music**. If there were such an obligation, then expediency in this case would be, the kind of mechanical instrument to use (if the kind were not specified), how many to use (if the number were not specified), when to use it (if the time to use it were not specified), etc. Verily, it ought to be obvious to the honest truth seeker that there is simply **no** authority for musical instruments in Christian worship assemblies. If God wanted men to utilize mechanical instruments of music in worship, why then did He say *sing* when He could have simply said play or make music? Would you order a chicken from a restaurant, if what you wanted was pork? Besides, vocal music and instrumental music are two different kinds of music and are akin to the lamb and the pig in the illustration above.

Finally, concerning singing groups, what obligation does the singing group expedite, when congregational singing has been specified (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)? The phrases, “speaking to yourselves” and “teaching and admonishing one another” indicate congregational singing. If congregational singing were not specified or authorized, then solos, singing groups and choirs would be expedients to the obligation to *sing*, so long as only vocal music is made. However, in addition to vocal music, God has legislated that anytime the church assembles (take note of this), that which should be done is congregational singing.

When in doubt, always remember this question; **what obligation does this expedite?** This is the litmus test as far as expedients are concerned.

Conclusion

All men everywhere including those in the Lord’s church who are predisposed to change (Prov. 24:21) would do well to learn the timeless and valuable principles from the conflict between Christ and the religious leaders of His day in Matthew 21 and in Mark 7. The principles restated are these;

- Whatever we do in religion is either from God or of men.
- We need authority for every single thing we practice and teach in religion.
- When God is silent on an issue, then that thing is prohibited or unauthorized.
- Simply because there is nothing wrong or inherently harmless with an act does not make that act authorized in worship to God.

If we would learn these principles and practice them from our hearts, then in addition to taking heed to ourselves by living holy and moral lives, we shall surely be saved by the grace of God (1 Tim. 4:16; Titus 1:2).

Footnote:

Brother Dub McClish in his manuscript, “*Instrumental Music – Aid or Addition?*” has masterfully treated the issue of expedients. The manuscript can be accessed at www.thescripturecache.com.

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Occurrences Upon Jesus’ Return

Dub McClish

The New Testament not only frequently and plainly tells us that Jesus Christ will return, but it also tells us what things will occur when He comes.

- Great sounds and noises will be heard, including “a shout,” “the voice of the archangel,” and “the trump of God” (1 The. 4:16).
- He will obliterate all material things, including space (“the heavens”), the base ele-

ments, and the earth and all that men have produced (2 Pet. 3:4, 10). His coming will mark “the end” of time (1 Cor. 15: 23–24).

- He will raise all the dead “at his coming” (1 Cor. 15:22–23; 1 The. 4:16), including good and evil in the same “hour” (John 5:28–29).
- He will judge “all the nations” (Mat. 25:31–46; cf. 2 The. 1:7–10), a Judgment Day no one will escape (2 Cor. 5:10).
- When He comes, He will deliver His presently existing church/kingdom (Mat. 16:18–19; Mark 9:1; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9) to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). He has gone “to prepare a place” for His people (i.e., Heaven), to which He will take us to be with Him forever (John 14:2–3).
- When He comes, no one will miss it (Rev. 1:7).

With these Biblical facts before us, we note that when Jesus returns:

- **Everyone** will be aware of this momentous event, not merely a few (the righteous), as the “Rapture” theorists aver. (The spectacular sounds and sights will be unavoidable.) “Every eye shall see him” when He comes (Rev. 1:7).
- He will return only **once**, contrary to the “Rapture” doctrine that requires at least two “Second Comings.”
- He will raise **all the dead** in only one universal resurrection, rather than allegedly raising the righteous dead at a “first” Second Coming, followed by that of the unrighteous dead at a “second” Second Coming a millennium or more later, per the “Rapture” doctrine. The New Testament knows of only one Second Coming.
- He will **not establish** a political kingdom on earth for even one year, much less for a millennium, for there will be no earth upon which to establish it and no time remaining in which it might exist.

Speculations concerning the time of the Lord’s return and its accompanying events are both numerous—and dangerous.

The Absurdity of Premillennialism

H. Leo Boles

The whole scheme of pre-millennialism is based upon the **theory** of a millennium. The doctrine of the “millennium” comes from two Latin words—*mille*, “thousand,” and *annum*, meaning “year.” The Greek equivalent for *millennium* is *chiliasm*.

Briefly stated, the theory of the millennium teaches that the fleshly and earthly, or sub-lunary, state of man is not terminated with the coming of Christ, but that a new order of things is to be set up at that time; that when Christ comes with His glorified saints, He will reign in person on a literal, material throne of David at Jerusalem for 1,000 years, over a world of men yet in the flesh, eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage; and that this new order of affairs will continue exactly to a day for 1,000 years. Hence, *millennialism* is the belief that Christ will reign personally on the earth with His saints for 1,000 years over an earthly kingdom.

The millennial theory represents Christ as King in Jerusalem, who had begun His reign on earth in the Spirit, but will end it in the flesh on a literal throne. It is a significant fact that in all His teaching, Jesus did **not** speak of a millennium. Paul and the other apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit in their speaking and writing, did not mention it. No ancient prophet, speaking by the Holy Spirit, ever used any language that could be correctly interpreted as a “millennium.” Indeed, it is nowhere to be found in the Bible.

What Is Premillennialism?

Premillennialism is a theory based on the theory of the “millennium.” It is a **theory** based on **another theory**. The word simply means “before the millennium.” Those who believe that the second coming of Christ marks the **beginning** of the “theory of the millennium” are called *premillennialists*, while those who believe the second coming of Christ marks the **close** of the “theory of the millennium” are called *postmil-*

lenialists. The difference between the *pre* and the *post* millennialists is a definite period of 1,000 years separated from the rest of human history by strictly definite boundaries, called "the millennium."

The Bible does not teach anything about premillennialism. Christians who are guided by the New Testament are **neither** *pre* nor *post* millennialists. Neither are they millennialists in any sense of the word. Anyone who calls himself a *premillennialist* is taking a name that is not given in the New Testament and subscribing to a theory about which the New Testament says nothing.

The scheme of the premillennialists, as diagrammed by their own leaders, has periods of time known as "The Rapture," "The tribulation," and "The Revelation" (See W. E. Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, pp. 48-50). By *The Rapture*, they mean the translation of the saints who, like Enoch, are caught up to meet Christ in the air. They define *The Tribulation* as the period of time between the saints being caught up in the air and their return to earth with Christ. *The Tribulation* comes between *The Rapture* and *The Revelation*. *The Revelation* is defined as the time when Christ and His saints shall return to the earth in flaming fire to execute judgment on the earth, and at the end of *The Revelation* begins the *millennium*.

It is strange that anyone would want to believe such a wild scheme of religious errors. But there are some who accept the theory without any investigation. These are curious and restless spirits who feed upon anything that has to do with the future. The bare statement of the theory carries to their minds something new, and they are ready to accept it without any proof.

There are others who are sincere in accepting this theory. But their sincerity cannot be taken as proof of the theory. Mohammedans and Jews are sincere in their worship, but their sincerity does not render their worship acceptable to God. Neither does it prove the truthfulness of their claims.

A Fatal Fallacy

There are many clumsy interpretations of prophecies and gross fallacies of premillennialism. Chief among these is the one that makes the kingdom of God an earthly kingdom. Every argument that premillennialists advance is based upon the **assumption** that the theory of the millennium is true. Therefore, before any premillennial argument can be logical or sound, those advancing them must first prove that the Bible teaches that Christ came to the earth to establish an earthly kingdom, because their theory presupposes an earthly kingdom. Their interpreters say that "the kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of God," as used by Christ, means an earthly and temporal kingdom.

Jesus taught the very opposite of this theory. In Luke 22:24-30, He contrasted His reign with that of Gentile kings. He said the governments of the Gentiles are typical of all earthly governments, but that His reign in His kingdom is far different from theirs. He told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). This should settle the matter. His kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. He never intended that it should be an earthly kingdom at any stage of its existence. Neither was it to be a temporal dynasty in any sense.

Again, Jesus said to His disciples just before leaving them, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29). What is the kingdom which was appointed unto them? One thing is definite—it was not a kingdom of this world, though it was to be **in** this world. Jesus never spoke of having two kingdoms. The Holy Spirit nowhere guided any New Testament writer to speak of two kingdoms. He claimed to establish only one, and He **has** only one, but it is **not** an earthly kingdom.

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul denied the theory of premillennialism in Second Thessalonians 2:1-3. He says there, in brief, that he besought the Thessalonians not to quote him as ever implying anything of the kind, as ever saying anything of the kind, or as ever writing anything of that sort. He denies that by spirit, word or letter he had ever given any warrant to the advocates of this doctrine to quote him as endorsing it. He said that if anyone should say that this theory is the spirit or purport of his teach-

ing, or if anyone should say that he **sometimes** preached it, or if anyone should say that the doctrine can be found in any of his letters, they should not believe it. “Let no man deceive you by **any** means,” he said.

Christ always rebuked His disciples for entertaining the idea that He would set up a temporal or worldly kingdom. We cannot allow any interpretation of prophetic symbols and language to contradict the plain and simple teaching of Christ. Every interpretation of prophecy must accord with the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel.

Premillennialists admit that Jesus came to establish a kingdom, but they deny that He did what He came to do. They teach that the Jews rejected Christ while He was here on earth, and that instead of establishing His kingdom, He established the church. Hence, they call the church the “spiritual contingent of the kingdom.” But all the work of the salvation of man from sin will be completed by the gospel before the return of Christ, according to the New Testament. Christ is now king and will reign until all His enemies are subdued (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

Other Fallacies

Premillennialism depends upon an unsound and illogical method of handling scripture. Those who advocate it give a literal interpretation to figurative, symbolic and poetical language. The advocates of this theory have the wrong conception of the kingdom. They deny that the kingdom of God is now present in the world, and affirm that it will not be inaugurated until Christ comes.

The premillennial theory is Judaistic in that it presses the literal interpretation of the scriptures to an extreme degree in order to bolster up the “theory of the millennium.” It is further Judaistic in its view of the kingdom as an earthly empire with its capital at Jerusalem, and a vast hierarchy of ecclesiastical and political government extending over the world.

Finally, this theory teaches that the Gospel as God's power to save, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the church are not sufficient for the redemption of man, and that the earthly life of Christ, His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension were all failures.

“Finding Jesus?” He was Never Lost

Jerry C. Brewer

I have always been a fan of Country Music—**real** country music not the pseudo-country music spewed out of Nashville today. But one of those recent song's lyrics made shivers run up and down my spine because of it's irreverent reference to the Son of God. The song's lyrics said, "I found Jesus on the jail house floor." That is typical of the experiential religion that the majority of people in the world embrace today. But Jesus is **not on** a jail house floor. He is, today, where He has always been—in His Father's house, being about His Father's business. Jesus is not lost. It is man who is lost.

The only account of Jesus' childhood recorded in the New Testament is related by Luke.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions (Luke 2:41-46).

At least two great lessons for us are found in this lone account of Jesus' childhood:

“Supposing” Christ is With Us

Luke 2:44 says they went on their way, **supposing** that Jesus was with them. How

many religious people today live life merely **supposing** that Jesus is with them and approves of everything they do? They do not investigate the Bible for themselves, but take the words of a preacher, **supposing** that he is right.

But each of us must investigate for himself. We are to study God's word (2 Tim. 2:15) in order to know the truth, for only by that knowledge can we be sure of our salvation (John 8:32). We should study to **walk with Jesus**, rather than **supposing** He is walking with us, and in order to do that we must walk in the Truth of God's word (John 14:15; 1 John 1:5-7).

Following Parents' Religion

Joseph and Mary committed another fallacy that is oft repeated today, Luke 2:44 also says they **thought** He was among their **kinsfolk and acquaintances**. How many people today will say, "Well, my parents' religion is good enough for me?" or "My friends practice this or that religion?" without realizing that parents and friends **can** be **wrong** in their religious practices. Though he was sincere in what he did, Paul was wrong and changed his religion (Acts 23:2; Phil. 3:8; Gal. 1:13-14). The standard of true religion is not parents or friends, but the word of God. Paul wrote that God's word "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Parents can be wrong in their religion. Jesus said his religion would set parents and children against each other.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matt. 10:34-36).

Yes, parents, like Joseph and Mary, can be wrong, but Christ's way **cannot** (John 14:6). It **cannot** be wrong to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24; Acts 16:30). It **cannot** be wrong to repent of one's sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30-31). It **cannot** be wrong to confess Christ before men (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37) and it **cannot** be wrong to be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

Paul followed the religion of his "fathers" (Gal. 1:13-14) but gave it all up when he learned the truth of Jesus Christ. That takes courage, but when parents follow a religion not found in the New Testament it **must** be given up if one is to please God.

Jesus Is Not Lost

When Joseph and Mary learned they were mistaken, Luke 2:45 says they "turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him." That's the answer to every question regarding where truth in religion is to be found. One must go back past Catholic councils, Protestant creeds, and the opinions of parents and friends, all the way to Jerusalem where the Gospel began to be preached and the church was established in Acts 2. It's there where Jesus will be found—as He said in Luke 2:49—being about His Father's business.

Contrary to what his parents feared, Jesus wasn't lost. His reply to them in the American Standard Version says, "How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" God's house is His church (1 Tim. 3:15) and that's where Jesus is. He was not lost at 12 years old and He is not lost today. It is **man** who is lost and if man would be saved, he must seek Jesus in God's house, the church, today.

Friends, think on these things. Good parents love their children and provide the necessities of life for them. But even good parents can be religiously wrong. Do not blindly accept the religion of parents, but investigate the Bible for yourselves. Jesus Christ has the words of life and He is the only way to the Father (John 14:6).

I can be wrong, my friends can be wrong, and my parents can be wrong, but the Word of God is never wrong. In it we are told that we must hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17) believe it (John 8:24) repent of our sins (Luke 13:3) confess our faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

Atheistic Proselytizing on the Internet

Lee Moses

Atheists have become much more publicly militant and belligerent in recent years. And they have taken to the Internet as their bullying playground. They have found the Internet a favorable medium to spew out godless vitriol, and have actually had some success converting people to their cause by so doing. They do not typically gain their Internet converts by means of logical reasoning. While holding a public debate, one renowned Internet atheist admitted to the audience, “My job is to confuse the (expletive) out of you.” This seems to be a main focus of their online approach as well—simply to confuse people, rather than by proving their view is correct.

The primary way online atheists confuse people is by throwing out lies and half-truths. Of course, a half truth is a whole lie; but sometimes they give added credence to those lies by throwing in an element of truth. A commonly perpetuated Internet lie is that “radical (i.e., actual, Bible-believing) Christians are just as dangerous as radical Muslims.” And as “proof” they will cite Timothy McVeigh and Anders Behring Breivik as examples of Christian terrorists. McVeigh was guilty of killing 168 people when he bombed the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995; Breivik killed 8 people in a bombing in Oslo, Norway, and then murdered 69 more in a mass shooting at a nearby youth camp. However, neither of them were actually Christians, even in the denominational sense, much less the Biblical sense. Consider this quote: “It is essential that science take an undisputed precedence over biblical teachings.” Does this sound like something a Christian would say? Yet it is a direct quote from Anders Breivik. What about this quote? “Science is my god”—direct from the lips of Timothy McVeigh. Their views were not remotely Christian, and certainly the Bible had no influence on their actions; contrary to Muslim terrorists, who act in direct obedience to the teachings of their supposed “holy book.”

Internet atheists also like to throw out the Crusades as evidence of the supposed atrocity of Christianity. Unlike McVeigh and Breivik, the Crusades were certainly perpetrated by those at least **professing** an allegiance to Christianity. However, this fails to prove anything flawed in the character of true Christianity. The New Testament, the Christian’s constitution, nowhere authorizes waging physical warfare against a group of people simply because they are not Christians (the causes of the Crusades were more complex than this, but that is a story for another day). Conversely, the New Testament specifically states, “The weapons of our warfare are **not** carnal” (2 Cor. 10:4, emphasis LM). Jesus **rebuked** Peter when he attempted to defend Christ’s Cause with a literal sword (Matt. 26:51-53). The fact that certain people professing Christianity have acted immorally proves nothing—one must establish that the **teachings** of Christianity (the New Testament) compel people to act immorally. And this no atheist can do, but that will not stop atheists from attempting to cloud the air with such accusations.

Remember, an atheist has no reason to see himself as having a moral obligation to tell the truth. The more a lie is repeated, the more it seems to be the truth in people’s minds. Hitler’s Minister of Propaganda is credited with saying, “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it,” and Internet atheists seem to adhere closely to this maxim.

And as might be expected with bullies, Internet atheists also attempt to win arguments and proselytes through name-calling. One of their favorite epithets is “flat-earth creationists,” as if to believe in creation were equivalent to believing in a flat earth. They cast any number of insults in such a way as to insinuate that believing in the Bible renders one less intelligent or incapable of thinking for oneself. However, it does no such thing. One who blinds his mind to the abundant evidence for God is the one who dulls and darkens his intellect (Rom. 1:19-22). “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7); all knowledge to be obtained rests on this most fundamental awareness.

The Christian who ventures online needs to understand that online inhabitants are typically not interested in a fair exchange of ideas. That goes at least double for atheist trolls who lurk online to seduce the innocent. Seeking to engage and reason with athe-

istic proselytizers online is typically a waste of time. This does not mean that one should never consider,

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (2 Tim. 2:25-26).

However, if atheists encountered online continue to “oppose themselves and blaspheme,” you need to be ready to move along to better soil and a better environment for a Christian soul to dwell (cf. Acts 18:6).

Only One Chance to do Right

Nathan Brewer

Golfers call it a “mulligan.” Kids call it a “do-over.”

Whenever we make a mistake, we want the opportunity to make it right. Sometimes, in this life, we get second and even third chances.

But one day—**and no one knows when that day will be**—the opportunity for “do-overs” will be gone. One day, it will be too late to make things right.

Jesus makes this point in Luke chapter 19 in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Both men die and go to Hades to await final Judgment. Lazarus had been a beggar living a miserable life. The rich man lived as the rich often do, in comfort and luxury.

But when they die, their roles are reversed. The rich man is in agony, “tormented in this flame” (v. 24). Lazarus the beggar is now comforted, resting at last in Abraham's bosom.

The rich man sees Abraham in the distance and asks him to send Lazarus over with a drop of water to relieve his suffering. Abraham says no. “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence” (v. 26).

It's not that Abraham, the father of the Jews, doesn't want to help relieve the rich man's suffering. He can't. When death comes and our spirits travel to Hades, it's too late for us to change our condition.

Here's a wake-up call: The one suffering in flames in Luke 19 isn't an atheist or a cultist. He's one of the Israelites God had separated to be His special people.

Are you religious? Do you think that you are right with God? The Bible is full of religious people who think they are living, worshiping and serving God acceptably, yet they aren't.

Study your New Testament with an open mind. Preachers, relatives and friends might counsel you, but the words of Christ are the only road map to heaven (John 8:31-32). They are the standard by which our lives will be judged (John 12:48).

Once you die, that's it—no “mulligans,” no “do-overs,” no second chances. It won't do any good for your relatives to pray for your sins to be purged. And no one can obey the Gospel for you. Death seals your fate. Like the rich man in Luke 19, whatever spiritual condition you are in when you die is the condition you will be in forever. Are you ready?

How to Beat the Devil Out of Sin

Phillip Williams

Sin. Such a little word to describe such a huge problem.

What is sin? In a nutshell, it's not complying with God's will.

There are two types of sins. One is called *sins of commission*—that is, **doing** something that is **against** God's will, such as murder, theft or adultery. The other is called *sins of omission*, which means we **don't** do something God **requires** us to do. These

types of sins would include, among others, not attending worship regularly when we are able, not studying the Bible, and not loving our enemies.

Sin has had—and can have—terrible consequences. For man to be forgiven of it, Jesus Christ, Who was the perfect, sinless Son of God, had to die on a cross by crucifixion, shedding His blood so sinners could go to heaven for all eternity.

Sin can lead to death. The Bible has more than one example of people whom God struck dead for it. One can also lose his life today by committing sins like taking an overdose of an illegal drug, alcohol poisoning, or committing a murder that results in the murderer's legal execution. Death, however, is not the only severe consequence of sin.

Committing a crime, such as burglary, can result in going to prison. Adultery can lead to divorce, costing the adulterer considerable money in a divorce settlement and child support, as well as ruining his reputation.

Habitual gambling can lead to financial disaster. Sexual misconduct can result in getting a sexually-transmitted disease, and alcoholism can ruin one's health.

Thus, we need to take sin seriously! Not just the ones that have been mentioned, either. There are many types of sin, and any one of them will send us to a burning Hell forever unless we comply with God's terms for forgiveness!

The good news is that God offers that forgiveness, but we need to study the Bible to see what we must do to receive it. God does not automatically grant forgiveness; if He did, everyone would go to Heaven, but the scriptures tell us that few will be there (Matt. 7:13-14).

The devil wants you to be among the many, but if you want to beat him out of sin and be among heaven's few, believe in Christ as God's Son (John 8:24), repent of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), confess your faith in Him (Acts 8:37), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

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Indulgences and Other Catholic Heresies

Frank Puckett

That the doctrine of indulgences (the spark that touched off the Protestant Reformation) is still taught by Catholics is clear from their catechism. It is a cardinal part of their scheme to control men through fear. These doctrines of indulgences are two in kind: one will obtain the complete remission of temporal sins; the other will obtain a partial remission. The idea of indulgences hooks right into the doctrine of penance, and the two heresies joined together form an unholy alliance.

Catholic teaching concerning indulgences can be traced from the last decade of the twelfth century. The Catholic Catechism says that an indulgence is “the remission of temporal punishment due to sin.” The idea is that the priest absolves the penitent sinner of his sins; pronounces upon him certain requirements as *penance* or punishment for his sins; then by the granting of an *indulgence* can remit or annul the punishment imposed by penance.

The conception of a storehouse of merits (*thesaurus meritorum or indulgentiarum*) was elaborately formulated by Alexander of Hales in the thirteenth century. Starting with the existing practice in the Church that some penances (such as pilgrimages) might be vicariously performed, and bringing together the several thoughts that the faithful are members of one body, and that the good deeds of each of the members are common property of all, and therefore that the more sinful can benefit by the good deeds of their more saintly brethren, and that the sacrifice of Christ was sufficient to wipe out the sins of all, theologians gradually formulated the doctrine that there was a common storehouse which contained the good deeds of living

men and women, of the saints in heaven, and the inexhaustible merits of Christ, and that all these merits accumulated there had been placed under the charge of the Pope, and could be dispensed by him to the faithful (*History of the Reformation*, Lindsay, p. 219).

Preaching Of John Tetzel

What must one do to get an indulgence? The answer is given: “to gain an indulgence one must (1) be in a state of grace, (2) have the intention of gaining the indulgence, and (3) do the good works required” of the priest, i.e. do whatever penance the priest may impose.

To whom may the indulgences gained be applied? Answer: one may apply the indulgence to himself, or to the souls in purgatory. (Some indulgences were restricted to the living).

It was the preaching of this monstrous doctrine that was really responsible for the beginning of the Protestant Reformation at the beginning of the 16th century. When John Tetzel, a Dominican monk, came into Germany selling indulgences like cattle are sold in the market, he so incensed Martin Luther, a devout Catholic monk, that Luther lifted his voice in horrified protest. He filed 95 objections to the practices of Catholicism as it was taught and practiced in his day, and challenged any Catholic on the face of the earth to meet him in open discussion of the same.

Tetzel was unbelievably crude and cynical in his sale of the indulgences. He did not try (nor do modern Catholics) to conceal the crass greed of his doctrine between honeyed words and vague generalizations. When he would enter into a town, he would erect a cross bearing the Pope's own insignia, enter into the pulpit, and begin to harangue the multitude and exalt the efficacy of indulgences. Here is a portion of the speech he would customarily make:

Indulgences are the most precious and sublime of God's gifts. This cross (pointing to the emblem) has as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ. Draw, near, and I will give you letters duly sealed by which even the sins which you shall hereafter desire to commit shall all be forgiven. I would not exchange my privileges for those of St. Peter! I have saved more souls with my indulgences than he has with his servants. There is no sin so great that indulgences cannot remit. And even if one should, which is doubtless impossible, ravish the holy Virgin, Mother of God, let him pay, only let his pay well for an indulgence, and all shall be forgiven him! Ye priests, ye nobles, ye wives, ye maidens, and you young men, hearken to your departed parents and friends who cry to you from the bottomless depths. 'We are enduring a horrible torment', they scream, 'a small alms from you would deliver us. You can give it now if you will'. Thus they cry to you from purgatory. The very moment that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies free to heaven. Now just pay off, o senseless people! Almost like the beasts who do not comprehend the grace so richly offered. This day heaven is on all sides of you. Do you now refuse to enter? When do you intend to come in? This day you may redeem many souls.

From preaching such as this Martin Luther and millions of other devout and intelligent men arose in wrathful rebellion. Put so crudely as Tetzel put it, no righteous man could accept the doctrine. Only the base and superstitious, only the depraved and wicked could be willing to follow so false a leader. Yet, thought the words to describe it have been softened and sweetened through the years. *The Doctrine of Indulgences* as taught by Catholicism today is precisely that which was proclaimed by Tetzel

No Bible Authority

Let it be understood by all that the Catholic church does not maintain that the Bible teaches the doctrine of indulgences. Their acceptance of that heresy grows out of another and more fundamental error the belief that **the church** has legislative power.

In the catechism we have reference after reference to what **the church** teaches, what **the church** commands, what **the church** enjoins, what **the church** authorizes. With them, it isn't, **what the Bible teaches** or what the apostles authorized, or what Christ commanded. Rather, it is, what does **the church** command?

The idea of church authority as taught by Catholicism centers in the Pope. As head of the Catholic Church, the Pope claims all authority in spiritual matters, and claims to be absolutely infallible. Catholics claim that it is impossible for the Pope to be wrong in any of his teaching. He just cannot make a mistake! What he says is divine law. He has divine right over the church, and over all mankind on this earth. He has supreme authority over every pastor and his flock.

When the Pope speaks, he speaks infallibly; he has authority to enact new decrees, to set aside any particular injunction of the scripture, to modify at will any statement even of Christ himself! This is the basic and foundational error of all Catholic heresy.

With that idea to start with, there is no superstition or fable which may not become a part of “the faith” for Catholic peoples. Once accepting the idea of the infallible authority of the Pope, Catholicism has no way of stopping short of a total and complete descent into eternal darkness of mind and spirit.

“Remember, in Thy Lifetime”

J.A. McNutt

God has blessed man with the power to remember the days that are past: the joys of youth, the pleasures of early life, the precious memories of home and the companionship of friends. Yes, memory can be a great blessing, and one poem has raised the question:

Where is the heart that doth not keep,
Within its inmost core,
Some fond remembrance hidden deep,
Of days that are no more?

But let it also be remembered that memory may be a cause of sorrow and regret, as well as a blessing in the lives of men. Memories can be happy and pleasant or filled with remorse and regret. The story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke chapter sixteen may be a parable, as most commentators regard it, or the account of two real individuals who died, but the truth in either case remains unchanged. After death Lazarus enjoyed comfort and rest in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man entered a state of torment and suffering.

Their Situations were Reversed

After death, there was a complete reversal of their situations in life. In hell, or hades, the rich man appealed to Abraham for mercy saying, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame” (Luke 16:24). Then came the answer, “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou are tormented” (Luke 16:25). And then the rich man was reminded that his destiny was sealed, and a great gulf separated the two men so that no passage from one estate to the other was possible. The memory of the rich man served as a curse, filled with remorse and regret. Once Lazarus lay at his gate hungry, afflicted and begging for help, but he died unnoticed; now the rich man begs for mercy and is denied. Some one has said that in the democracy of death all men are equal, the rich are divested of their wealth, and those like Lazarus lay aside their rags. There was a time when the rich man could have relieved the beggar at his gate but that day was past, and the fate of the two men was settled.

Seeing that all hope for himself was gone, the rich man pleaded for a miracle to convince his five brethren lest they too should be lost. But he was told that they had the words of Moses and the prophets, and if they rejected this testimony, they would not be persuaded by a miracle (Luke 16:29-31).

For the First Time, He Felt the Need for God

After the rich man was lost and in torment, for the first time in his life he felt a genuine need for God. Like so many in the world today, he was so busy he had never found time for God. He was not an evil person, perhaps he simply had become so involved in making money that he had not given any consideration to spiritual matters or taken notice of the poor beggar at his gate. He had sought to gain the world at the loss of his own soul (Mat. 16:26).

At Last, He Saw the Need for Mercy

For the first time in his life he saw an urgent need for mercy and cried for help (Luke 16:24). In the business world, he probably had neither experienced much mercy nor shown any mercy to his competitors' ill business deals. It was every man for himself, no compassion shown, and only the strong would survive. To ask or to seek help would have been an admission of weakness. But now in torment he pleaded for mercy.

He Saw the Folly of Materialism

For the first time in his life, he learned the lack of true value in material things. All his wealth and all his goods which he had accumulated were worthless. His possessions could not purchase any relief from guilt and pain. God says "Thou Fool" of all those who lay up treasures for themselves and are not rich toward God (Luke 12:20). Someone has said that a million dollars will be worth no more than a bale of hay on Judgment Day.

He Became Interested in Saving Souls

For the first time in his life, the rich man became concerned about saving the souls of his five brethren, lest they should share his fate. He requested a special miracle whereby Lazarus would return from the dead to warn his brethren to change their lives and avoid the agony that he was suffering. He was told that such a miracle would not convince those who refuse to heed the words of Moses and the prophets (Luke 16:31). Those who exalt miracles above the Word of God need to consider and read carefully (Rom. 10:6-11). It is not necessary that Christ return from heaven or rise again from the dead, we have the Word of God today which produces faith and saves souls. Jesus has promised salvation to those who believe and are baptized (Mark 16:15-16). Believing, penitent souls can be baptized and receive remission of sins and be added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:36-47).

Do not wait for a miracle! Believe and obey our Lord today!

What is "That Form of Doctrine"?

M.F. Manchester

The question in regard to when a sinner receives the remission of sins has long been one about which there is much controversy. Some say that remission comes as a result of believing only, and others that it is through prayer that salvation is obtained. The only way to answer any question that pertains to the forgiveness of sin, is to give a thus saith the Lord. Peter says: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). This we shall do in this article, and we hope that everyone will read it with an open mind, and with a readiness to do all that the Lord has required of you to do to be saved.

Paul has forever settled the question as to the time when the sinner is made free from sin. "But God be thanked that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being **then** (emphasis mine) made free from sin you became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18).

Let us note first: The form of doctrine had to be delivered. Second: They had to obey it from the heart. Third: In order to be made free from sin. This the Romans had done, and according to Paul they were not made free until they had done so. This fact makes the question, "what is that form of doctrine"? a question of major importance.

We think it is easy to see that **believing only** is **not** that form of doctrine because Paul does not say they had obeyed it **in** the heart, but **from** the heart. Obedience to

that “form” follows that which is believed in the heart, and consists of acts which cannot be obeyed by the mere act of believing. Here is a Bible illustration of what we mean. “For with the heart man believeth unto (not into) salvation” (Rom. 10:10). Now if a sinner can believe into salvation without any outward acts of obedience on his part, Paul should have said, “with the heart man believeth **into** salvation” instead of “**unto** salvation.” As further proof that, “that form of doctrine” is not a mere act of faith in the heart we give the following statement from John. “He came unto his own and his own received him not. But to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:11-12). Notice that faith alone does not make one a son of God, but only furnishes the power by which one can become a son.

An automobile may have a one 200 horsepower motor in it, but until a person starts it and puts it in gear and steps on the accelerator he cannot enjoy its mighty power of transportation. So it is with the sinner who believes in Christ. His faith must be strong enough to lead him to turn to the Lord. “And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great company believed and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:21). If salvation is by faith only as many teach, these people had everything that God had to offer the moment they believed. Therefore we ask, “Why turn to the Lord?” The truth of the matter is that their faith gave them power to **become** the sons of God, and they **turned** unto the Lord that they might become sons. No dear reader faith alone is not that form of doctrine. We also know that prayer is not that form of doctrine because in the book of Acts we find believing sinners wanted to know what to do to be saved, but no preacher or apostle ever told them to pray for the remission of sins.

Faith and the Gospel

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). It is not power unto salvation even if believed, unless acted upon, or obeyed.

Jesus said, preach the gospel to every creature, “he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16). The gospel consists of three facts. First, the death of Christ upon the cross. Second, His burial. Third, His resurrection from the dead. (See 1 Cor. 15:1-5) These are the facts to be believed, but “that form of doctrine” must be obeyed before these facts will save you. “But you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin.” The gospel was first preached to the Romans, and they believed it, and then that form of doctrine was delivered unto them and when they obeyed it, Paul says they were made free from sin. So faith plus obedience to that form of doctrine equals salvation or the remission of sins.

Peter Delivers That Form of Doctrine

Paul has made it plain that the “form of doctrine” is something that must be delivered to those who believe the gospel. On the day of Pentecost Peter along with the other apostles, had preached the gospel as Christ had commanded them (Acts 2:14-36). About 3,000 believed it, because they cried out “men and brethren what shall we do?” They had the power to become sons of God, but that “form of doctrine” had not been delivered as yet, but in answering their question it was delivered. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Let us watch them obey it because it was then, and not until then, that they were made free from sin.

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized” (Acts 2:41). Repentance and baptism preceded by faith in the gospel is that “form of doctrine.” It is **after** (not before) obedience to that form of doctrine, or repentance and baptism, that one is made free from sin.

Hear Paul again:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his res-

urrection (Rom. 6:3-5).

Note: Newness of life follows baptism. But freedom from sin follows obedience to that form of doctrine; hence we must conclude that without baptism there can be no newness of life, or remission of sins.

Dear reader will you not accept the place where Christ has placed the forgiveness of sins? He has placed it **after** repentance and baptism, but man's wisdom puts it at the point of faith, without repentance and baptism. Which will you accept? It is your soul that is lost. Mere man did not give his life for you, but Christ did, and He says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

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Paul, a Leader in Passion

David Ray

Anyone who knows me very well knows that my favorite professional football team is the New England Patriots. Having lived in Massachusetts for five years, very near where the Patriots play, I can't help but be. I was cheering when they won each of their six Superbowls and felt the agony of defeat as they fell short in three others. One might say I have passion for the Patriots!

This is a typical example of the "passion" people possess today. But this word originally carried the idea of suffering (e.g., the passion or suffering of Christ). Today, according to the American Heritage Dictionary, its meaning is "a powerful emotion, such as love or anger." In general, it carries the image of intense emotion, feeling, or desire. Nobody who has ever read Paul's writings would doubt that he had intense emotion, feeling, and desire for the Lord and His church. We take nothing away from any other biblical character when we say that there was no greater leader in passion than Paul!

Passion in preaching

This passion, which preachers today would do well to imitate, is seen clearly in 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. Having shown that it was the church's obligation to pay the preacher (vv. 1-14), Paul then refused to accept payment (vv. 15-18). He said he couldn't glory in his decision to preach because he was chosen by Christ for this mission, and woe unto him if he didn't preach. So instead, he said he would glory in making the gospel free of charge. He would've rather died than to accept payment from them. This was because his passion (that for which he would willingly suffer) was in reaching the lost (vv. 19-23). He made himself a servant to all in order to save as many souls as possible! Are we willing to do this? Or are we too interested in our own desires, rights, and freedoms?

Passion in Encouragement

Paul's letter to Philemon is a great example of encouragement, as he asked this brother to do something difficult, but that would benefit all parties. After making the request, Paul encouraged Philemon by saying, "having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say." It's a lot easier to do the right thing when our brethren have confidence in us.

Encouragement means more than patting a brother on the back and saying, "Good job!" Many times it means reproving, rebuking, and exhorting (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul was even willing to rebuke a fellow apostle for his sin. Because of Peter's duplicity regarding the Gentiles, Paul correctly opposed him—an act that must've been difficult (Gal. 2:11-14). How many members of the Lord's church today say nothing while their brethren continue in sin?

Coming Soon!
"The Thing That Hath Been..."
Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised

Editor's Travels and Writings

November found us at Willow, Okla. for morning worship each Sunday, Nov. 1, 8, 15, and 22 and at Yukon, Okla. for evening worship on Nov. 1 and 15. We made our monthly trip to Chillicothe, Texas to preach in morning worship, Nov. 29.

The fourth printing of *“The Thing That Hath Been...”: The Cycle of Apostasy* is gone. We mailed the last copy Nov. 11, but our follow-up book, *“The Thing That Hath Been...”: The Cycle of Apostasy Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised*, is nearly ready to go to the printer. It contains **5 new chapters** with much more material on mainstream churches of Christ, their Pentecostalism, their preaching schools, their tangled web of fellowship with error, and an in-depth expose' of the use of pornography in Freed-Hardeman University's art classes. The Enlarged edition is about 360 pages, compared with the first edition's 214 pages. **This BOOK is FREE and POSTAGE is FREE for single copies.** Multiple copies will be sent boxed, via Priority Mail. To order early, send your name and address in an email message to us at txjch@att.net. Your copy will be mailed as soon as we receive them from the printer.

“What Saith The Scriptures?”

Harrell Davidson

Our question this month is:

How can a Christian reconcile the command to not be covetous and the exhortation to be content (1 Tim. 6:6-10) with seeking material progress in this life? Am I a covetous person, if I desire to own a house and a car in the future? Can I claim to be content with my lot if I desire to be promoted at my workplace? Does 1 Timothy 6:9 mean a Christian should not aim to materially rich?

Thanks for the thoughtful question. The querist also suggested that this might be a “loaded question.” With the proper understanding of Scripture, we do not see it as loaded at all. One must remember that there is one main Author of Scripture and that is God who gave Words through the Holy Spirit to men who were inspired to write those words. Therefore, each word in the Bible must harmonize with every other word in the Bible.

That being the case please notice that Adam was to “dress it and to keep” the earth thus causing it to produce enough to sustain man and then mankind (cf. Gen. 2:15). Notice also that Noah was told after the flood to empty the ark “that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth” (Gen. 8:17). The earth was barren it would need to advance to the point of producing food for man and beasts. Thus, not being satisfied with the status quo.

Abram and his nephew Lot went out as God commanded Abram. After some time, their herds and flocks increased till there was not enough in the land they were in to sustain them and there began to be tension between their herdsmen. No command was given to accept such and not grow the herds etc., but to expand by separating the flocks so there would be no strife between the herdsman of either—demonstrating the matter of continual growth.

The Book of Exodus demonstrates this same principle as the children of Israel wanted more with less agony and God heard their cry for help. On and on we could go giving these kinds of examples of how others increased—had more and worked for more and it did not turn God’s face against them. We must conclude that it is not prospering that God is opposed to, so it has to be something else that thus far we are missing.

Let us then be true to God and not contradict His divine Word. When something like this appears to have happened, we must look for an answer that will harmonize with God’s Word.

We cannot stress too much context, context, context. What is the context of 1 Timothy 6:1-10? Paul to Timothy addresses, in verse one, servants who are under bondage to a master. The word *servant* in verse one means bond slave thus a slave owned by his master. These were slaves who had obeyed the Gospel as verse two indicates but not all masters were Christians. Those not Christians were to be treated with great honor so that the servant's life should not cause the master to blaspheme God which means to speak against. In this context they were to be satisfied with what they had—be content (vs. 6).

Timothy was told to teach these things to those whom he met and how that slaves who were Christians were to treat those who owned them with greater honor and not be angry because the master was a Christian also. Converted slaves must not despise their masters, because in the church they are equal. Rather, they must serve them better because they are beloved brethren, and partakers of the benefit of their service. The opposition is between those Christian slaves under the yoke of heathens and those who have believing masters.

Notice the phrase *but rather* in verse two also. The masters were beloved by God so the slaves should treat them honorably in all things, and more so because they were children of God. The servants and the master in such cases were equal before God as brethren. The masters were friends of God like the servants were. "Partakers of the benefit" are the blessings that are imported through the Gospel.

Verses 3-5 is the teacher and what is and is not taught. False teachers were teaching error regarding masters and slaves for, or, to the gain of the false teacher. They consented not to wholesome words which were healthful or healing words for the soul and this was causing strife, railings -speaking against and evil surmising. The false teacher associated these things with gain for them and their hearers.

Look back at the phrase in verse three "and to the doctrine which is according to godliness." The doctrine was the teachings of Christ, not **about** Christ but the doctrine **of** Christ which was/is wholesome. Then in verse 6 "supposing that gain is godliness" and from this error—false doctrine—they were told to turn away. The false teachers and their followers made gain over the teachings of Christ. They were even wrong in their suppositions.

So, in turning away from this error what should they consider-know-practice? Following Christ, practicing New Testament Christianity is the greatest value one can have. There is never peace in error, speaking against the Lord and His truth, teaching error thus making disciples to themselves. "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked" (Psa. 37:16). "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith" (Prov. 15:16). And consider the Lord's promise in Hebrews 13: 5 that He would never forsake the faithful. Godliness is the source of the greatest gain.

We had nothing when we arrived or nothing when we leave this world. The necessities of life are furnished to those that love the Lord and obey His Word as we work with out hands the things that are good. God does nothing for us that we can do for ourselves.

Verse 9 shows us that if our hearts are set on riches only, we will be tempted to doing anything to get the wealth we desire. We have little to no time for the Lord or sense of right and wrong truth or error.

These passages under consideration do not teach that we can't desire and work for better things as long as our motive is on serving God. May we remind all of the parable of the talents. The man with five and two doubled theirs by trading—making more of which the Lord approved but the man that did not use his was cast into outer darkness (cf. Matt. 25:14-30).

A caution to all readers, be careful what you want with all your heart for you shall surely get it. Have hearts set on God and prosper spiritually and physically so you will have to give to the Lord's cause.

Brother Davidson answers readers' questions in this column each month. If you have Bible questions, you may email them to him at harrelld@charter.net

' 'Tis the Season to Explode Some Myths

Jerry C. Brewer

What the world calls “Christmas” is a mixture of mythology and religious error that the centuries have piled layer upon layer. In all of the New Testament, there isn’t one syllable of authority for celebrating December 25th as the anniversary of Christ’s birth. That date was set by a Catholic Bishop, Liberius of Rome, in the fourth century. According to Wayne Wyrick of Oklahoma City’s Kirkpatrick Planetarium,

Christmas grew out of the pagan Roman holiday known as “Saturnalia,” which celebrated the beginning of the sun’s return to the northern hemisphere. The decadence and boisterous activities of this Roman carnival was a perfect cover for persecuted Catholics to celebrate Christ’s birth without being detected by the authorities (“Christmas Falls on 25th Thanks to ‘Toga Party,’” *The Sunday Oklahoman*, Dec. 1, 1996, A24).

Bible students know the truth about the events surrounding Christ’s birth, but Catholics and Protestants who call themselves “Christians” have swallowed the mythology of Christmas and rejected plain Bible teaching. Unknown to most Protestants, their churches originally refused to celebrate Christmas because it is a Catholic holiday. It was not until well into the 1800s that Protestants stopped “protesting” the holiday (and most everything else Catholic). The following are some of the myths to be exploded that are perpetuated by nativity scenes on church building lawns this season:

“Jesus Was Born In A Manger”

Jesus was not born in a manger. “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and **laid** him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7, Emph JCB). Jesus was not born in a manger, but laid in one after He was born.

“Peace On Earth”

Politicians and gullible religious folks seize upon this season of the year and co-opt the phrase, “Peace on earth,” to promote cessation of political and military hostilities. But when the angels said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,” (Luke 2:14), they announced the **peace** that comes through **the Gospel**, made possible by Christ’s atoning sacrifice, not the cessation of political animosities or military conflict. Consider what Jesus said about His mission on earth:

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be those of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Matt. 10:34-37).

Jesus said He did **not** come to send peace on earth. Did he contradict the angels? No. He spoke of the conflict within families that His Gospel would bring. The announcement of “peace on earth” by the angels is the peace that ensues between God and men when we accept His terms of salvation. It’s the same peace of which Paul wrote: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 8:1). The myth of World Peace—a cessation of military conflict and all nations being at peace with one another—is perpetuated by Social Gospel advocates and is not supported by the Bible

The Visit of “Three” Wise Men

The nativity scenes displayed by Catholics and Protestants around our town usually consist of cut-out figures representing Joseph, Mary, the infant Jesus, and **three** Wise Men, who are either beside or upon camels, gathered around a manger. Religious mythology says the wise men visited the stable where Jesus was born. The Bible indicates they were never there on that night, and it is silent as a tomb on how many wise men there were. It merely says, “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews?” (Matt. 2:1-2). How many wise men

does this passage indicate? Obviously, more than one, since the plural, *men*, is used. The Bible does not indicate **how many** there were, only that there was more than one.

When The Wise Men Visited

Contrary to popular myth, the wise men came to Jerusalem much later than the night of Christ's birth—in fact, almost **two years** later, and their visit was to a house where Joseph, Mary and Jesus lived (Matt. 2:11). That they came about two years after Christ's birth is indicated by the fact that Herod inquired of them the time of the star's appearance that signaled Christ's birth. "Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared" (Matt. 2:7). The word, "diligently," is defined by Strong as "strictness; exactness" which means Herod sought the **precise time** when the birth occurred. Obtaining that information, he then had all male children in Bethlehem, age two years and under, murdered, "...according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men" (Matt. 2:16). There was a span of two years between the birth of Christ and the arrival of the wise men. They did not come on the night of his birth.

"Babe" And "Young Child"

In their announcement of Christ's birth to the shepherds, the angels said, "And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the **babe** lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12, 16, Emph. JCB). When Matthew recorded the visit of the wise men, he used a different word to describe the young Jesus. In Matthew 2:8, Herod ordered the wise men to search for the **young child**. That same term is used in Matthew 2:9, 11, 13, 14, and in all of these places it refers to the young Jesus. The Greek words, translated babe and young child are, *brephos* and *paidon*. *Brephos* (babe) is defined as, "a newborn child, unborn, infant, a babe." *Paidon* (young child) is defined as, "a child, little child, young child; little ones; little boy, little girl." When Matthew and Luke were inspired of God to write their respective accounts of events surrounding the birth and early life of Jesus, they were given two different words to describe Him at two different stages of His physical development. By the time the wise men arrived, Jesus was **no longer** considered a **babe** but a **young child**. That is why Herod had all children "from two years old and under" slain in Bethlehem.

The single greatest event in all of history is the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world. For that purpose, the New Testament instructs us to remember that event upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) by taking the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in memory of the body and blood of Christ (Matt. 26:26-29).

O, that men adored the Christ of Calvary as much as their misguided adoration of the Babe in the manger! As important as it was, it was not His birth, but His death that saves men by His blood. Let us not be caught up in the mythology of "Christmas" which began as a Catholic/Pagan celebration with no basis in Holy Writ. Rather, let us remember the suffering and death of our Risen, Living, Triumphant Lord Who now reigns over His kingdom, and Who is coming again to judge the world.

The Seed Principle

Carl Hecker

In the beginning, the seed principle was stated and the law of reproduction has been confirmed in the experience of all mankind over the centuries. It is an obvious, continuous, and immutable fact of life. Everything produces after its own kind (Gen. 1:24). The seed of one plant brings forth of its own kind—always! Of course, this is true of physical man and all of the other facets of God's creation. It is also true in the religious world.

A Baptist preacher, preaching Baptist doctrine, will always produce a Baptist. He will never reproduce a Presbyterian. Everyone surely knows this. The denominational proclaimer can and does depend upon the law that seed brings forth after its kind. He has seed to sow, and he depends upon it producing what he has sown.

The Restoration Principle

Early in the history of our country, denominational men began to see that division

among the churches did not help a struggling frontier people. They needed unity to face the trying times of those formative years. Some in European countries also observed the fruits of the Reformation movement. They were not pleased with their harvest. Forced by necessity, they began to re-examine their seed.

Consider this Seed

Jesus declared the seed to be the Word of God (Luke 8:11). What if one preached only the Word of God? Would it produce something else other than a Christian? No one believes that it would. All agree that the Gospel is the Truth. That the Truth is the Word of God. That the New Testament is the revealed Will of the Father.

With that premise, what would happen if men only preached that Word and nothing else? If a preacher would only preach the Truth, the Word, the Will of the Father, revealed in the New Testament, he would only produce Christians. He could not make a Baptist—such is not in the New Testament. He could not make a Presbyterian—such is not in the New Testament. He could not make some **brand** of Christian—there is only one kind in the New Testament.

Why is there division? Why so many denominations? How do men become so mixed up in trying to explain the different churches, sometime meeting on the same corner across from each other? How come there are hundreds of different and conflicting doctrines all claiming to be from the same Christ? Is Christ divided? Is our Father the author of confusion? Is this His fault? Did He plan it this way?

There are some more specific questions. Did Christ want us to count beads or burn incense? Or both? Or neither? Did God want a priesthood to take our confessions? Did He want His people divided into clergy and laity? Did He raise up icons to preach faith only while another preached works only? Which one should we believe? Is God indifferent?

Consider the Restoration Principle

Who would want to charge God with the division of His own people? Who would want to charge God with supplying faulty seed? Now, according to the seed principle, division is caused by men sowing different kinds of seed. Remember, seed produce after its own kind.

What would happen if men sowed only the pure seed of the Gospel (1 Pet. 1:22-25)? Read this passage carefully. The seed principle affirms that the souls of men would be purified. If no other seed is mixed in, the souls of men would remain pure. The restoration principle calls for men to preach this Gospel in all its pristine, simple beauty. It calls for men to restrain from trying to reform old traditions and corrupt practices of the past.

The restoration principle calls for men to dedicate themselves to the restoration of preaching the simple terms of the New Testament. It calls men to organize God's people in the same, simple, New Testament arrangement of local congregations.

The restoration principle calls for men to preach Christ and Him crucified. It requires men to put the authority of Christ first and to recognize no other. It pleads for men to strive for the unity for which He prayed so fervently (John 17:20-21).

Is this asking too much? History has shown that many will not give up their own religious past. But you and I can.

Has the Bible Been Changed?

J. Early Arceneaux

The American Standard Version of the Bible was translated in 1901. This was the last standard version of the New Testament scriptures until a modern revision was made several years ago. Likely there is not a skeptic on earth skeptical enough to say that the Bible is no older than the American Standard Version.

Going 300 years back in time, we come to the King James, or Authorized, Version. There's not an infidel on earth who would say that the Bible began then. There were several English translations (maybe a dozen in all) a hundred years or more before the

King James translation. Conspicuous among these earlier translations is that of William Tyndale, dating back to 1525. But even earlier than Tyndale's translation was the one of Wycliffe, which goes back even before the time of printing. It was copied out by hand, and made its appearance in 1380. But no infidel could be found who would argue that Wycliffe's translation was the real beginning date of our Bible. The New Testament had been translated into numerous tongues (Coptic, Latin, Syriac, etc.) centuries before Wycliffe was born and before there was even any written English language at all. The Syriac version, for example, dates from about the year 175 A.D.

Everybody agrees that the New Testament was written in Greek. That very fact attests powerfully as to the time of its writing. For if it had been written 300 years later than it was, it would not have been in Greek at all, but in Latin. For the Latin language had superseded the Greek, and all documents of any importance and all literature was in Latin rather than Greek. If one admits that the New Testament was written in Greek (and only a fool would deny it), he admits that it was written at a very early period in the Christian era of the world, not far from the very time Bible believers claim that it was written.

Only Time for Changes

The oldest manuscripts we have date back to the year 350 A.D. or thereabouts. No changes have been made in the text since then, we know, because we have actual copies of the book that old. The apostle John died about the year 100 A.D., and we can take it for granted that no changes were made and there were no serious corruptions in the text of the New Testament while the apostles were still living. Then the only period of time when there could have been changes made is a period between the year 100 A.D. and the year 350 A.D. No changes were made before 100; we know none have been made after 350.

How do we know then that there were no changes made during this period of 250 years? There is the chasm that we must bridge. And we can do it. First of all, the Syriac version was made about the year 175 A.D. Thus 75 years after the death of the last apostle, the New Testament was translated into the Syriac tongue. The evidence is not quite conclusive, but it is pretty strong that there was also a Latin translation of a good portion of the New Testament even before this Syriac version was made. Before the end of the second century they were making frequent quotations from a Latin translation.

Ante-Nicene Fathers

Consider the ante-Nicene fathers. During every single year between the year 100 A.D. and the year 350 A.D., there were scores and hundreds of faithful Christian men preaching, teaching, writing; and there were New Testament quotations almost without number that they had to copy. There were not copies enough of the Bible to make it possible for every reader or hearer to have a copy. So the men who taught would quote copiously and extensively from the scriptures. Instead of just giving a citation to a passage, as we do, they would carefully and painstakingly write out the whole quotation in full.

Some years ago the question arose in a literary club in England as to how much of the New Testament might be reproduced from the writings of the ante-Nicene fathers. "Suppose," said one man "that every Bible in the world had been burned up in the year 325. Could we reproduce a New Testament from the quotations made of it by Christian writers prior to that date?"

One of the other members of the club accepted the challenge. About two months later he was visited by the man who had first asked the question. The visitor found his friend almost knee-deep in books; every table in the room was crowded with them, notes and markers were lying all over the place. "What are you doing with all these books scattered around?" he asked.

"Two months ago," the friend replied, "I began the task of checking the ante-Nicene fathers for scripture quotations. I have here every line they wrote—more than 13,000 pages of double column print. I have not completed all these books yet, but so far I

have found every verse, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, in all the New Testament except eleven verses! And I believe I'll find those verses before I finish the task."

From the writings of one man, Origen, nearly three-fourths of the New Testament can be found verbatim ad literatum. Probably if all of Origen's writings were extant, the whole New Testament could be reproduced from the writings of that one man.

The Nicene Council List

The Nicene Council did not in any part of its proceedings determine which books would be recognized as canonical books of the New Testament. They published a list of books which Christians all recognized as being the inspired New Testament. That list contained 27 books, the books we have, Matthew through Revelation. The very fact that they published a list proves conclusively that they did not compile the New Testament. They could not have published a "list" if the books had not been in existence already.

Long, long centuries after the Nicene Council, a group of Methodist preachers got together and wrote the Methodist Discipline. In the Discipline they gave a list of the New Testament books. Nobody has accused them of writing the books—they simply published a list of them. They made a list and simply said we recognize these books as being the New Testament.

That is exactly what the Nicene Council did. No more and no less.

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The Modernity Of The Ancients

Edd Holt

After repeated failures in an effort to make his audience laugh, a comedian got peeved. He told the best joke in his repertory and still not a ripple from the audience. He said, "Well, I guess you will laugh at that next year." A man from the crowd said, "No, we laughed at that one **last** year." Which suggests that there are many things going on these days which are "nothing new under the sun." People are pretty much the same in all generations. The sins of the ancients have become the sins of this age. "As your fathers did so do ye." The sins that crucified Jesus are the sins that would destroy His kingdom today. The hatred of the Jews' denominations for Christ is expressed by denominational churches against the church of Christ today.

In Matthew chapter 22, we see three groups of the Jews—three denominations of them—trying to get rid of Jesus. They had no use for one another, but they could get together if it required to destroy Jesus and His influence. They could have a union meeting against anything good. It is not difficult to imagine them talking of tolerance and having a sweet spirit. They probably thought Jesus should have had the spirit of the Messiah. Brother Pharisee might be heard to say,

Brother Sadducee, I think Jesus is too hard. He even calls names. He is too narrow. He is opposed to our theory that the kingdom is to be of the world. From the way He talks, Jerusalem is to be destroyed, and is not to become our capitol of the Kingdom. In fact, He said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' I said Jesus is narrow, and He is, for he will have nothing to do with any of our denominations. He talks like He is the only one that is right. I am a Pharisee because my parents were Pharisees. I'll be a Pharisee till I die. Isn't it wonderful that we can belong to churches of our own choice? You belong to your church, The Sadducees, and I belong to my church, The Pharisees to theirs. Of course, the Herodians are not as popular and powerful as we are, but I like them better than Jesus and His little bunch. What difference what church you belong to? We are striving to go to the same place. We are agreed on the essential things. You Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection, but that is a nonessential. We are agreed that men ought to be broadminded enough to work together. We believe in tolerance, so let's get

together and kill Jesus.

The Sadducees supposed that in the resurrection things went on as they are in the world. They supposed that what is done on earth will be done in heaven. But Jesus said, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures”...for in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Matt. 22:29-30). This upset one of their studied arguments against the resurrection. But they were modern, those Sadducees. We have some of them in these days. They are mighty ancient though. They suppose that what is in heaven ought to be in the church. They double the supposition by supposing instruments of music to be in heaven. If you could find where they use the instrument in the resurrection it would not follow that we should use it in the worship any more than the fact that men marry in the church would prove that they will marry in the resurrection.

God gave the people a law which was to last till the seed should come. The seed was Christ. People were to live and be saved by that law. There were to be no additions to it or subtractions from it. But they taught for doctrines the commandments of men. These traditions or doctrines of men resulted in the different denominations of the Jews. Such as Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians. Jesus came to live on the earth at the time the Old Testament was the covenant of God. He lived up to it. He did not join any of the denominations then existing. He opposed them. They hated Him. His teaching, if accepted, would have brought them to an end.

The New Testament is the law of Christ. It is to last as long as men live on the earth—to the end of the world. By it men are to be saved, if saved at all. There are to be no additions to it or perversions of it. But as long ago, so men today teach for doctrines the commandments of men. These traditions and doctrines of men have resulted in many kinds of denominations. Such as Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics and many, many more. If Jesus were here he would be opposed to all of them. He would not be a member of any of them if He could, He could not be if He wanted to—they would not have Him. They would hate Him as they now hate His body the church. Now, as then, if men would hear Christ, all human churches would vanish from the earth. He took much personal abuse but allowed no principle of truth to be gainsaid. The disciple is not above his teacher. We must imitate Jesus in learning to be longsuffering when men would speak evil of us for His sake, but we must be quick to convict the gainsayer of the doctrine of Christ.

Because the Jews sought to kill Him, and to withdraw from the territory over which Herod was ruler, Jesus would often go into borders beyond the Jordan, or in countries north of Galilee. On one occasion He went as far as Caesarea Philippi. The record says, “When Jesus came in to the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am? And they said, Some say thou art John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets” (Matt. 16:13-14). Did you ever hear anybody say, “We just can’t see alike” or “We can’t understand the Bible alike” or “One man’s opinion is as good as another’s?” Those are stock statements of those who would close any discussion of differences among men on the subjects of religion. Can we see alike? Are we supposed to see alike? If two men see a thing, they both see alike. It is impossible for one man to see that 2 plus 2 equals five while another sees that 2 plus 2 equals four. In that case one of them does **not see at all**. They must see alike if both of them understand. If, in religion, one man sees one way and another man sees another way, supposing that one of them sees the truth, the other just does not see the truth. Not that they see the truth differently. We use the word **see** to mean the **understanding**. If A understands the truth and B differs with him, it is not that B understands one way and A understands another. B just doesn’t understand. We can’t possibly differ in understanding a point. If we understand at all, we **understand alike**.

Now are we supposed to see alike? Listen to these words of the apostle Paul:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ [by the name of Christ means by His authority, so Christ is the one who commands this, EH], that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions

among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind (see alike) and in the same judgment.” (1 Cor. 1 :10).

Same mind, same judgment and speak the same thing. Can it be done? He said to do it. “Well,” says someone, “my opinion is as good as yours.” Now that is right. We see alike on that. But my opinion is not worth anything in religion. Yours being just as good as mine, is worth nothing either. We are not to walk by opinion but by faith. Opinions are no more than guesses. Faith is founded upon evidence. Faith comes by hearing God’s word (Rom. 10:17). What God has said you can believe. What is not of His word cannot be of faith, and what is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). But it is said, “Well, smart men differ, and how am I to know the truth?” Wait a minute! It is not “Am I smart?” but “Am I **wise**?” that is important. Jesus says the man who hears His sayings and does them is like a wise man. That you can do whether any smart man on earth does so or not.

No wonder men do not understand the Bible. They rely upon *smart* men to help them misunderstand. Read the Bible for yourself. Study to show yourself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). The fact that religious teachers are divided is one of the main reasons you are commanded to study for yourself. “But we were told that we can’t understand the Bible.” Paul says of what he wrote, “...when you read you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4). It is strange to me why an audience becomes offended when I tell them that they can understand if they will read—that they have as much sense as anybody—but will feel complimented when a clergyman tells them they just can’t understand, so no need to read.

We know that the secret things belong to God, but we know too, that the revealed things belong to man. Now with these thoughts ringing in your ears, let us apply our text (Matt. 16:13-14) to it and clinch it. “Who do men say that I the Son of man am?” One said, John the Baptist. That was the opinion of a smart man. It was the opinion of Herod the king, remember? But Jesus was not John the Baptist at all. Can’t you hear Herod say, “My opinion is as good as that of anybody else.” And “We just can’t see alike.” He would call you narrow minded if you insisted that he was wrong. But he was wrong and I had rather be called narrow than to be where his kind go. But another said, Jesus was Elijah. But that was just an opinion. It wasn’t so. He was not Elijah. Opinions are worth nothing in such matters. Another said he was Jeremiah and others said he is one of the prophets. Opinions, opinions, plenty of opinions but **no faith**. All of them were wrong.

Is One Church as Good as Another?

H. Osby Weaver

If we are to abide by the old adage, “Give the devil his dues,” then we should hang a blue ribbon on the Old Scratch for having been such an excellent salesman in duping the masses into believing that one church is as good as another. If we are wrong in ascribing this idea to the devil, we shall be most happy to learn of such and will welcome the opportunity to repudiate our own mistakes. However, our investigation of the word of God fails to reveal one single verse that even implies that such is true, on the contrary, we find ample evidence that leads us to brand such an idea as false.

If the Lord Jesus Christ built a church, it must be a better one than man can build, unless man is as proficient in such things as the Lord. But did the Lord build a church? In Matthew 16:18 after Peter had confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, “Upon this rock (the fact that he was the Son of the living God) I will build my church.” If the Lord never built his church, then he did not do what he promised that he would do. Did he break his promise? No, for in Acts 2:47 we find those being saved were added to the church. The saved could not be added to something that did not exist, hence the church was in existence at the time the things of Acts 2:47 took place. Some time between Matthew 16:18 when Jesus said, “I will build my church,” and Acts 2:47 the church of Christ was established and people were being added to it. Yes, Jesus kept his promise.

Acts 20:28 says the Lord “purchased the church with his own blood.” Would you say that the church which Christ built, which cost him his own blood, is no better than one built by man? To say that the church of Christ is no better than a man-made church is to reflect upon the intelligence of Christ and accuse God of trickery.

God sent His Son into the world to purchase man's redemption. The church was in God's divine arrangement for man's salvation. According to God's purpose, Christ died a cruel death on the cross, and purchased the church with his shed blood in order that man might be saved. And after all this had been done, he suddenly learned that God had deceived him, because his church was no better than a man-made church and his blood was shed for nothing, if indeed one church is as good as another. Believe it who can!

The only way one church could be as good as another is for Christ to have built all of them or none of them. If he built all of them, then of course one is as good as another. If he built none of them, then we would also concede that one is as good as another, since we have no reason to believe one, left to human wisdom, would do any better job in building a church than another. But we have already seen that Jesus did build at least one, so that eliminates the second alternative by which one church could be as good as another and leaves only the first.

Did he build them all? There are about hundreds of different churches, different religious bodies in America. Is Christ responsible for all of them? Did he build them all? Since we know that the Lord did some church building, if he did not build them all, how many did he build? Any attempt to answer these questions on the basis of opinion, or what we think, or what we believe about it, is as worthless as no answer at all. The only consideration of value is, “What does the Bible say?” Let us see.

Ephesians 4:4-6 says, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” You will note the oneness emphasized in this passage. How many Gods? Just one. Which Christ do you worship? There isn't but one. How do you know? Well, how many does that mean? It means, just one! Could one Lord mean three or perhaps 300? Of course not! Get this: The same book, the same chapter, and the same verses that say there is one **God** and one **Lord**, also say there is **one faith** and **one body**. Not hundreds of faiths and bodies. Only one—just one. Now, this passage does not say what the body is, but it certainly tells us how many there are. There is one, just one. There are no more bodies than there are Gods. There are exactly as many bodies as there are Lords to serve. Since this passage does not tell us what the body is, we must learn that from some other passage or passages, but we do not have to learn how many from any other source.

What is the body? Ephesians 1:22-23 reads: “And hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” What is the body? It is the church. Listen again: “And he is the head of the body, the church...” (Col. 1:18.) The church is the body; the body is the church. How many bodies. Just one. How many churches? Just one. Since there is one body and the body is the church, the Lord does not have but one church. He never built but one. He never promised to build but one. He did **not** say, “Upon this rock I will build **a** church.” He did **not** say, “I will build my **churches**” or “**one** of my churches.” But he did say, “I will build my church”—singular. In Ephesians 5:23-25 the relationship between Christ and the church is likened to that of a husband and wife: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body.” How many wives is a husband supposed to have? We are not asking how many some have, we are asking how many is he **supposed** to have? Well, that is how many churches the Lord has. He is no spiritual polygamist. Verse 25 says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” He did not give himself for **them**. He gave himself for **it**. Now, how many are “it”? Well, that is how many churches Christ gave himself for. We may never believe this, but we cannot keep from understanding it.

If there are 500 different churches in this country, and Christ built only one, then if any one of the 500 belong to Christ, 499 are not his and men are responsible for them. They are **not** as good as the Lord's. Salvation is in Christ's church. There is no salvation in man-made churches. They are not as good as the Lord's church. He adds the saved to **His** church.

Since Christ has but one church, and there are about 500 others, how may we know which one is His? We are in sympathy with the honest inquirer and know he can find no help from denominational preachers. If he made the rounds, asking each preacher if the church of which he was a member was the Lord's he possibly would receive all affirmative answers and would be no better off than when he began. The way to find out which is the Lord's church is to take your Bible and get acquainted with the church of the New Testament. Learn about its builder, its name, its creed, what people did to become members of it, its worship, organization, and mission. Then find the one today exactly like it, and you will have located the Lord's church. If, in your investigation, you find the church of which you are a member has in its worship things which the New Testament church did not have, wears a name unknown to the New Testament church, and offers salvation on terms which the New Testament did not offer, then you will know that you are not a member of the church of Christ.

Baptized “By One Spirit”

1 Corinthians 12:13

Doug Post

I do believe in evolution, but the evolution I am speaking of is the evolution of false doctrine. Since 1994, Mac Deaver has been evolving his teaching on the Holy Spirit, and for over a decade he has also advocated the false doctrine of modern-day Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In his recent publication he put forth the idea that 1 Cor. 12:13 is referring to Holy Spirit baptism. Deaver writes,

As you, I was taught that there are three measures of the Spirit among men (while there actually are none—John 3:34), and that baptism in Spirit was a miracle. But this was all wrong, so sadly wrong, and these mistakes affected all of our biblical interpretation of passages that mentioned the Spirit and his relationship to us (“Baptism In One Spirit, Per 1 Corinthians 12:13” *Biblical Notes*).

Due to his myopic view, Mac does not know what he is speaking about here. There are measures of the Spirit and they refer to the miraculous. Jesus had all power. And the apostles were afforded the same. However, first century Christians received individual miraculous gifts from the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:14-17). There were, indeed, varying degrees or measures of miraculous power from this standpoint. The sign of an apostle was not just the ability to work a miracle. How would that be any different from others, who were not apostles, who also worked miracles? The difference was that the apostles had all power, whereas individuals typically had one gift. Also, you could distinguish an apostle from others by the apostle's ability to transfer miraculous power to others. Only the apostles could do such a thing. Therefore, that was the “sign of an apostle.”

Mac Deaver writes:

Think about the words in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13: “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were made to drink of one Spirit.” Please go immediately to Galatians 3:26-29 for the language of Paul there. And please return to John 7:37-39 immediately for the language there. Do you see concept and language connection?

Interesting that Mac tells us to go Galatians 3:26-29 to buttress 1 Cor.12:13. Paul says we are children of God through **the faith** in Christ Jesus. Here, the faith is the

doctrine of Christ—His word, the Gospel, which are said to be “in Christ.” While Christ’s teachings were in His mind and heart, Paul is referring to the realm of Christ, not so much the Person of Christ, just as we are “in Christ.” Now, why does Mac not see this point when he comes across such phrases as “in Spirit”? It is selective hermeneutics. Paul is discussing the realm of the Spirit—His teaching and power—and not so much the mere Person of the Holy Spirit. As for John 7:37-39, this refers to miraculous power from the Spirit given to the apostles. The idea of the **Spirit** being **given** is metonymy. **Power** was given by the Spirit to the apostles—literally the now “obeying Him ones” prior to Christ’s glorification. He is not referring to all people.

Mac continues bloviating:

But, because (1) we all knew there was only one baptism, and because (2) we all knew that water was for the remission of sins, we concluded that we must “interpret” 1 Corinthians 12:13 to mean that we were baptized “by” the Holy Spirit (usually taken to mean by the teaching of the Holy Spirit). How many times have you heard this “interpretation”? We were told that we were baptized in water in harmony with the teaching of the Holy Spirit. My, my! This was an honest but ignorant and unintentional interpretive mistake that we made. But most of us made it. Think! Is there any other passage in the New Testament that supports the claim that the Spirit is an **agent** who baptizes anyone? No! However, we do have passages that claim that **Jesus Himself** would be the agent who baptized in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16).

Deaver's arrogance is once again unleashed. We are all considered ignorant, but he—and he alone—is the savior of the 21st century church. He is on par with the change agents who claimed they had discovered grace for all of us and we all just need to shut up and thank them. Today, we have some younger folks parroting the same pablum.

John 3:3 says, “out of water and out of Spirit”, which is explained by John 6:63 and Ephesians 5:26. The Spirit’s teaching concerned baptism, and within the realm of the Spirit is the inspired teaching of Paul, which also includes teaching on baptism (Gal. 3:26-27). In fact, this is **how** the Spirit bears witness with our spirit (Rom. 8:16), through His instruction (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

As for Deaver’s argument of “agency.” Joel records that it was God the Father who would “pour out from His Spirit,” which had to do with miraculous power from the Spirit, not some spatial residence within human flesh referred to as “indwelling” (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21). The agency involved here begins with the Father, then Christ, then the Spirit. This is the same process of revelation and inspiration (John 3:31-35; 16:14-15). The fact is, the Spirit was given by the Father to Christ the Son, who would give the Spirit: “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26-27). Moreover, Jesus specifically said the Spirit would give the apostles testimony. He would testify through them. The apostles would both speak and perform miracles by the Spirit to confirm what they preached. This has everything to do with supernatural power from the Godhead, not Mac’s fanciful imagination of “indwelling.”

Moreover, within the same context, most translations recognize the instrumental case, translating it as “by one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12: 3, 9). Mac is ignoring the context while continuing to evolve his dogma.

EDITOR'S NOTE: False teaching is a spiritual virus and, like all viruses, it must continually mutate to survive.

History and Geography Confirm the Bible

N.B. Hardeman

About 700 years B.C. Isaiah stood upon the hilltops of Israel and drew aside the curtain to look into the mystic future. To him the whole sky was clear and he predicted

world events that the most pronounced critics of the ages cannot deny. In chapter 13, he speaks of Babylon, “the glory of Kingdoms, the beauty of Chaldees’ excellency.” He says: “It shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there.”

At the time of this prophecy Babylon had not attained its greatness. About 100 years later, Nebuchadnezzar made it one of the wonders of the world. Its walls, 15 miles on each side, 87 feet thick and 350 feet high, were, excepting that of China, without an equal either before or since. The temple of Belus, the palace and their hanging gardens, the banks of the river, and the artificial lake and canals for draining the great Euphrates have ever excited the wonder of the world. Strange it is to imagine any one’s having the courage to predict the downfall and desolation of so great a city, and yet this is what the prophet declared. It came to pass that just 51 years after the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the Jews this great Babylon fell to rise no more. Subsequent history literally confirms Isaiah’s prophecy and demonstrates the inspiration of him who foresaw its doom.

In Ezekiel 27:7-14, the prophet foretells the destruction of old Tyre situated on the mainland of the Phoenician coast. He declares that Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon will come against it, and with his weapons of war, he will break down its walls and towers, with his horses he will tread down its streets, with the sword he will destroy its people, and its site shall be occupied by old walls, fallen towers, stones, arches and remains of an ancient magnificence. His final prophecy is that “the stones and timbers and dust shall be laid in water.” This prophecy was spoken more than 200 years before its fulfillment and while old Tyre was yet in her glory. The years rolled by and then came Nebuchadnezzar and laid waste to the city and left it a mass of ruins. The inhabitants that were left moved to an island half a mile from the mainland and which was about three miles in diameter. They erected a wall around the island 150 feet high and built a modern city called new Tyre. The glory of this latter was greater than the former. Tyre now sent her ships to distant ports and carried on the commerce of all countries round about. Protected by its gigantic walls, it became prominent, powerful and wealthy. In the year 336 B.C. Alexander the Great began his march to conquer the entire world. Reaching the Phoenician shore he looked upon the ruins of an old city and then gazed with some misgivings upon the island city so prosperous and prominent. At first he thought of making terms with them and passing on, but later decided it dangerous to leave behind such an influential city. He therefore conceived the idea of building a causeway 200 feet wide and a half mile long from the mainland to the island. He saw plenty of stones and masses of timber and dust on the ruins of the old city to accomplish his purpose. With 200,000 men working through a period of seven months, he finally succeeded, and with his battering rams he made a breach in the wall, burned the city, destroyed and enslaved its inhabitants; 8,000 he slew and 2,000 of those taken prisoners, he crucified and erected their crosses along the shore of the Mediterranean. Thus, it was literally true that the stones, timbers and dust of old Tyre were laid in water. Let an enemy of God’s word tell how Ezekiel knew this 250 years in advance.

Luke 2:1 says: “There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.” When John began his ministry, it was the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1). Many years after, Paul appeals to Augustus (Acts 25:21). Here is confusion and apparent contradiction. Unless one has made a study of the political affairs of that land, it is impossible to get through this tangled network of allusions. The Augustus who appears in Luke as if dead and alive again in Acts is none other than old Nero who, by his flatterers, was called Augustus. No record of this decree, other than Luke’s could be found, and for hundreds of years infidels denied that such a decree ever went forth. They declared it a forgery and many a friend of the Bible suffered embarrassment before them. In 1927, Mr. William T. Ellis, noted scholar and world traveler, wrote an article in which he says that on the walls of an unearthed building in the city of Angora, Asia Minor, the original decree has been found. Luke has been corroborated and the story of the Bible confirmed. Let Christians thank God for those who are spending millions in the field of archaeology. Regardless of their purpose they invari-

ably find evidences in support of that story given by inspiration.

Writers and travelers have ever had great difficulty in maintaining geographical and topographical accuracy. Especially is this true if one is trying to give an account of some country with which he is not perfectly familiar, and even then egregious errors are found. When the *Encyclopedia Britannica* written by leading scholars and experts in their respective lines, first appeared, it contained so many errors in geography and topography that its rival, the *New American Cyclopedia*, got out a pamphlet exposing them. Such is the inability of man to speak and write accurately about these matters.

Most scholars who visit Palestine with a view of writing an article or book regarding that country feel it their special duty to correct the errors of all others regarding places and the physical features of that sacred land. Books written especially as a guide for tourists are so filled with errors as to render them largely useless and undependable. Now let it be said with absolute assurance and without fear of contradiction that in the New Testament not a single error can be found in either geography or topography. This is equally true whether the writer speaks of Palestine or of foreign fields. The argus-eyed critics of 20 centuries have been unable to find a single error. Let the enemies explain how those “Ignorant Jews” and illiterates **could** write with **such accuracy**. To this query there is but one answer and that is “that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

We give this Bible to all as a Book good always and everywhere—a light to our feet when we are young—a guide to our path during mature years, and when we come to die, it is the **only** Book one cares to have beside him.

“The Thing That Hath Been...”: The Cycle of Apostasy, Volume 2, Revised and Enlarged is now in preparation and should be ready for publication later this Fall. It will include a lot more material documenting the apostasy of mainstream churches of Christ and—like the first volume—will be **free of charge**.

Blood and the Remission of Sins

C.G. Caldwell, Sr.

It is generally accepted by all who believe in Christ that His blood is essential in some way or other to the remission of sins. Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins, and all efficacy as a procuring power is in the blood (Heb. 9:22; 1 Pet. 1:19). The denominational world has for many years misrepresented the church on this subject, calling us “water salvationists.” Such misrepresentation obviously comes from those who deny that baptism is one of the steps that brings one into contact with the blood of Christ.

The church has never taught—nor do Christians believe—that water literally saves from sin, or that power is in the water. Water is simply the means by which one is brought to where pardon is obtained through the blood (1 Pet. 3:21). The difficulty here lies not so much in a difference of belief, but a lack of belief on the part of some who prejudicially reject the plain teaching of God's word.

Saved by Blood

The Bible clearly teaches that, “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 1:6-7). “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2). These, when conformed to English idioms, mean that no man is—or can be—cleansed from sin, save as he is cleansed by the blood of Christ. Jesus, when instituting the memorial Supper said, “For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28). Again, Paul said “feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). The statements that He poured out His blood for us, redeemed us by His blood, and purchased us with His blood are doubtless equivalent to “He laid down his

life for us.” The first sin offering ever made was a blood offering, made by Abel (Gen. 4:4). The Jews were forbidden to eat blood, because in eating blood they would eat life and all life came from God (Deut. 12:23). The shedding of Christ's blood is the giving up of His life. He gave His life for our lives. “Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” (Rom. 3:5). In setting forth Jesus as a propitiation, He was set forth to make satisfaction, expiation, or reconciliation through His blood. Jesus, by His blood, became the propitiator or expiator for sins.

Redeemed in Christ

There is no room for one to cavil as to **where** justification and redemption are to be had. It is plainly stated by Paul that both are **in Christ**. In Christ is where the efficacy of the blood is to be found (2 Tim. 2:10; Eph. 1:3; Col 1:13-14). All those who expect to be rescued by the blood of Christ and cleansed from all their sins, must walk in the truth, the light of God. The truth of God leads to the light where pardon and full fellowship may be had (John. 3:21; 1 John. 1:3-6; 1:17; 2:1-2).

“How may the sinner approach the cleansing blood of Christ?” is a question of great moment. The blood of Christ is not brought to man and applied as a doctor would apply ointment to a burn or sore. Neither is the literal blood of Christ applied to man's heart. Satisfaction was made with the Father by the Son; the purchase price was paid for all the guilty of Adam's race, and the requirement laid down in the word of God for man to meet in order to enjoy the benefits of the purchased redemption.

Lost man must come to the appointed place to enjoy the purchase. The blood will not be brought to man, neither man to the blood, in answer to all the prayers that might be prayed. The benefits of the blood are to be had **in Christ**. One cannot be prayed into Christ. To get into Christ one must be born again, one must obey the gospel.

How Does Man Get Into Christ?

The consummating act of the new birth and obedience to the gospel is being baptized into Christ. This truth is clearly set forth in God's word. “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth, having been begotten (KJV born) again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

Or 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 into death. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5).

In the completion of the act of baptism one enters Christ, reaches the merits of the blood and is rescued, redeemed, saved, pardoned, and united with Christ. “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). Again, “Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you the remission of sins” (Acts 13:38). “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). It was by the guidance or instruction of the Holy Spirit that these Corinthians had been baptized into Christ. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).

Paul was a minister of the Spirit, that is, he preached and baptized by the authority of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 3:3-6; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet 1:19-22). Jesus shed His blood in His death; salvation is in the blood. Therefore to reach salvation one must come to the blood; one must come to where the blood was shed; one must enter into the death of Christ. To get into His death, one must be baptized into it. For that is precisely what Paul says, “Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death” (Rom. 6:3).

That which puts one into the name of Christ puts him into Christ or under His authority (Acts 10:48; Col. 3:17). Water baptism is in the name of Christ. Therefore it is water baptism into the name of Christ that brings one to the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 10:43-48; 19:1-6). Christ is the Savior of the body, the church; and the church is sanctified and cleansed by the washing (baptism) of water by the word (Eph. 5:24-28). The church is Christ's body; and there is but one body (Eph. 5:24-28; Col. 1:18; Eph.

4:4). We are baptized into that one body. (1 Cor. 12:13) Without baptism, therefore, we are without the body, apart from Christ's death, away from His blood. Without baptism we are lost.

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Genuine Faith

R.L. Whiteside

Genuine faith is based on evidence that admits of no doubt, and to believe in a person means more than to believe that such a person exists. “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). In addition to accepting the truth that God is, we confidently trust Him for the fulfillment of His promises. In all genuine faith there is, therefore, the element of confidence and trust. We trust Him to fulfill His promises, and we confide in His wisdom and goodness.

It is true that Abel heard God's command and obeyed, and therefore he made his offering by faith (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4). But there was something back of all that. Why did he do what God said, and why did not Cain do what God said? Abel had confidence in God's wisdom and goodness. Cain had confidence in his own wisdom and way. Hence, Abel followed God's way and Cain followed his own way. Abel did what God commanded because he had more confidence in God than in himself.

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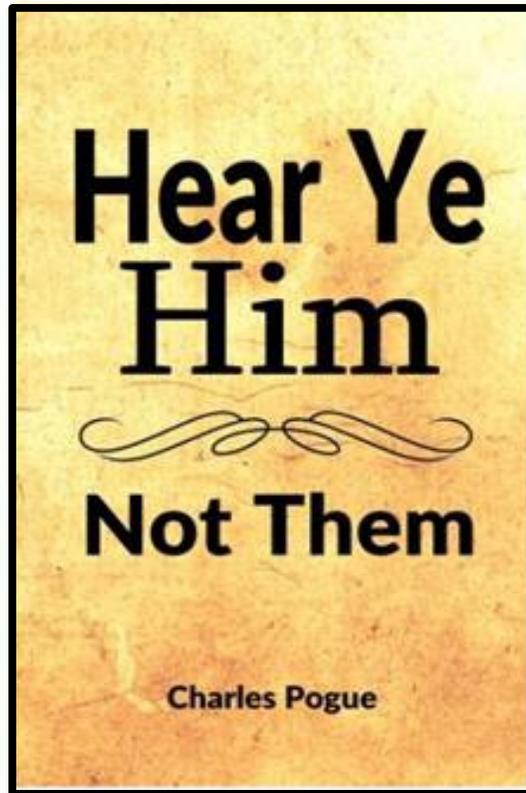
False Doctrines of Man

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*A New Book
by Charles Pogue*



When Peter suggested building three tabernacles at the Mount of Transfiguration, the Father's voice from heaven declared Jesus was His beloved Son and uttered the memorable words, "Hear ye Him." Jesus came into this world to both teach and execute God's long-planned scheme of redemption of man from sin. Jesus taught the plan in its entirety and empowered His apostles through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to spread the saving message after His ascension back to the Father. As man has been prone to do throughout history, he has corrupted the saving message Jesus and His apostles declared. In this book, we have set forth that which Jesus and those apostles taught as opposed to the false doctrines of man, particularly Calvinism and the error of salvation by faith alone. The reader is encouraged to study the Word of God and, "Hear ye Him." - Charles Pogue -

We have known Charles and his wife, Linda, for many years. Charles is a faithful Gospel preacher and a man of conviction, and we recommend his new book to all who have a love for the Lord and His Word.

Jerry C. Brewer
Editor and Publisher
The Gospel Preceptor

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