

The Gospel Preceptor

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

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Dick and South Point

EDITOR'S NOTE: In humble, steadfast service to Christ, one may often think, "I do not seem to be doing any good for the souls of men. I am not accomplishing anything and no one seems to care." This account of a humble, black man's devotion to Christ by brother Lard brings to mind Paul's words: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Only eternity will reveal the good that humble, faithful Christians like Dick do in this life. Somewhere, there are honest, seeking souls who hunger after righteousness. One Christian's small effort may bring many to Christ.

Moses Lard

In the summer of 1853 I had an appointment to preach in Richfield, Missouri. The Sunday morning at length, came, and I rode down to the village. While hitching my horse a black man came up to me and said: "You do not know me; but I know you, and have known you for a long time. My name is Dick. I once belonged to the Church at Stanley's, where old brother Warrinner used to preach; and near which he is buried. Since his death the church has gone to pieces; and I have been long without its privileges. I have come fifteen miles to-day to hear you preach, and have brought with me my young master, Thomas. He is a good boy; and I think would be a Christian if he knew how."

With this artless tale of a poor servant man, my heart was touched. My memory at once became fragrant with reminiscences of the past. The strange, sweet eloquence of Jacob Warrinner warbled once more through my soul; and I felt the spell of that dear man. He had been my friend; and I loved him still. When a young man, and trying to preach, I had sometimes blundered. Others had criticised me coarsely; but Jacob Warrinner patted me on the shoulder, looked me warmly in the eye, and said: "Go on, my son, you have done well. Be thoughtful and persevere; and when I am gone you will be a man." These were precious words; and dear to me still were the lips that had spoken them. My preaching brother, perhaps you have many years and much experience on your side. Your counsel is weighty. Then lay your hand gently on that young brother whose devoted, anxious heart prompts him to preach. Again, I say, criticise him gently. If God stooped to make him, he may not be worthless. An encouraging word will cost you nothing. Risk a few, then, on that young man. You may one day be glad you did it. But I am wandering.

Dick soon introduced me to Thomas, whom I took to be an honest, steady boy. Musing on this incident I went into the meetinghouse. May there not be, I said to myself, something providential in this? I recollected that many people do not believe in special providences; yet, just then, the conviction of their reality clung very close to my heart. Indeed, I was in no mood to debate a question which strung me for the work of the day; and which afforded me so easy and so pleasing a solution of the presence of Dick and Thomas. Let fatalists talk as they may, thought I, I believe there is something in this. For why should God condescend to give His Son to save us; and yet decline to guide some trivial incident of life, when it can be made subservient to that great end? Or why should He think it worth while to number the very hairs of our heads; and still overlook the small, worldly affair which may help to save the immortal spirit? If He is

not ashamed to watch the fall of sparrows, is it unworthy of Him to so link the events of earth as to make one, now and then, so fall out, as to help on his way back some prodigal longing to return? This may all be superstition; but I confess I envy not him his cold incredulity who can so regard it. I love the thought to lie close to my heart, that on even the humblest child of man, God looks ever more with special solicitude. Earth in its truer features is but the type of Heaven. Here the mother sends her earnest wish with her boy wherever he wanders. Tell me not, then, that God leaves that child to pass through life a deserted and unnoticed orphan. Never.

But I was now in the meeting-house. The audience was of good size; yet not a Christian in it had come fifteen miles to worship that day, save Dick. Is not this a critique, I asked myself, on the small zeal of the proud white man? He does not toil; yet he travels no 15 miles to meeting. I thought of the previous week's labor of Dick. He might, with much reason, have claimed that day as a day of rest. I counted again his 15 miles, and then went to work with heart. Thomas was in that congregation—a circumstance which I determined not to forget for the next hour and a half. In other words, though many were present, I intended my audience to consist, except by chance, of a single person. In my boyhood's days, when hunting was the idol of my heart, I loved the single, fatal rifle shot. I resolved to try it now. In my speech I kept steadily in mind a plain, honest boy of 16. I knew if he had no great, cultivated mind to comprehend the subtleties of Christianity, he had an anxious, yearning heart to feel its blessed provisions. To this I trusted largely; and never have I trusted it in vain. Let him who sets out to preach, early learn this lesson, that man has a heart as well as a head. Logic is for this, love and sympathy for that. The one requires large culture in the hearer, the other large honesty in the speaker. The one cannot be misguided, the other should not. Logic merely cracks nuts; but love and sympathy unseal fountains of kindness; and few men, after all, are so lost as to be wholly devoid of the latter. In preaching I have always found it both safe and profitable to trust largely to the spiritual and better instincts of the human family. With them all are richly endowed, and, no doubt, for wise and gracious ends. But I am wandering again.

My discourse, as already intimated, was to Thomas; and was exceedingly plain. It consisted in a simple statement of what Christ had done for him, and now required of him. In plowman's phrase, I told the tale. This was my early dialect, and I spoke it to perfection. I felt that, might be, the interests of an immortal spirit were staked on that speech. I did not wish to make it too long; nor was I willing to stop short of the mark. At length I guessed the time and closed. My invitation ended, Thomas came forward and gave me his hand. Poor Dick was as near Heaven then, as he will ever be again, till he reaches that blessed abode. He could not sit, he could not stand, he did not shout, but clapped his hands; while tears ran over those toil-worn cheeks. He meekly occupied a distant corner of the house; and I felt, if angels delight to gather around the heart that is all full of gratitude to Christ, surely they must have a strange pleasure in folding their wings in that corner just then. I borrowed clothes for Thomas, and immersed him that evening. He and Dick retraced those fifteen miles; but, in what mood, the true heart needs not be told. The day had been a glorious one to me; and I returned home happy and thankful.

Two weeks after this, I was going to an appointment at Lexington, same State, when, within about one mile of their home, I met Dick and Thomas in the road. I need not say they were glad to see me. As Thomas was a quiet boy, Dick did most of the talking. "You have stirred up the Devil in this neighborhood," he began. (Dick alluded to the preachers!) "Since you baptized Thomas, the preachers have made you their text generally, sometimes Thomas; and, sir, they have even stooped to talk of poor Dick. For the Lord's sake come and preach for us just once, if no more." Dick, said I, on next Wednesday, God willing, I shall return this way on my road home. If you and Thomas will smooth off the top of a stump, under some shade trees, somewhere in the neighborhood, and will circulate the appointment, on that day, at eleven, I will preach for you. "God bless you," replied Dick, "you shall have a place to preach, if Thomas and I have to work every night from now till then." In a few minutes I took leave of Dick and Thomas, perfectly confident that this promise would be kept to the letter.

On the following Wednesday I returned. In the shade of some great trees, according to promise of Dick, I found a stand for myself, seats for the people; and close by, a Baptist church well locked. This last I at once interpreted as an evidence of a work of grace on the soul; and so felt perfectly content to speak out of doors. True, my stand was not an imposing one in appearance; nor were the seats of the model to suggest the easiest posture of body. But then from the one the Gospel could be preached, and on the others heard; and what cared I for more than this? Long ago, in Missouri, in stands like this, stood James McBride, Allen Wright, Duke Young, and other men of like noble type; and preached Christ to the crowds that came to hear them—and seldom has it been better done. They are now gone to their rest; but a hundred years from this writing will still show traces of the vast, and now ill-appreciated, labors of these men of God. I felt proud to stand where they had stood, and humbly aid in carrying forward the work in which their lives had been spent.

The audience was large, unusually large for a Wednesday. A glance at it told me who they were, and what they were. They were an honest, agricultural people, blest with pertinent common sense and sound hearts. I deemed them a soil full of promise. There was a repose in the eye and an unsinister look, a candor in the expression of face, and an artlessness of manner, which filled me with hope.. I felt inspired for the work of the day. The religious element of the audience was chiefly Methodist and Baptist. They were a plain, honest, unlettered people. Their prejudices I knew to be many and strong; and, believing them to be sincerely held, I determined to treat them tenderly. This course I have always found best with these parties. Among them are many truly pious and worthy people. They are deep in error, I verily believe, but this cannot be corrected by harshness. Let them be dealt with faithfully and firmly, but gently and in a good spirit. We, ourselves, do not like to be treated harshly. Let us remember this in dealing with others.

I had only that day and one more to remain in the neighborhood, without making a disappointment in a distant county, which I was most anxious to avoid. I consequently resolved to make the most of my limited time. Accordingly, I spoke for two hours and thirty minutes—an unconscionable length of time I grant. The attention was profound and most respectful. Indeed I never saw better I felt sure a deep and good impression had been made. The audience lingered on the ground, as if enchanted. The discourse was freely spoken of. Some dissented; but the greater number heartily approved. Many said, to use their own language, “If that was Campbellism they had been Campbellites all their lives. It was the very thing they read in their Bibles, and was good enough for them.” An appointment was made for the next day, and the congregation separated.

The next day came and found the audience undiminished in size. Again the discourse reached through two hours and a half. At the close, four of the neighbor men came forward to confess their faith in Christ. The excitement was intense. Many a bosom, then, for the first time, heaved with deep, religious emotion; and men, unused to tears, bravely wept. I loved to see this. The heart that can weep is not wholly corrupt; and when men turn to Christ, I like to see them deeply broken in spirit. Let the proud heart be melted, and tears stream freely; it is well. There is hope in such tokens. The scene now to be enacted was an unusual one in that community. We had met in the shade of grand old trees. Never had Christ, here, in that primeval forest, been confessed after the primitive manner. The audience was silent as the dead. Each of those four strong men then formally and solemnly avowed his faith in Christ. We sang a song, gave them the hand and said, “God be with you.” The old members of the Stanley church now came out, and greeted these their neighbors, and greeted each other; and in the joy of that glad hour forgot the privations of past years. Last of all came Dick—that same Dick, gentle reader, that traveled those fifteen miles, and took with him Thomas. His heart was full. “Thank God,” was all he said, as he shook my hand and passed on to his seat.

I now felt that it would be highly improper to leave that audience in its present mood, and proceed to another appointment where, possibly, nothing might be accomplished; and so resolved to stay. Meeting was accordingly announced for the next day and we again adjourned. On the following day, eight confessed their faith in Christ. Thus the

meeting continued, from day to day, until about forty were immersed. I give the number merely from memory.

Shortly after this, we met, about a mile distant, at a more convenient spot, for the purpose of organizing a church. The day was a glorious one—being the over-memorable first of the week. Previous devotion had prepared the brethren for the occasion. The whole country flocked together to witness the scene. The new converts were all present. Here, too, had come all that remained of the old Stanley church to take their seats once more in an assembly of the saints. Their joy was complete. They had long been disbanded. Meantime, their children had grown up; and in the recent meeting many of them had entered the family of God. Now, parents, and children, and neighbors, sat down together to have their names enrolled as members of the “one body.” Lovely was that sight! The object of the meeting was concisely, but clearly set forth. All were made fully sensible of the solemn step about to be taken. Appropriate portions of Scripture were read; and the names of the brethren then taken down in a book provided for the purpose. A hymn was now sung, and they gave each other the right hand of fellowship. The protection of the “Great Shepherd of the Sheep” was then fervently invoked on that little flock; and it was committed to His keeping. Will these dear brethren ever forget that day, that scene, and the resolutions there formed? I trust not.

A table was then spread; and on it were placed the emblematic loaf and cup. The supper was then eaten in memory of the Master, a song sung, and the services of the hour closed.

A question now arose as to where their future meetings should be held. It was unanimously agreed that they should be held on that spot. It was the base of a gentle hill looking toward the South. But what name should it bear? With one consent it was called South Point. It lies in Ray county, Missouri. Thus originated the name South Point, and the Church meeting there. It is very dear to the writer of this piece. He may never more see these brethren in the flesh. His fervent prayer is, that they may be ever true to their high calling. Also, will they remember to be kind to Dick, to whom, in the providence of God, they owe their existence as a church?

Here, on this same spot, these brethren subsequently built them a house; and here do they still continue to meet to worship God. On the top of that gentle hill sloop the remains of Jacob Warrinner. His grave, like a faithful sentinel, looks ever down on the house at its base. It is hallowed ground. May God keep and bless the church that is planted there. Thus, kind reader, to a single act of a servant man in his fidelity to Christ, do I trace the origin of a church, the joy of a neighborhood, and the salvation of many a soul. You may think it accidental; be not angry with me if I see fit to view it in a different light (*Lard's Quarterly*, Vol. 1, 1863, p. 23).

The “Living Water” And The Holy Spirit

Jerry C. Brewer

The outward flowing of “rivers of living water,” of which Jesus spoke in John 7 is inseparably joined with the descent of the Comforter on Pentecost, and relates to the miraculous age of inspiration. It has no bearing on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians today, and to use it as a proof text in that vein is to misuse and misapply it.

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39).

Verse 39 is the inspired commentary on Jesus’ words in verses 37-38. “This spake he of the Spirit” indicated that the living water was connected to the Holy Spirit and “the Holy Ghost was not yet given” indicated that the living water would begin its flow commensurate with the descent of the Holy Spirit. That points to the coming of the Comforter on the day of Pentecost and to inspiration in the apostles. They were the

recipients of the Comforter, as indicated by Jesus' words in his final discourse to them.

I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you (John 14:16-17).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning (John 15:26-27).

The "Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive" of John 7:39 is a reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on Pentecost and the "rivers of living water" was the truth which the Spirit revealed through them by direct inspiration. (cf. John 16:13-15).

That John 7:37-39 refers to the miraculous inception of the gospel dispensation is further seen in that to which Jesus referred when he said, "as the Scripture hath said." He referred to Ezekiel's vision of the healing waters which issued from "under the threshold of the house eastward" (Ezek. 47:1). What Ezekiel saw was a prophetic vision of the issuance of the living water of the gospel from Jerusalem on Pentecost. That's when and where the law went forth from Zion "and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3). The waters which issued from the house in Ezekiel's vision symbolized the going forth of the gospel from Jerusalem in the preaching of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ (Luke 24:47). The 47th chapter of Ezekiel is prophetic of the living water of the gospel overspreading the earth for the healing of the nations and connects with the river of life of the New Jerusalem of Revelation 22:1.

The connection between the rivers of living water in Old Testament prophecy and Jesus' statement in John is further seen in Zechariah's prophetic utterance:

And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one (Zech. 12:8-9).

The living waters issuing into a great river from the threshold of Ezekiel's vision are the same living waters which Zechariah said would go forth from Jerusalem, and both connect with the miraculous beginning of the Gospel dispensation when the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. "... out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" is a figure of speech. The belly is the innermost man and from the man who was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (a declaration of the miraculous) would flow "rivers of living water"—the water of life, the Gospel message of salvation in Christ. From inspired men of the first century, the Gospel of Jesus Christ would unite men of all nations of the earth in Him as they obeyed the Gospel.

That's the import of Jesus' statement in John 7 and his final words to the apostles in Luke 24: 45-47 and that was fulfilled on Pentecost in Acts 2. John 7:39 does not teach the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians today, direct or otherwise. The waters of Ezekiel's vision began their flow, Zechariah's living waters went "out from Jerusalem" and the living water of the gospel flowed from inspired men as Jesus had promised.

A Great Inconsistency

Jess Whitlock

I once attended a Gospel Meeting in Oklahoma where the speaker informed us that he would be using the text of the *New International Version* (NIV). Later that evening he took to task one of the cardinal points of Calvinism. While he made some good arguments against that error, his choice of versions was not consistent with his lesson. That night the thought struck me that if you would speak against any tenet of Calvinism, you had better **stay far away** from the NIV. The NIV text supports every

“petal of the Calvinistic TULIP,” as we shall show:

T~otal Depravity—inherited sin, Adamic sin, sinful nature, original sin, et al. One must not attack this error of Calvinism with the NIV in hand. The NIV rendering of Psalm 51:5 states, “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” That is not what the text says, but that is the 1978 rendering; then in 1984 they changed it, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” The NKJV correctly reads, “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psa. 51:5). David was not saying that he was born as a sinner; rather, he was born into a world of sin. One must transgress God’s Law in order to become sinful (1 John 3:4). The NIV had no idea of the meaning of the Greek word *sarx*, as they originally (mis)translated that word to “sinful nature” (see Rom. 8:3-5, 8-9, 12-13; 13:14; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 5:13, 16, 19, 24; 6:8; Eph. 2:3; Col. 2:11,13).

Now, it is true that in the 2011 edition of the NIV they wanted it to appear they had realized their error, and took away the words “sinful nature” in 13 of the 15 occurrences, but they could not let go entirely. It is still found in Romans 7:18, 25. And, at the other texts you will find the NIV has a clever footnote which reads: “In contexts like this the Greek word for flesh (*sarx*) refers to the **sinful state of human beings**, often presented as a power in opposition of the Spirit” (Emph. JW).

U~nconditional Election—(salvation), commonly called Predestination. The NIV altered Romans 9:16 to state, “It does not, therefore, depend on man’s desires or effort, but on God’s mercy.” (Cf. 2 Cor. 2:2; 5:5 in NIV) and see the phrase “...guaranteeing what is to come.” The NIV changes the past tense and then inserts “...what is to come” which words are not so much as found in the Greek text.

L~imited Atonement—i.e., only a certain “limited” number will be saved. The NIV blasphemed my Lord in 1 Peter 5:8, “..and a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” I emphatically deny that Christ has forced any man to stumble and fall, but that is the teaching of the NIV text. The inconsistency of the translators is self-evident in Hebrews 2:9; 5:8-9 where the NIV points out that Christ tasted death for **all** men. They goofed again at 2 Peter 3:9 where they point out that God does not want anyone to perish, but desires “everyone to come to repentance.” **If** Christ causes men to stumble and fall (because they are not in that limited number); then why did the (mis)translators leave these passages intact?

I~rresistible Grace—hence, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the word of God. The NIV has this in Acts 16:14, “The Lord opened her (Lydia's -jw) heart to respond to Paul’s message...” Notice that her heart is opened before she heard the Word of God. Watch our for 1 Corinthians 2:14 in the NIV: “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him and he **cannot understand them...**” (Emph. – jw). If this be true, then why encourage anyone to read the Bible, to obey the teaching of God’s Word? Without their so-called Irresistible Grace, you stand condemned. This doctrine makes God to become a respecter of persons, which doctrine contradicts Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11 and Ephesians 6:9.

P~erseverance of the Saints—commonly referred to as “once saved, always saved,” “once in grace, always in grace,” or the “Impossibility of Apostasy.” This asserts that one cannot fall from grace. The NIV perverted 2 Corinthians 3:5-6 by removing the words “except ye be reprobates” and “we are not reprobates.” It has been watered down to read “you fail the test” and “we have not failed the test.” The NIV had to get rid of the word for “reprobate” because the word itself denies their pet doctrine. When I met Mr. Ballard in public debate on the subject of the impossibility of apostasy, he tried to get me to use the NIV text, but I adamantly refused to do so. I knew full well why he wanted to use the text of the NIV.

There you have it; the entire tenet of Calvinism located in the text of the NIV. The NIV text is shot through and through with the doctrines of John Calvin.

The “Failure” of Jesus

Dub McClish

A popular theological system advances the following theses:

- The Jews of Jesus’ day “surprised” God the Father by rejecting His Son, their Messiah.
- This rejection prevented Jesus’ from establishing the earthly kingdom He intended to establish at His first coming.
- As an emergency measure, Jesus established His church to suffice until He returns.
- When He returns, He will establish an earthly political kingdom, which will endure for one thousand years.

If this system of theology is true, Jesus failed at His first coming. If He did not fail, this system is false. To even imply that Almighty God was “surprised” by the rejection of His Son is to blasphemously deny His omniscience. Moreover, it denies prophetic announcements of said rejection (e.g., Isa. 53, written seven centuries B.C.).

The rejection of Jesus, resulting in His crucifixion, did not thwart the establishment of His kingdom. Without question, the Jewish leadership’s rejection of Jesus would have prevented His establishment of a political domain—had He come for that purpose. But their fatal error (and that of the modern future-kingdom theorists) was their expectation of an earthly reign of the prophesied Messiah. They envisioned for their nation a revival of the glory days of the kingdoms of David and Solomon dominion of ten centuries earlier, which would throw off the despised yoke of Rome. They sought to force Jesus to be their king on one occasion, but He refused it and fled (John 6:15).

The church was no emergency substitute for failed kingdom plans. Rather, the church is that kingdom He came to—and did—establish. In the same breath, He promised to build His church, and He identified it as the “at-hand” kingdom (Mat. 16:18; 4:17). Paul reminded the Colossian saints that God had “translated” them into the kingdom (Col. 1:13). John was “in the kingdom” with the brethren he addressed (Rev. 1:9). The church is the “kingdom that cannot be shaken,” prophesied by Daniel (Heb. 12:23, 28; cf. Dan. 2:44).

Jesus’ kingdom is spiritual, not temporal or political, in nature. When He comes again, He will deliver His presently-existing kingdom to the Father in Heaven, not establish one on earth (1 Cor. 15:24). Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). What part of Jesus’ plain statement can Bible readers not understand?

You Can Know for an Absolute Certainty That You Have Eternal Security

Lee Moses

Most religious people like to believe things that make them feel good about themselves. Most of us have heard stories about people literally cutting verses out of their Bibles with a pair of scissors because those particular verses made them uncomfortable. Even if they do not literally do this, in their mind they conveniently forget the portions of the Bible that might make them uncomfortable, or that might challenge them or loved ones to remove themselves from their present lifestyles. This mindset has made the “once-saved-always-saved” doctrine (A.K.A. “perseverance of the saints”) a huge success in the religious world. This doctrine teaches that once a person is saved from his sins, he can never become lost in sin again. The word of God emphatically denies, time and again, the “once-saved-always-saved” doctrine (cf. Acts 1:25; 1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:4; Heb. 4:11; 6:4-6; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; 2 John 8; Rev. 2:5; et al.). Bible believers have often been compelled to defend biblical truth in this regard in discussions with denominational friends.

Unfortunately, this defensive mindset has been carried to the far extreme by some, believing that a person cannot know he is saved while on this earth. I once had a discus-

sion with a preacher who would not sing “When We **All** Get to Heaven,” but would always sing the words “When **the Saved** Get to Heaven” (to which some songbooks have changed the words to read). At first, I assumed he did not feel comfortable with singing “When We All Get to Heaven” because it might lead some in the assembly who were not saved to a false sense of security. However, his reasoning was in regard to his own perspective. He believed that he could not know for certain that he himself was saved at any particular point. His rationale seemed to be that it would be arrogant for one to presume to sing before the God of heaven and earth that he was saved when he might not be.

“Nevertheless, what saith the scripture?” Jesus said,

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one (John 10:27-30).

Some have erroneously attempted to force upon this passage that once a person becomes a child of God, he can never be lost. But notice certain attributes about Jesus’ “sheep” here discussed: (1) They hear Jesus’ voice; (2) They follow Jesus. If one ceases to hear or follow Jesus, he ceases to be provided the protection Jesus promises. A certain Baptist preacher with whom I had a discussion attempted to assert that “**no man** is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand” included oneself. According to him, Jesus was saying that even if one wanted to be lost, he could not remove himself from God’s favor. Such a view would obviously contradict numerous biblical passages. And if “no man” automatically excludes oneself, Jesus contradicted Himself when He said, as recorded a few verses prior, “...I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down **of myself**” (John 10:17-18, emph. LM). Of course, Jesus did not contradict Himself. When he said “no man” He did not exclude Himself. If “no man” excluded oneself, Judas could not have fallen from grace— he could not have betrayed Jesus and the Scriptures could not have been fulfilled (Acts 1:16-17).

However, just because some have attempted to hijack portions of Scripture to advance false doctrines does not mean the faithful follower of God needs to surrender those portions of Scripture to the perpetrators. Jesus was impressing upon the minds of those listeners that day, and of all who read this precious passage, that eternal security is promised. While one can **choose** to leave God’s good favor, no man can **force** another from it. The Father is all-powerful; and since Jesus is one with the Father, He likewise has all power. Therefore He has the ability to protect His sheep (again, those who hear His voice, whom He knows (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Thess. 1:8), and who follow Him. Those who are His sheep can be certain of this security and protection.

Jesus has proven His Deity and power through His resurrection (Rom. 1:4). Since He is God, He cannot lie and will perform His promises (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). God (including all three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) has proven continually that He will perform His promises (Gen. 3:15; 6:13; Exo. 3:8; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 7:14; 44:28; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; et al.). When Jesus promised, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16), one can know that His power is sufficient and His word is truth; therefore there can be no doubt in one’s mind that he is saved when he has done this in the manner which Jesus commands. And he can know that no man can take him from God’s grace as long as he hears and follows Jesus.

Eternal security is not something one simply chooses to believe because it makes him feel good about himself—the Christian believes it because he knows it. As he approached the conclusion of his first epistle, the apostle John penned by inspiration,

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may **know** that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13, emph. LM).

Those things, preserved in the Bible, can provide certain knowledge for one that he is

saved. John added, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). As long as we continue to abide in the New Testament doctrine, we can know for a certainty that we have eternal security.

The Olivet Discourse

Nana Yaw Aidoo

Introduction

In relation to the twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Matthew and the second coming of our Lord, there are two extreme positions held by religious people. On one hand, there is the extreme position, which contends that everything in the chapter is a reference to the literal and future second coming of our Lord in judgment over the entire world. We shall call the proponents of this view, premillennialists. This group of people suggest based on Matthew 24 that all the things happening in the world today are indications that the coming of Christ is imminent. On the other hand, there is the extreme position, which also contends that everything in the chapter was fulfilled in the first century. Therefore, according to this position, the second coming of Christ is already past. We shall call the proponents of this view, realized eschatologists. Those who hold this view, however, do not agree on which point in the first century the chapter was fulfilled. Some proponents of this view claim the chapter was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and some others (like Lynn Louise Schuldt, author of “Prophecy Paradox”) claim the chapter was fulfilled during the volcanic eruption of mountain Vesuvius in AD 79.

Whiles it is true that the coming of Christ is the subject matter of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, we suggest that both positions are extremes due to the fact that both of these positions fail to discriminate between the various comings of the Lord in Scripture. This is inexcusable and against one of the major rules of sacred hermeneutics, which is contextualization. A word or phrase might be used multiple times in Scripture and yet have a variety of meanings due to its respective contexts. Take for example the word “sin.” In Romans 6:23, it has the general meaning of missing the mark but in Hosea 4:8, it means a sin offering. Same word yet different meanings due to their respective contexts. Again, consider the phrase, “laid his hands upon.” In Luke 13:13 (ASV), this phrase means to heal. However, in Acts 19:6 (ASV), this same phrase means to impart spiritual gifts. Same phrase yet different meanings due to their respective contexts. Reading Scripture in context is critical in our bid to arriving at the right conclusion as touching Matthew 24 and any other biblical doctrine.

Let us now direct our attention to the text.

Two Questions or Three?

As Jesus Christ condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the Scribes in the previous chapter, He made this sad proclamation; “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matt. 23:38). The temple, which was the house being referred to, due to the constant refusal of the Jews to accept the Christ and come to Him, was no longer God’s house but “your” house, and had now been “forsaken of God and His Christ, and sentenced to utter destruction.” (Wesley). In an apparent response to these bold words of Jesus Christ, the twelve “...came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple” (Matt. 24:1) as if it say to our Lord, “now, you don’t mean this huge and impressive structure, do you?” “And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” (Matt. 24:2). Later on Mount Olives, the twelve who, like the patriots they were, couldn’t get their heads around the temple being destroyed, went to Jesus in private and asked Him; “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt. 24:3). A closer look at this text and one cannot help but notice that our Lord was asked two questions. First, *when shall these things be?* that is, when shall the temple be destroyed? and second, *what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* that is when shall the world come

to an end? The twelve, in their innocence mistakenly assumed that both of these events were supposed to be the same event.

Some good Bible students claim that our Lord was asked three questions and that what I refer to as the second question, is actually two different questions. That cannot be, due to Jesus' use of the word "but" in the thirty-sixth verse. The word *but* is a conjunction that introduces an opposing proposition to what our Lord had just spoken about. Thus, even if the twelve had asked three questions, which I deny is the case, the fact that our Lord discussed two propositions as proven by His use of *but* shows that He considered the questions before Him to be just two. Based on this three-letter conjunction, I submit that the apostles asked only two questions, both of which Jesus Christ answered exceptionally plainly.

A Brief Look at the First Question

Let us now briefly look at what we learn from the Lord's answer to the first question, which was about the destruction of the temple.

First, He discussed this from the fourth verse to the thirty-third verse.

Second, while discussing this particular subject, the destruction of the temple, He gave signs that would precede this event.

Third, Jesus Christ gave a clue for escape.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes...But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day. (Matt. 24:15-20).

In the foregoing, our Lord applied Daniel's *abomination of desolation* (cf. Daniel 9:27) to the Roman soldiers and said that their presence in the "holy place" that is Jerusalem, was a clue for escape. How do premillennialists deal with this problem, in view of the fact that as touching the final judgement of Christ on the world, it is written "...we **must** all appear before the judgement seat of Christ..." (2 Cor. 5:10)? Pray tell how anybody, no matter how mighty he or she is, can flee something which God says is a *must*? Yet from the fifteenth verse to the twentieth, our Lord gave a clue for escape. Is this not incontrovertible proof that this judgment or *coming* is unlike the Lord's coming in judgement on the whole world?

Disciples of the first century knew what signs to behold and they left the city before Titus and his Roman army leveled the rebellious metropolis. Infidelic Jews perished en masse. Luke tells why, "...because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:44). They paid no attention at all to what Jesus had said and what Matthew, Mark and Luke already had written years before Rome marched on Jerusalem. Jerusalem was destroyed. Its temple was razed to the ground with not a stone left upon another. About 1,000,000 perished. Close to 100,000 were sold into captivity. The city, which had crucified its own Lord of glory, now found her sons crucified en masse by ruthless Romans. They had chosen Caesar over Christ in John 19, and now Caesar was crushing them minus mercy or compassion." (Taylor).

Fourth, in the thirty-fourth verse, He told the apostles that this judgement or *coming* would happen in their generation. Profane history tells us that the destruction of the Jewish temple occurred in AD 70, which was the generation of the auditors of the Lord's discourse. All who read Matthew 24: 4-33 and think Jesus Christ had 2000+ years in mind are wrong because He who cannot lie (Titus 1:2) clearly said that the generation to which He was speaking to, would "...not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Friends, the discussion from the fourth to the thirty-third verse of Matthew 24 must be distinguished from the event, which is known as the "final second coming." This coming or judgement was a local event, a coming of Christ in judgement on the Jews

and **not** the final second coming of our Lord in judgement on the whole world.

A Brief Look at the Second Question

We now move on to the second question, which was a discussion on the final coming of our Lord in judgement on the whole world. What do we learn from the Lord's answer to this question?

First, He discussed this from the thirty-sixth verse to the final verse in the chapter and even to the next chapter.

Second, He used the word *but* to show that he was discussing something different from what He had already discussed, which is the destruction of the temple. How do premillennialists and realized eschatologists explain this conjunction away since they both hold that Christ discussed only one coming in the chapter?

Third, He stated that only God the Father knows when that day, which is the final coming in judgement on the whole world will be (Matt. 24:36).

Fourth, from the point where He used the word *but* onward, He stopped giving signs. Rather He said;

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. (Matt. 24:42-43).

At my previous residence, I was visited a fair few times by thieves and I am certain I would have been glad had they given me signs and a timeframe prior to their coming. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Peter in 2 Peter 3:10 make the exact same argument as our Lord.

Fifth, our Lord said the days prior to His final coming will be like the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37) in that, life will be going on as usual as it did prior to the global deluge (Matt. 24:38). Prior to the return of Christ, people will be doing their farm work as usually as they always have (Matt. 24:40). Prior to our Lord's return, people will be doing their grinding as normally as they always have (Matt. 24:41). Let it be known that "...one...taken,...the other left" is not a reference to the rapture, a doctrine, which is falsified by passages like Matthew 25:31-46 and John 5:28-29.

Sixth, since we have been given **no** signs and timeframe as far as the final coming of the Lord in judgement on all humanity is concerned, we must live everyday of our lives with careful faithfulness (Matt. 24:45-51).

Conclusion

As we have clearly seen, it is a mistake to ascribe everything in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew to the final coming of Christ in judgement on the whole world. It also is a mistake to ascribe everything in the chapter to the destruction of the temple. Based on the context, the Olivet discourse concerns both of these comings and not one to the exclusion of the other. Both the premillennialist and the realized eschatologist are in soul-damning error.

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After Death, What's Next?

Nathan Brewer

Many people assume that we go directly to heaven or hell as soon as we die. According to the Bible this isn't true, but where we go when we die **does** depend on how we live.

Jesus gives us a glimpse of what we can expect in Luke 16:19-31. There are two men. One is rich and lives like a king. The other, a beggar named Lazarus—his body riddled

with sores—who hopes to eat the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table.

Both men die. Although the King James Version renders it “hell” in verse 23, the men do not go immediately to either heaven or hell. The Greek word Jesus uses to describe their destination is *hades*, the place where spirits go when death comes. This is where all departed spirits wait for Judgment Day.

But Hades is composed of two parts. The beggar is carried to a place Jesus calls “Abraham's bosom.” Abraham was the father of the Jews, and he lived a righteous life. Jews of the first century could hope for nothing better than to be with Abraham when they died.

The rich man isn't so fortunate. He ends up in Hades too, but his destination is a place of “torments” (v. 23). The rich man looks up in agony and sees Abraham in the distance, with Lazarus. He cries for mercy and begs Abraham to send Lazarus with just a drop of water to cool his tongue, “For I am tormented in this flame” (v. 24).

Here is what we know so far. Two men have died and are in Hades, but one is resting comfortably with Abraham, while the other is in misery. Judgment Day is still in the future when Jesus comes again. Lazarus the beggar is in the part of Hades that provides rest, while the rich man is in that part where the unrighteous go—a place of torment.

When the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus over to bring him some relief, Abraham explains that the two have swapped roles. When they were alive, the rich man lived well while the beggar suffered, but now on the other side it is the beggar who is comforted (v. 25). Why the reversal?

The answer comes in verse 29. While he was alive, the rich man did not “hear” Moses and the prophets—he didn't heed the word of God. Apparently, the beggar did. And now, after death has come, two men await the Judgment, but in very different circumstances.

If death comes to you before Jesus returns, which of these men will you join when you leave this world? Your destination will be based on whether you listen to the words of Jesus Christ (John 12:48).

Qualities Of A Faithful Follower

Kent Bailey

To be acceptable to Christ one must be classified as a faithful follower. By the term *follower* we refer to one who accepts the authority and follows in obedience to the one who is viewed as being in the position of leadership. By the term *faithful* we refer to being conscientious, loyal, firm in adherence to promises that have been made, one full of obedient faith. As we seriously consider the qualities of being a faithful follower we do so in view of being a faithful follower of Christ which necessitates a beginning point in life (John 1:35-50). Following the establishment of the New Testament church that was indicative of both obedience to the Gospel of Christ and continuing in the faith (Acts 2:36-47; Rev. 2:8-10).

While it is crucial that as Christians we abstain from moral and doctrinal sin we must also from a positive perspective develop qualities that establish our loyalty to Christ (Col. 3:1-17). One serious fallacy of thought in the lives of Christians is the concept that brethren can be “mostly faithful.” The church of the Lord was established upon the basis of one being faithful. That is an either/or situation with one being an **obedient** believer in becoming a Christian, or a **rejecter** where one refuses to obey the Gospel of Christ. This also is demonstrated by continuing and growing in the faith, or else a refusal to properly develop as a Christian thus becoming unfaithful. There is **no middle ground** between the two. May we give serious consideration to specific qualities of what it means to be a faithful follower of Christ.

Faithful followers of Christ must ascertain the truth and openly confess their faith in Christ. This is affirmed in Mark 8:27-29. When one has a faith that is strong enough to openly and clearly admit the truth about Christ his faith leads him—

as a believer—to repent, i.e., change the mind about sin (Acts 17:30). His faith also brings one to the point where he has a strong desire to die to the practice of sin and begin a new life in Christ (Rom. 6:1-7). As a result, he receives the remission of all past sins and is added to the Lord's one true church (Acts 2:47). Until this takes place initial salvation in the reception of forgiveness from past alien sins does not occur. Becoming a Christian is indeed conditional and involves the exercise of our free will. One cannot be forced into such a decision; neither can one acceptably enter into the fellowship of Christ and his church by compromise (Rom. 6:17-18). Faithfully following Christ not only necessitates becoming a Christian, i.e., a member of the one true New Testament church, but also implies remaining faithful to this beginning (Matt. 10:28-39).

Faithful followers of Christ must ascertain the truth about Christ and the Gospel in becoming Christians, but they must also receive the truth by continual teaching after becoming Christians. That is affirmed in Mark 8:31-33. Many individuals have accepted the crucial necessity of being properly taught the Gospel before they can become a New Testament Christian (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:17-18). However, many of these same individuals—though they became Christians and were added to the church of the Lord—have failed to understand the principle of growing in our knowledge of God's truth. According to the context of Mark 8, Peter did not know as much about God's scheme of Redemption as he thought that he did. Perhaps his intentions were sincere, and he meant well. However he was wrong. This brought about a strong correction of Christ (Mark 8:33). Like Peter, many of us at various times had the best intentions in both our words and actions. In spite of our intent, because of our lack of knowledge of truth in various areas, we either spoke or practiced that which was wrong. Just because one is a Christian does not exempt one from drawing improper unscriptural conclusions in addition to engaging in sinfully wrong practices. As Christians, we all need to have an open mind and willingness to be instructed in the scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15). We all need to have the willingness, through proper study, to admit we have been wrong and change both our faith and practice when we see we are wrong (1 Pet. 2:1-10; Heb. 5:11-14). Unless we develop this mindset and practice, we will never develop the quality of being a faithful follower of Christ.

Faithful followers of Christ must learn to be willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Christ, as is affirmed in Mark 8:34-37. Since the New Testament church has been brought to our nation, various brethren have been called upon to make sacrifices for the cause. As we note our history, time and time again apostasy has reared its ugly head among the people of God, taking both individuals and local churches into sin and away from God's truth. Such has dearly cost brethren their income and their wealth. Because of their stand for truth some have been abandoned both by friends and family (Matt. 10:34-38). While that is a heavy price to pay, Christ made it very clear that we must be faithful even if our faithfulness costs us our own lives (Mark 8:38-40).

A careful study of church history informs us of the great suffering and loss of life faced by the Lord's church brought on by the Jewish persecution during the first century (Acts 8:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:24-28). Near the end of Paul, the apostle's life we read of the beginning of the Roman persecution against the church, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem (1 Pet. 4:1-6; 4:11-19). Regardless of where the church has gone, faithful Christians have faced some sort of rejection and in certain situations even the loss of life. That was true in the first century and even in some remote situations it is the case today. Regardless of the situation that we face our responsibility remains the same—faithfulness to Christ, even if it means death (Rev. 2:10).

The book of Revelation carries an important message to all Christians: That of ultimate victory (Rev. 2:8-10). In this passage Christ wrote to the church at Smyrna. He realized their accomplishments amid their tremendous tribulation and poverty. He recognized that their faithfulness caused them to be rich in spite of their poverty. He admonished them not to give up. Some would be cast into prison and have additional tribulation. The word of encouragement was this: Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee eternal life. Let us not develop a spirit of fear but, rather, may we muster up needed courage in the face of danger. May we realize the way to self preservation is anticipated

in losing one's life for the sake of the Gospel.

Faithful followers of Christ must learn that we must never be ashamed of Christ and his words. That is affirmed in Mark 8:38. To be ashamed drives one into dignified silence where individuals fail to speak up in opposition to that which is sinful. It is sad but nonetheless true that some have adopted the false position known as "preaching the Gospel and leaving others alone." That viewpoint, in reality, will not work. In the preaching and teaching of the Gospel sin will be militantly opposed and truth will be exalted. Carefully consider the work of the first century church. Where ever the preachers of truth went the Gospel was preached. Not only was the Gospel preached, but it was preached in a way that stirred opposition by the Devil and his crowd. When individuals **falsely affirm** that one can "preach the Gospel and leave others alone" by the very nature of their affirmation they have compromised God's truth and are no longer preaching the Gospel. Certainly, as Christians we ought never to have an insulting demeanor in the way we react to other individuals. However, even as we confront sin in the spirit of meekness, we will stir up strong opposition because of the nature of truth. When the truth is faithfully preached and taught, it is designed so the hearer cannot be neutral. It will either be accepted or rejected.

As Christians, may we learn the qualities of being faithful followers of Christ, and may we always remember that a church without controversy is a church without Christ.

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Transformation: A Christian's Lifelong Work

Ron Cosby

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service*. And be not fashioned according to this world: but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1-2, Emph., RC).

Like the Nations

God expects us to avoid conforming to the world. However, He does what He can within divinely set bounds to encourage us to avoid fashioning our life according to the human standards of those around us. He also informs us to **transform**, to be Christ-like, as followers of Christ.

During the days of Samuel, the last Judge of Israel, the people sought a new way of being governed. Rejecting Jehovah, they wanted a king (1 Sam. 8:19). Why? The text says they wanted a king "like the nations" (1 Sam. 8:20). In other words, they sought to conform to the world. Until we are transformed, we will be like "the nations."

The word Paul uses for transform in Romans is metamorphoses. I venture to say that 90 percent of the women and 99 percent of the men would flinch wildly if a worm goes crawling across their arms. Unless you are eight years old, worms are so repulsive! Yet, if the worm in its full form as a butterfly landed on your head, you would grin with delight. Butterflies are absolutely gorgeous. You see where I am going with this? The beautiful butterfly is the wiggly worm **after** metamorphosis. The ugly sinner is the caterpillar **before** transforming to the beauty of holiness.

Conform to What?

Paul encourages us to imitate Christ. "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). He compares this imitation to that of a child (Eph. 5:1). "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children." Children are great mimics. When our granddaughter who was about 10 months old greeted a person while her mother held her in her arms, she would bow to the smiling adult in front of her. She bowed so strongly, she almost fell head first out of her mother's arms. Her mother thought that the daughter was "just being bashful." The adults then noticed that the little girl was simply acting like the person she was greeting. The person bowed to the daughter be-

cause of the height difference, so the little lady bowed in return. Mimics! Aren't they all?

The apostle Peter adds to this encouragement of change by telling followers to be zealous or followers of "that which is good" (1 Pet. 3:13). We can hear the objector complaining, "Who in the world has the right to tell us what is good?" Let us test a few examples. Do you want the standard of good from politicians who are filled with fornication and hypocrisy? Don't think so. Maybe you prefer Hollywood. Lewdness and foul language comes from their rule or set of standards. A recent newspaper story tells of an experience by Mr. Nichols who is the chief executive of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Park. He heard voices loudly swearing around the corner from where he was standing. It seems that Billy, Elsie, Eric, Jade and Tyson were swearing. They were not employees but African grey parrots that had arrived at the park a week earlier. Clearly, they were mimicking the foul language that they had heard from folks around them.

National news organizations reported another event earlier in the month. A passenger on Southwest Airlines was accused of wearing lewd, obscene and offensive clothing. The picture in the paper shows her wearing a halter top or a bikini top. The lady responded, saying, "I don't understand how my body part is obscene." She left the impression her appearance was not obscene since she was not totally nude. From the article, it appears this young lady failed to maintain the norms set by the world. What about the criteria of God? Since it is a higher rule of conduct, she failed it too.

Seek the Christian's Rule of Conduct

Not only are we begotten by the gospel, but we imitate those who in their own lives present the gospel to us. "For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel. I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me" (1 Cor 4:15-16). Within the Gospel is revealed the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16-17). I can still hear brother W.S. Boyett telling us students that the "righteousness of God" is not that God is righteous but that the Gospel reveals how we are to be right with the Father.

"Working on it, Boss!"

"Working on it, Boss!" comes from a TV personality. Neither the caterpillar nor the child of God makes the transformation overnight. It is a work in progress. Transformation is a lifetime endeavor. "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are **transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18, Emph., RC).

The Church That Jesus Built

J.D. Tant

There have been two families on earth with a divine origin. God was the maker and founder of one at the beginning when he made Adam and Eve, and called their name Adam (Gen. 5:2). This was God's family upon the earth. From this family all nations came. Had these people lived up to the law of God, there would have been no necessity of the confounding of languages and scattering the people over the earth as was done at the tower of Babel when they tried to reach heaven by their works (Gen. 11:5-10).

When this family had fulfilled the work God ordained it should do, we are introduced to another person, Jesus, the Son of God, who came, lived, died, and lived again in order to save His people from their sins.

While Jesus was here perfecting His work, on one occasion when Peter confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, Christ pronounced a blessing upon him and said, "Upon this rock (Peter's confession that He was the Son of God) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Paul called attention to this church and said it was purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).

Paul refers to it as being a bride and being married to the Son of God (Rom. 7:1-4). Also he represents it as being the body of Christ (Col. 1:18), and represents Christ as being the Savior of the same (Eph. 5:23).

Seeing the importance that the word of God attaches to the church of Christ, claiming it was built by Him, that it was purchased with His blood, and that He is married to it, and promises to save it as His body, it is then sad to see how much the religious world under-rates its value, claiming a connection with the church has nothing to do with the salvation of man.

Often it is said that a man can be saved just as well in one church as in another. Why not argue that when the flood came a man could have kept out of the water just as well in some other ark as in the one Noah built?

When God told the bitten Israelites to look at the snake Moses hung up in the wilderness would it have done just as well for Sam Jones or Bill Smith each to have made snakes and hung them up for the people to look at when bitten by the fiery serpents?

The charge is often made that my brethren teach that all will be lost who do not belong to "your church." While the Bible says nothing about "your church," yet the Son of God did say, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). He also says, "In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9).

The question is often asked, "Don't you think there are just as good people in one church as in another?" Most assuredly that is true. But it is also true that God never promised to save any man on account of his goodness. There are just as good people outside the Masonic lodge as belong to it, but no outsider is ever buried with Masonic honors.

There are as good people in France and England as we have in America, yet they have not the protection of our government because they are not American citizens. So it is in becoming a child of God, or a member of the church of Christ.

Jesus says in John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Inasmuch as the church of Christ is a spiritual institution, entered by spiritual law, not moral law, it matters not how good a man is he has no spiritual connection with Christ, the head of His church, unless he obeys from the heart said spiritual law as taught in Rom. 6:17, and is made free by the law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus, as taught by Paul in Rom. 8:2. This is the kind of a good life many lead here, working all the time in what they call "your church" instead of the church of Christ, doing, as they claim, many things in his name which he has not commanded. I am sure this will come under the head of their works of righteousness at the last day instead of doing the righteousness of God as taught in Rom. 10:3 and will be found building on the sand.

Then, as the Bible teaches that Jesus has a church, purchased with His blood, we conclude it is not only a divine institution, but is separated from all human churches. Salvation is promised only through the name of the founder (Acts 4:12). This salvation includes those only who build on the rock (Matt. 7:24). As those who build on the rock, or in the church, are said to be members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones (Eph. 5:30), it should then be a question of great importance that we know more of this church, and of the spiritual law that makes us members of it, and of the power by which we are kept alive after we get into this church.

First. When the prophet foretold the laying of the corner stone in Zion, he said this should be laid after the trial of the Son of God (Isa. 28:14-16).

Second. Jesus told the apostles they should commence work at Jerusalem after the Holy Ghost came upon them (Luke 24:4-9).

Third. We are taught in Acts 2, that the Holy Ghost came upon the apostles on the first Pentecost after the death of Christ, giving them a spiritual law, by which and through which, men and women become members of the church of Christ. But how did they become members? Peter taught they became members by "hearing" the gospel (Acts 5:7).

Paul taught them they must "believe" the gospel (Acts 16:31).

The Jews rejoiced when God granted unto the Gentiles "repentance" unto life (Acts

11:18). Philip taught they must “confess” the Son of God (Acts 8:38). The Holy Ghost taught they must be “baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Those people who gladly received said teaching were baptized and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2:47). This church continued in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, and in prayer (Acts 2:41-45). A leading act of their worship was to meet upon the first day of the week to break bread, as my brethren teach and practice today (Acts 20:7). If this was the church of Christ then, and if we teach and practice the same things, why are we not the church of Christ today ?

If the seed of a peach tree was planted A. D. 33 it grew and produced peaches and if the same kind of seed is planted today will it not grow and produce peaches as it did then? If not, why not? So if we have a peach seed that was planted and produced peaches 1,900 years ago, and we plant the same kind of seed today, it only remains to sow the seed and it will produce peaches. If not, why not?

The man who would argue that we cannot tell whether or not they are peaches today unless we can produce an account of each tree that has borne the same kind of fruit from now back to the apostles, would be illogical. So it is with the word of God. We have the same gospel they had then which is the word of God, or the seed of the kingdom. If it produced nothing but Christians then who were members of the church of Christ, it will produce nothing less nor more now. So if in any community we find something besides a Christian, and find a church which is not the church of Christ, we are forced to believe the word of God was not sown in that community, and said church, whether it be “your church” or “my church” is **not** the church of Christ.

As Jesus taught that all plants or churches not planted by His Father should be rooted up, we should be careful lest it may turn out we are working in some human church and will be rooted up at the last day.

“Christian Music”

David Ray

Oftentimes I have been asked if it is okay for Christians to listen to “Christian music.” The question itself is almost humorous; if Christians can’t listen to Christian music, what can they listen to? And if Christians can’t, then who can? Of course, most professing believers don’t understand why anyone would ask the question. But those who know the Bible do.

The question is whether “Christian music” is scriptural, acceptable, sinful, etc. This question is so important because it involves worship to our God, and certainly any professing Christian should want to do this acceptably in order to please God.

What is “Christian Music”?

When most people speak of *Christian music*, sadly they aren't speaking of anything related to the Bible. They're no doubt referring to the songs typically heard on a “Christian music” radio station. These are almost always songs that use mechanical instruments (guitars, keyboards, drums, etc.) and the lyrics of which speak of God, Christ, Christian values, or at least something related to religion. In other words, the lyrics purport to worship God.

Those who like this music will say it's encouraging to listen to, particularly instead of other music which is so sinful and negative. But does this make it authorized?

What Music is Authorized?

First of all, the **only** Christian music is that which the Bible authorizes and identifies as such, and God commanded that Christians **sing**. Period. Search the entirety of Scripture and you'll find singing as the only type of music in the church. (The Old Testament does not contain Christian worship and therefore should not be appealed to in order to authorize Christian worship.)

If we are asked, “what music does God want, require, command, accept, desire, etc.?” we can say *singing*. We will not mention anything else (piano, organ, drums, guitars, or any other musical instrument). We will not say you can or can't use these things.

The only time instrumental music will come up is when someone else other than God brings it up! It only becomes a topic of discussion if one asks, “what other music can we have in worship?” or “what can we get away with?” **God** never addressed it (silence)!

Logically, singing can be done with or without a mechanical instrument. But authoritatively, it cannot. Nowhere has God ever commanded it, asked for it, discussed it, or hinted about it regarding His church. Therefore, we can know that **nowhere has God authorized it** in His church.

To add instruments of music (or anything else God never mentioned: e.g., humming, beatboxing, etc.) is to do just that: add to! If we wish to do this then we need to consider Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Gal. 1:8-9; and Rev. 22:18-19, all of which warn against adding to God's word. If we do so anyway, we will **not** be violating the passages that command us to sing (e.g., Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); we'll be violating God's law of silence. The Bible's silence on an action forbids that action (cf. Col. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17 with 1 Thess. 5:21; Rom. 14:23 with 10:17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 7:14; Lev. 10; et.al.).

Therefore, true Christian music is “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). There are only two instruments to be used: the voice and the heart, and it's the heart where the true melody is to be made (not “making melody with your voice”). And this can be done anywhere. Christian singing is a part of our corporate worship, but Paul and Silas demonstrated that it wasn't limited to a corporate worship setting (Acts 16:25).

Additionally, *acappella* is not the proper designation for Christian music, nor is *vocal*. These terms are broader in meaning than what the Bible authorizes. *Acappella* generally means singing “without instrumental accompaniment” (dictionary.com) and therefore logically includes humming, whistling, beat boxing, etc. But these are **not** biblically acceptable; they do not qualify as “singing with grace in your heart” or “teaching one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” We would do well to call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways.

Application to “Christian Music”

We've already noted what type of music is authorized by God: singing, the main instrument being the heart. This coincides with John 4:24—we “must worship in spirit and in truth,” with *spirit* being the heart (i.e., meaningful) and “truth” being according to “thy word” (cf. John 17:17). Anything else is an addition to (or subtraction from).

Now let's deal with what the world calls *Christian music*. There are two big problems. First, it's almost always unscriptural in design, using unauthorized mechanical instruments. And second, it's very often unscriptural in content. The false doctrines that these folks believe come out in their lyrics. So, the world's *Christian music* cannot be considered as such by biblical definitions. It is **not** authorized by God and Christians shouldn't listen to it.

Addressing the Arguments for it

Some brethren will say “What about in the privacy of my own home?” Why would this make any difference? God's legislation for worship applies anytime and in any place worship occurs. Can we not worship in our own homes where two or more are gathered? Paul and Silas worshipped from prison with singing. This wasn't a worship assembly of the church, but it was worship nonetheless. If the song is a worship song, then it's still worship regardless of where and by whom it is sung.

This has caused some to foolishly claim that these songs are **not** worship. I wonder what the song's author (or performer) would say to that! We're all smart enough to discern by the lyrics whether or not a song is a worship song or not. If it isn't a worship song, then we're not having this discussion. It's just like any other secular song on the radio! But if it is, then biblical legislation applies and we are not to add to or subtract from.

The next argument goes something like, “Well, **I'm** not worshipping when I sing it!” Then shame on you for taking a song whose intent is to worship God and selfishly using it for your own entertainment. This is no different than brethren in the worship

assembly singing hymns that praise God but focusing on other things and not paying attention to the lyrics, or singing songs simply because we like them, regardless of whether the lyrics are scriptural. Similarly, there are those who disagree with instrumental music in worship solely because “I like four-part harmony.” This is **not** a sound argument for or against instrumental music in worship.

Probably the most popular (and honest) argument for “Christian music” is that it’s encouraging. “It makes me feel more spiritual,” or some similar response, is heard from brethren because they believe the lyrics at least **sound** religious, mainly in contrast to secular music. First, if the lyrics are unscriptural, which so many are, then it doesn’t matter how religious they sound and a Christian should not feel encouraged by them. Second, if God’s law is being violated by the addition of instrumental music, then a Christian should not be encouraged and should not participate in this sin.

And finally, “it’s better than all the other music.” Folks will try to justify this unscriptural worship by contrasting it with all the ungodly filth that they could be listening to instead. But this is not an either/or proposition! Yes, there is definitely a lot of immorality in today’s music; but there are plenty of songs that are not immoral. Just because it isn’t *Christian* doesn’t mean it’s inappropriate. If your music is ungodly, stop listening to it! But not all “secular” music is unchristian (i.e., inappropriate)! Music can be ungodly because of its lyrics or because it worships God in an unauthorized way. **Both** of these should be avoided by Christians! It is not difficult to understand that He expects us to worship Him as He commanded **and** avoid the filth of the world.

Conclusion

As Christians we must have authority for everything we do (Col. 3:17). Particularly when it comes to worship, everything must be according to what God wants, not what we want (John 4:24). There is no authority for His church to worship Him musically with anything other than the voice and heart. To worship with any other instrument is to add to His word; and this is true in any location (church building, home, car, concert, etc.). The best way to teach and practice this is to look **only** to Scripture for our authority, and always remember **Who** we're worshipping!

Preaching the Gospel Around the World – www.thegospelpreceptor.com

Striking the Nail on the Head

Gilbert E. Shaffer

It is a known fact that if you want to drive up a nail you must hit it on the head. The harder you strike, the quicker you will finish your task. Now and then a spark will fly, but that is a sign you are doing good. It takes a real blow to bring forth fire, and each spark tells you of your contact with the piece of metal.

There is also such a thing as “pulling punches” in pugilistic combat. By that, we mean that there is every appearance of a heavy blow, but in reality the fighters are holding back part of the force. They clown while the audience gets the benefit of the show.

It appears to me that perhaps we who are called preachers are not striking the nail on the head. If we are, then the lick must be so light that no fire is brought forth. I believe if our preaching brought forth more fire we would see greater results. Is it possible that we are pulling our punches? Perhaps we think too much about beautiful phrases and mannerisms in the pulpit. Regardless of what might be said about our preaching, we are no longer having an effect on denominationalism. Sin is growing, sectarianism is spreading, and thousands of souls are being led astray by denominational preachers.

A few years ago our preachers were not as well educated as they now are. Better schools and greater opportunities have increased the learning of people in all walks of life. While our preachers of a few years back may not have been as well educated as many are today, they certainly knew the Bible and were not afraid to preach it. They may not have been able to quote Shakespeare, but they were able to quote Paul, and

were certainly not afraid to do so. Some of the hardest hitters and most able debaters lived when education was rather primitive. My heart goes out to our pioneer preachers who fought in the front line trenches against digression.

Much is said today about being “moderate,” the happy medium and the “middle of the road.” We hear in the business world that “knockers do not win and winners do not knock.” That may be a beautiful business phrase, but I doubt if it can be applied to Christianity. Christ “knocked” the Pharisees on every hand and told them they were like “whited sepulchres” (Matt. 23:27). On one occasion, Christ entered the temple and drove out the money changers. He told them, “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13). I would not consider Christ's words on these two occasions in harmony with the thought that “knockers do not win.” Christ struck the nail right on the head—a heavy blow.

Neither would Peter's words to Simon the sorcerer be welcome in some pulpits today. Listen to him as he speaks: “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:22-23).

We are living in a changing world and in perilous times. Politics, customs, education, and almost everything around us change with the years. While these things change, the church and the Gospel remain the same. Paul announced, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28).

It is true, however, that with the changes of our age, many in the church have been affected. There is an epidemic of softness toward sin that is spreading like wildfire. It is the spirit of compromise which was born in the mind of Satan, and if it continues only eternity can tell how much the church will suffer. Are we afraid that we will offend the enemy? Is it a fact that we are scared? I long for the “good old days” when sin and sinners were exposed.

We would do well to preach the gospel with the same plainness that characterized Marshall Keeble. He did not withhold names and places. Regardless of where he was or who was present, he continued to fire into the enemy's ranks. Did he have results? To ask the question is to answer it.

Every article written and every sermon preached should have a definite aim. We should aim to uproot sin in whatever form we find it. If it has found fertile soil in the church, then uproot it there. To call names might hasten the uprooting. No doubt, sparks may fly and weak-kneed church members will grumble, but we are trying to destroy sin. There has already been too much flirting with the devil. Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me” (Matt. 12:30). If we are against sin, then how much are we going to oppose it? The present day attitude seems to be that we will oppose sin as long as we do not offend those practicing it. Paul found that Peter had sinned, and he not only called his name, but withstood him to the face. “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Gal. 2:11).

In all the preaching and writing of the apostles, there was one thing that characterized each of them, and that was **plainness**. Not only was their preaching plain, but it was pointed as well. The Holy Spirit directed them in their preaching and gave them the words to speak. It took plain, pointed, positive preaching to uproot the isms of that day. We have far more sects now than the apostles had to contend with. Certainly we cannot be too severe or too plain in pointing out their errors.

Brethren, let us carry on the good fight of faith. Let us not be led into the error of soft, politically correct preaching.

Coming This Month!

**“The Thing That Hath Been...”: The Cycle of Apostasy
Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised**

Editor's Travels and Writings

Our With the end of 2020, we are all a year closer to eternity. Are you prepared? A Clockeoo

"The Thing That Hath Been...": The Cycle of Apostasy Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised, is at the printer and will be ready this month. 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 pornography in Freed-Hardeman University's art classes. The Enlarged Edition is 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

What Saith the Scriptures?

Harrell Davidson

"Can you please comment on the position that says a woman must be veiled in worship assemblies?"

If a woman wishes to wear a hat that is fine. If my wife does not want to wear a hat that is fine too, but she should not be bound by a matter of opinion. Look at my notes on 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 and see the truth.

Chapter 11

Chapter divisions here are unfortunate because verse one goes with chapter 10. He said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." This is the exhortation to imitate Paul and so as he has done in matters of liberty for the good of other persons. In liberty there are limitations and these are to be abided by when another person is involved. We do not want to cause a person to violate his own conscience.

Before studying verses 2-16 there are some principles that are necessary. I think that will help us understand these matters better. In fact, chapters 11, 12 and 14 deal with worship. Verses 2-16 have caused problems over the veil or the covering. Bible studies such as this is the place to study these matters so that we might have the proper understanding. This will help us in our interpretation and understanding of Scripture. In these verses Paul is talking about women in the assembly. What was the problem of the woman in the assembly? What does it finally get down to and what does it go back to, the problem and why it was a problem and the principle that is underlying this in order that we may understand; we will be well served? We have noticed in chapter 10 some peculiar things in Corinth that created problems. It is also a fact that no other portion of Scripture contains this material and suggests that no other congregation had this problem. I believe this to be a truthful statement. It was a local situation at Corinth and for Corinth alone.

In studying Scriptures, we need to study within the context. What is the condition? They were disorderly! Disorder was based upon a failure to understand an underlying and important principle. I am confident that this is based upon the liberty that we have already been talking about. Some thought that they were free due to the liberty that belongs to Christians and did not have to abide by customs at that time and verse 16 talks about customs. For instance, there were things in Colosse and in Galatia that were peculiar to them. Neither of them had this problem but had other conditions. This needs to be kept in mind as we study any book of the Bible. There was a general problem that Paul was dealing with in Corinth and this has a bearing on what he says in this chapter. The cause of the problem was the covering. The principle underlying this related to au-

thority and this is necessary if we are to understand what he is going to talk about. Disorder in the home or society in general is related to authority and the respect for it.

He gives the pattern in verse 3. **“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”**

Here is a pattern of authority. If you run this backwards you see what we have. This is speaking of the assembly of the church. First, there is God and Christ. This describes their nature. They function as one yet each carried out a particular work. God purposed and planned while Christ carried out and executed. When we say God is the head of Christ we are not saying that Christ is not equal with God in nature it has to do with His work and place. Man and woman as to nature are equal. Sometimes when people read this they say that this was in Paul’s day, and that he did not like women and it does not apply today. No, that is not true! Paul is not denying the equality of men and women. Here he is talking about the assembly. When we say that man and woman are equal it does not mean that their place is equal in the assembly.

Order in worship is based upon creation not upon culture. The Episcopal, Methodist and Presbyterian churches have appointed women preachers and they continually have strife over this matter. The place of woman is based upon creation. There are some fundamental things that are based upon creation and Paul lists some of these things in this chapter. In 1 Timothy Paul explains the proper place of woman in the assembly. He explains why she is under man and not over. He based it upon the fact that man was created first and that the woman was the first in sin in the temptation. These verses teach us that men and women should glory in their distinctiveness. A man is a man and woman is woman and each should glory in this fact.

Look at verse 12, **“For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.”**

Therefore, because I am a man I ought to realize the place that God has made for me. As a woman she should realize the place that God has made for her. Women should glory in their role as women. Today there seems to be a rebellion among women. Many are trying to fulfill the role of a man and it is impossible for her to do so.

In the next place there is a mutual dependence one upon the other. Look at verse 11, **“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”** There is a mutual dependence. We need each other. The fact that man was made first does not imply in any way that there is no place for women as Paul will show in verse 8 and 9. This relationship is based upon creation. Adam was created first and God saw the need for woman. We ought to appreciate this because we all need a mother. There is a mutual dependence upon each other.

Next, the order in nature is reflected in worship. The very creation and the order that God made in nature is made in worship. There is no relationship that does not need authority. Think about the Trinity—God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. Suppose that something came up and they said let’s take a vote on it. Now you have Christ and the Holy Spirit voting against the Father. What kind of order do you think there would be in the Godhead? We know that there is someone in authority—God the Father. The same principle is true everywhere. This authority does not destroy equality and this needs to be understood. A woman is not any less valuable or not equal to man simply on the order of creation. Was Eve any less than Adam because he was made first and Eve was made from his side? No, because Eve in nature was just like Adam. How could she not be just like Adam in nature when she was taken from his side? God placed them in different positions and in the assembly that order of nature ought to be recognized. This is the heart of what is in this chapter. The covering has something to do with the order of creation or the principles in creation in relation to man and woman. When we understand that we will have no problem in solving the problem in these verses. There was a principle in Corinth that had an effect on authority and that was the covering. The covering had to do with signified authority and this was fundamental and was a custom in Corinth that affected the relationship between man and woman. This is an introduction to verses 2-16.

Arguments can be made on either side that the covering was a veil or the hair, but you will come out with the same conclusion—it was the custom of that time. If you say it was a veil then it was a symbol of submission. If you say it was long hair it was also a distinction between the sexes and a symbol of submission. It makes very little difference which position you take in the matter. If it was a veil it covered the entire head and only the eyes were about all that you could see. Others think that because Paul asked if he did not have the right to lead about a wife like Peter that the veil was so thick that one could not see through it. Look at the principles that he is discussing.

(1 Cor. 11:2) “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.”

It is interesting, in spite of the problems at Corinth, that Paul found something for which to praise them. In this same chapter in verse 17 he said that he would not praise them, but the emphasis had changed. It is important to recognize the importance of praise and give it when it can be and to recognize when it is not proper. Where the KJV has “ordinances” the ASV has “traditions.” Perhaps it would be worthwhile to take some time and talk about the matter of traditions. Tradition, in this instance, simply means that which is passed along. The word *delivered* in verse 23 is sometimes translated traditions. It is something that is passed on. Paul delivered on the traditions to them and they were to keep them. These would be inspired traditions. Jesus talks about the traditions of the Jews in Matt. 15. The context must determine the meaning of the word, because many traditions are okay. Some traditions do not have to be kept like 3 songs and a prayer. Traditions of men must not become such that we think they are bound upon us.

In verse 3 we have the pattern: **(1 Cor. 11:3)** “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” This sets forth the matter of authority. This does not mean that there is inequality. It is simply a God designed place. Jesus said in John, “My Father is greater than I.” This is not a matter of custom, but one of authority.

(1 Cor. 11:4) “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.”

It could be his hair as well as another covering such as a hat. This would indicate that he was not the glory of Christ and did not sustain the relationship that God ordained between man and woman in the beginning. Literally rendered the phrase “having his head covered” says “that which is hanging down” so it is dealing with the length of the hair. Length of the hair for the man and the woman is under consideration and arguments can be made for that. It is my judgment that Paul is talking over all about the hair of the woman being her proper covering according to verse 15. The ASV reads “instead of a covering” where the KJV says “for a covering.” If it was the veil how did the hair get in the picture? It has to do with the distinction between the sexes.

(1 Cor. 11:5) “But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”

In verse 4 man would dishonor his head—Christ—in this verse the woman would dishonor her head—man. Notice he enters the matter of shaven. Remember the situation at Corinth, according to profane history, the priestess in the various idolatrous temples had their heads shaved. That was a sign in the Bible of being disgraced. In chapter 10 pagan worship became involved. The cropped hair indicated that she was a harlot of the temple.

(1 Cor. 11:6) “For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.”

The idea is that it denoted submission and the difference between man and woman.

(1 Cor. 11:7) “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.”

This is clearly based upon creation. God created man and then woman. It does not mean that she has no identity. Both were made in the image of God. She was taken from man's side.

(1 Cor. 11:8, 9) “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”

God created Adam first and God said that it was not good for man to be alone and He created Eve for man. Paul is showing that this is dealing with authority and submission in the public assemblies and in marriage as Eph. 5:25 shows.

(1 Cor. 11:10) “For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”

To me, personally, this is the most difficult verse in this chapter. What does this mean? Some think that angels are watching us while we worship. I do not know anything about that because Inspiration has not given us any information about that. Since he is talking about authority could it be the fact that in relationship to the rebellion of the angels? What happened to the angels who rebelled? This makes sense as some of the women in Corinth were in rebellion to God. The relationship between man and woman was questioned by some of the women in Corinth and this seems to be a suitable explanation in the context. This is a possibility at least. There may be other possibilities. I lean toward the idea since he was talking about authority that he is referring to rebellious angels. You can determine this on your own to accept what you will as long as it does not violate Scripture.

(1 Cor. 11:11) “Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.”

God ordained the place for both of us. Even though Adam was first created, then Eve, there is a need for man, as far as woman is concerned, since the creation man needs woman because all of us came into the world by a mother. In Eph. 5:22 Paul told the woman to be in submission and places the situation so that the husband is to love his wife as his own flesh and his own body and this controls the kind of man that he is to be. Both are to recognize their God ordained place in the home and in the church.

(1 Cor. 11:12) “For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.”

Let us recognize God’s ordained arrangement. That is the idea! In the assemblies God’s arrangement is to be recognized and obeyed. He has placed man under Christ, and woman in submission to man. Culture does not have anything to do with that. If the culture has no recognized symbol then we are not bound to a veil or specified covering as long as the woman is covered. Look at Ruth 3:15 “Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.” Now, in Corinth or today, if the veil is used here must be the size. Why? Because Inspiration reveals it to us! Let us be careful because he said they do not have this custom in the church nor do we today. If there is a custom today that signified rebellion against God it would be wrong for mankind to involve himself in that custom. We must see the custom that was in vogue at that time. Any custom that reinforces a divine principle we ought to abide by it.

(1 Cor. 11:13-14) “Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?”

The relationship between man and woman is amplified in these verses. We have made a lot out of these two verses. First of all, a woman with shorter hair without a veil does not today suggest that a wife is not in subjection to her husband. This was a custom of that day. In the first part of this chapter Paul is discussing some local situations that had to do with the recognition or the denial of authority relative to the covering in the assembly. The principle that should be learned from these verses are two: (1) There should be a recognition between the sexes. Men are men and women are women and these verses teach us that God made us this way and we ought to glory that we are men and women and each has a place according to ordination of God. (2) We should seek to fulfill the place that God has ordained for us.

(1 Cor. 11:14-16) “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair

is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”

The problem comes when trying to explain what is long and what is short. The main lesson is that in the cutting of the hair there is to be a distinction between the sexes. A man is not to appear from the back side as a woman may nor is a woman to have hers cropped in such a way that from the back side one cannot tell that she is a woman.

We have no such custom in the Lord’s church today of a hat or a veil.

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

Bible Authority for Worship

Joe Grant

We hear many expressions in the modern world such as, “Join the church of your choice,” “It does not make any difference which church you belong to,” “One church is as good as another,” “The church will not save you,” and other like expressions. With all due respect to all concerned, the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles with their co-laborers, and the Holy Spirit did not make any such revelation in the New Testament. Therefore, as we have no God-given authority for such teaching, these fall under the heading of “doctrines and commandments of men.”

Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus verified this prophecy concerning the traditions of men: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:8-9).

How then can a responsible person desiring to become a citizen of the kingdom of God, which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, do so? Men and women are born into the church, or kingdom, by obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). After being born into the family of our earthly parents, we do not have to join it. Neither do those who are born of water and the Spirit have to join God’s family. They become members at birth.

In the spotlight of God’s word, we would consider it very foolish if Adam had talked of “selecting the wife of his choice” when it is written: “And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Gen. 2:22). Again, we find when the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, he said,

Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:20-21).

Now, who would be willing to say that the angel of the Lord told Joseph to take the wife of his choice to become the mother of Jesus, the Son of God, the Saviour of mankind, regardless of who she was or what name she wore? Yet multiplied thousands of people talk freely about “joining the church of their choice,” when the same Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary said, “Upon this rock I will build my church [not churches, plural]; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

Many people, no doubt, wonder why we do not use organs, pianos, violins, guitars, and brass bands in worship. We are commanded to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18). The Holy Spirit Who came to teach the apostles all things and to bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had said to them (John 14:26) did not teach them or bring to their remembrance anything concerning the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.

They were not used by Christ, the apostles, or Christians of New Testament times. Their use is not taught in the New Testament by precept or example. Are they used by faith? No! “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17)

and they are not found in God's word for us today.

But many people offer the following “argument” for their use: “Where does the Bible say **not** to use them in worship?” In Genesis 6:14, God commanded Noah, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood.” The Lord did not tell Noah **not** to use oak, pine, maple, or cedar. The wood God specified eliminated the use of all other kinds of wood. In the New Testament, we are commanded to sing, using the heart as the instrument with which to praise the Lord. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). Now, if the specified use of gopher wood in the construction of the ark eliminated the use of all other kinds of wood, the specified use of the heart eliminates the use of all other kinds of instruments with which we are to make melody in worshipping the Lord.

Many people today wonder why we partake of the Lord's Supper every Sunday, or every first day of the week. In the Old Testament we find that God commanded the Israelites to “remember the sabbath [seventh] day to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8). He did **not** say, “the first Sabbath in every third month” or “the second Sabbath in every sixth month,” but to “remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Now, we know that those Jews understood God to mean every Sabbath day in every week of the year. The Lord Jesus Christ was raised on the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1). The church of the Lord was established on the first day of the week—the first Pentecost following Christ's resurrection (Acts 2), and the early disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). As every week has its first day and the early disciples continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship and in breaking of bread and of prayers, why should we not do the same things, as the Lord has given us no authority to change His word?

Then others probably ask, “Why do you not take up collections every night during meetings, have ice-cream parties, box suppers, or car washes and the like in order to raise money to carry on the Lord's work?” These things are not taught or commanded in the New Testament. Paul said our money is to be given as a free will offering in our first day of the week assembly. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

All authority for acceptable worship to God must be **authorized in the New Testament** or He will not accept it.

The Repudiation of Mark 16:15-16

Cled E. Wallace

All the constitutions and statutes of all governments of all time are not to be compared with the Great Commission. It is indeed the Magna Charta of salvation. As recorded by Mark, Jesus said: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16). Thus was the inspiration for the evangelization of the whole world in a generation.

It is not strange that this text has called forth the forces of truth and error to battle. There is nothing difficult about the text. Its terms are clear. Jesus beyond reasonable doubt makes both belief and baptism conditions of salvation, while unbelief alone is made a sufficient reason for condemnation. This much is clear on the face of the text. Some modern partisans have developed a rabid aversion to baptism as a condition of remission of sins and have made some reckless and ingenious efforts to break or change the force of the language that Jesus used. These efforts have not proved satisfactory to even all who were in sympathy with them. So some have gone to the extreme of repudiating the language altogether and contending that Jesus did not use the language at all. But criticism, scholarly and otherwise, has failed to shake the historical accuracy of the text. Jesus said it. The “assured results” of scholar criticism support the text.

This language of Jesus does not square with the faith alone doctors. The order of Jesus is (1) belief (2) baptism (3) salvation. Sectarian doctors would have it (1) belief (2) salvation (3) baptism. They would feel infinite relief if they could make Jesus say: "He that believeth and is saved shall be baptized." Their theory demands a change in the order of the terms that Jesus used, and also a change in the tenses of the verbs that Jesus used. This amounts to a rank perversion of the language of Jesus that cannot be tolerated for an instant by those who have any respect for the word of the Lord. Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." This makes both belief and baptism conditions of salvation. The text stands.

A plain text does not always stop a partisan. If it blocks his path, he resorts to artful dodges and detours around it. He does not surrender to the obvious fact that Jesus made belief and baptism conditions of salvation in the text. The text also makes disbelief sufficient ground for condemnation. This offers the sole opportunity for evasion. "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Jesus did not say "He that disbelieveth and is not baptized shall be condemned." Ergo, baptism is not a condition of salvation. Shades of logic! It might be excused in the dear old lady who thought it a touching story, that one about little Moses among the bull nettles, or in the brother who thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were man and wife. But for a man who knows that the epistles are not the wives of the apostles it is simply pitiful. Yet it is seriously urged by some men with seminary training, evidently for the consumption of the ignorant. They do not of course explain how a disbeliever could be baptized even if he wanted to, or how he might even be induced to want to. Suppose, for purposes of examination, we concede that Jesus should have said: "He that disbelieveth and is not baptized shall be condemned?" What follows? Well, more follows than the average dupe who apes the objection ever dreamed of. It would follow that the man who believed and refused to be baptized could not be condemned. But that is not the half of it. It would also follow that the man who disbelieved but should be baptized, as though such a thing could be, could not be condemned either, under the conditions of such a test. The most striking thing, however, that follows is that the sectarian critics, in trying to make a fool of Jesus, have succeeded admirably in making fools of themselves. The language of Jesus stands. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Nothing can be done to it that will make it any plainer, and we cannot allow it to be eclipsed by sophistry.

The Key to the Epistle Of Romans

Charles Pogue

From the time I was a boy, I was taught that the key verse in the book of Romans is Romans 1:16. To this day I cannot see any reason to argue differently. That lofty verse says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." In this verse, there is a worthy fact, a wonderful announcement, and a worldwide promise.

The worthy fact declared by Paul was that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Why would anyone be ashamed of the gospel? It is the news that God loved man enough (John 3:16), that He sent His only begotten Son to this world to give His life as a sacrifice for man's sins (1 Cor. 15:3). How could anyone be ashamed of the fact that the Creator loved the creature enough to forgive him of his sins and save him in the last day?

It is a wonderful announcement that a power exists to save man. The gospel is not just a wonderful announcement in that it saves those who believe, but that it really and truly has the **power** to do so. Why would it have that power? Because the One who went to the cross was not only a man—which He was—but He was God in the flesh. God dying for man. Surely one can see the power in that act. As the beautiful old hymn goes, "There is power in the blood." No other man could have done what Jesus did, because no other man was or is without sin. No angel could have done it, because angels do not partake of flesh. But Christ's blood had the power to save because He endured every temptation we all do (Heb. 4:15), yet was without sin. That is the only blood where the

power to save could be found.

The wonderful announcement that there is a power unto salvation, was not an announcement only to God's chosen people of the Old Testament. It is a worldwide promise to a new people. It is a nation of people without borders. It is not confined to one ethnicity, culture, origin, or race. The announcement of a power unto salvation is, as Paul declared, to everyone that believeth, to the Jew and Greek (or Gentile). Jew and Gentile includes everyone. Thus, as Paul did in his day, the Gospel needs to be taken to the whole world in our day.

Romans 1:16, is doubtless the key verse. The rest of the epistle expands on that wonderful news, and what more beautiful summation could there be than Romans 8:1,2? "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." We are thankful to God for the Gospel of which there is no reason to be ashamed, because it saves. It saves all who will believe it and obey the conditions contained therein.

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The Blood Of Christ

Charles L. Heron

"And having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20).

One of the truths that appears on the surface of this reading is that man is away from God. In this passage the apostle does not give any time to telling how man happens to be away from God. There are those among us who either do not know, or do not have respect for the teaching of the Bible and go about teaching that man was born away from God. Although our text does not state how came man away, other passages are clear on the subject. Isaiah tells us that man is away from God, not because he was born away, but, rather because of his sin and iniquities (Isa. 56:1-2). Too, some men are away from God because of the sin of neglect. "...If a man knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17). "...Whatsoever is not of faith is sin..." (Rom. 14:23). According to this last passage, there are not a few who sin, even, in religion. "Faith comes by hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Therefore, whatsoever a man does that is not endorsed by the word of God is sin. So many are sinning while attempting to worship God.

Salvation by Blood

The scheme of human redemption has ever been one of blood. In the very beginning God instructed Cain and Abel concerning the kind of sacrifice, and he specified the shedding of blood. It is true that I cannot cite the passage which tells me that God told them what to offer, but in Heb. 11:4 we are told that Abel offered, by faith, a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Since "faith cometh by the word of God," then, I know God **told** them what to offer, or else it could not have been offered **by faith**. When Israel was delivered out of the slavery of Egypt, blood was used in their deliverance. (Exo. 12:7-13). When Israel was cleansed or healed from their sinning, a bloody sacrifice was offered. The Hebrews writer tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22). Yet those who did appropriate the blood of animals were only ceremonially, and temporarily clean, because it was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (Heb. 10:4).

The Blood of Christ

Since there is no salvation but by blood, and since the blood of animals could not take away sin, it naturally follows that some blood of greater merit must be applied. The blood that now avails is the blood of Christ. Hear Hebrews 9:11-14:

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this

building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained (not temporary, but) eternal redemption for us.

Then salvation is by the blood of Christ.

What That Blood Means to Man

Since “the blood is the life thereof,” it means that Christ was willing to give his life that I might live eternally. It, then, is the purchase price of my salvation. Paul declares in Acts 20:28, that Christ purchased the church with his blood. That, too, is the purchase price of every Christian. Therefore, “Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price” (1 Cor 6:19-20). The blood of Christ is the propitiation for sins (1 John 2:2). It is a satisfactory covering for sins. When God made clothing of skins for Adam and Eve, it was, no doubt, at the cost of the life of some animal. It was by the shedding of blood that their sins were covered. It is by the shedding of the blood of our Savior that our sins are covered today. It is by the blood of Christ that we are redeemed—bought back. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14). And Peter informs us that we are redeemed, not by corruptible things such as silver and gold, “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18-20). The blood of Jesus is that which cleanses us from sin. “If we walk in the light, as he is the light, we have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Our text asserts, too, that we have peace with God through the blood of Christ. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he told them that they who were once afar off from God had been made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13).

Certainly, no man who knows anything about the Bible will deny the saving power of the blood of Christ; to deny that atoning power is to deny the Bible itself!

Appropriating the Blood of Christ

As powerful as the blood of Christ is, it is powerless unless it is applied. So the question naturally arises: Just how does man appropriate that blood? No one would, for one moment argue that the blood was not shed in the death of Christ. When Christ died, the blood then shed atoned for the sins of all humanity. It is necessary, then, that man come in contact with the death of Christ in order to reach the blood. Only New Testament baptism brings one in contact with the death and blood of Christ. Paul says: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3). So, now we can see that New Testament baptism cannot be over emphasized. Its necessity must be more forcefully preached, especially since so many sectarian preachers are minimizing its importance. No man can preach salvation by the blood of Christ, and not preach New Testament baptism. He who does not believe in and preach New Testament baptism is dishonest with himself, and with humanity. But, most of all he is dishonest with God.

Christ Crucified—The Hope Of The World

John C. Whitehead

The Jews require a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:22-23).

Often times we are asked, “What do you preach?” The answer is simple. “We preach Christ crucified.” This lofty theme has ever been the only hope of the world. In the days of the early church it produced a moral revolution. Thrones have vanished and empires have fallen, but the kingdom of Christ endures and is still able to bless those who will believe in Christ crucified, the power and the wisdom of God.

The apostle states, “We preach Christ.” The economic or military condition of the Roman Empire was not a concern of Paul's preaching. He preached Christ. His preaching was the doctrine of a person. Nothing else in its true sense is preaching.

Christ crucified has never been a popular theme. From the days of the apostles to the present, men have been stoned, beaten, persecuted, and killed for preaching a crucified Savior. In Paul's day the Jews required a sign and the Greeks were seeking after wisdom. This same attitude expresses itself in many ways today. There is a greediness for physical cures, people are contenting their souls with creeds, rituals, seances, magnificent buildings, candles, and crucifixes. The supreme tragedy of the whole thing is that people depend on these things for salvation, and there is no saving power in them. Jesus said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." Paul could have satisfied the Greeks who were seeking after wisdom, for he was a scholar. He was unwilling, however, to leave his high task of preaching the gospel for a mere display of man's wisdom. Neither miracles nor wisdom will conquer sin or make us holy. The gospel is God's power to save from sin (Rom. 1:16). With great multitudes, however, the simple gospel is still an unpopular theme; and the "learned scholars," of course, call it foolishness.

God's Hatred of Sin

Through the preaching of Christ crucified we come to better understand God's hatred for sin. There are those who care little or nothing for the authority of God's word in matters of religion, still others who regard sin as a light or frivolous matter. They carelessly remark, "What's the difference a hundred years from now?" or, "It will all come out in the wash." We all need to get a better understanding of Him whose agony over sin brought forth that bloody sweat in Gethsemane. To Him it was no light or easy matter; it was not something to be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders or an airy gesture. We need to see His thorn-crowned brow, and to hear that anguished cry from Golgotha's hill, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Christ is God's eternal heartache for your sins and mine. If any other way could have been found for sin to be removed, we may be sure God would have found it. There was no other. The blood of the sinless Son of God was the only answer—the only solution.

God's Estimate of Man

Through the death of His son, we come to realize not only God's hatred for sin, but also His estimate of man and his possibilities. Of course, none are worthy; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Man was so eternally lost in God's sight that nothing short of the blood of Christ could redeem him. But so sure was God of man's worth that His Son was freely given. "Behold, what manner of love God hath bestowed upon us!" There is no way to explain the cross except in terms of man's eternal ruined and lost condition, and God's estimate of man's ultimate worth. Being aware of man's lost condition, God was also aware of the possibilities of salvation. He sees in the worst of us the possibility of a noble saint. No wonder Paul cried out, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus."

Your Responsibility

What are you going to do with the great salvation that is offered you? The multitudes are still seeking after signs and worshiping at the shrine of wisdom. But throughout the ages there have been countless thousands who have turned their backs on the wisdom of this world, who have refused to follow the popular path. They have obeyed in humble submission that "form of doctrine" delivered unto them; they have been crucified with Christ and raised up from the watery grave of baptism to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-5). They have come to realize that the gospel is God's power to save from sin (Rom. 1:16-17). There is no other power. Christ and him crucified is the only hope for a sinful soul. What is your response to this love of God; how do you react to so noble a truth? Are you willing to turn from sin to the Savior? From selfishness to service? From the wisdom of this world to worship the living and true God? You alone can give the answer. God has made salvation possible; the responsibility of turning that possibility into a reality is yours and yours alone. No one can obey the Lord for you. We may indeed preach "Christ crucified, the power and wisdom of God," but obedience to that Gospel must come from the sinner's own heart.

The Bible and its Critics

N.B. Hardeman

The Bible is either the word of God or it is the work of man. If the latter, it must be reduced to a common level and put on equal terms with books that are the product of human minds. More than that, it must sink to a place below the level of man-made books because, from beginning to end, it claims to be the word of God given by inspiration. It is the only book known to the world that makes such a claim and that has thus far withstood the attacks of all classes of opposition. Books and men are judged by their fruits. The Bible has done nothing but good wherever its influence has been exerted.

The Influence Exerted

It values life, liberty and property as things to be protected and enjoyed. It opposes avarice and greed and oppression in all of their forms. It teaches honor and fidelity in every relation of life. There is not a precept or a line in it that countenances vice and crime but, everywhere and at all times, it sustains the laws and calls for honorable conduct. It commands children to honor and obey their parents; it sanctions marriage and protects the home. It cares for the poor in distress; it honors womanhood and glorifies a good wife and mother. Within the lids of the Bible are found light and instruction for men in their single capacities and likewise for governments in their collective undertakings. A general acceptance of the word of God would usher in a state of personal and social happiness and strength such as the world has never known. Murder, arson, rape, robbery, perjury and every other mortal sin would vanish from the earth if its teachings were followed. It is indeed a monument of truth and wisdom.

It is strange that a book whose influence upon all classes and conditions of men has been good and only good throughout the passing centuries should encounter those who have put forth every effort to destroy its influence and to banish it from the face of the earth. This hatred may be due to the fact that the Bible does not give a glowing picture of the human family and does not suggest that man came into his present condemned estate through no fault of his own, but rather the reverse. It declares that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. It, furthermore, holds men accountable for every act done in this body whether it be good or bad and pictures a judgment when all secrets will be revealed and final rendition of our eternal state delivered.

The Enemies Classed

The enemies of the Bible are numerous. First: the Agnostic—the one who says that he does not know whether there is a God or not. It is rather hard to exercise patience toward a full grown man who has never been able to form an opinion on a matter of this kind. Those who can reach definite conclusions regarding other matters seem wholly unable to form a decision on this subject with evidence overwhelming. They can dig into the old mounds supposedly built by Indians and there find some kind of a relic and from it, they can estimate the civilization of centuries gone by, and yet, they are totally blind to all the handiwork of a Creator. Just how anyone can find pleasure in taking from a human heart a living faith and a hope founded upon it and put in its place a cold and cheerless doctrine of “I do not know” is more than I can understand.

Second: the Atheist, who denies the existence of God and leaves all things as if they were the result of chance. He lives a negative life, denying all evidences that point to the existence of a supreme being. He goes out into a starless night without God and without hope of a life beyond the grave. But this class does little harm because real sober-minded men give but little attention to what they say.

Third: The Higher Destructive Critic, who seeks to remove the light of eternal Truth a little at a time until finally the world is left in total darkness. They are ever looking for some evidence or apparent contradiction that will rob the world of its faith and hope. These men are usually found in our universities and sometimes in our professed religious colleges. They deny the Sonship of Christ and they really believe that He was a bastard. They set aside all the miraculous and whatsoever does not harmonize with their process of reasoning.

The Fundamentals Denied

This kind of a Higher Critic is a close ally of the Evolutionist, which is today, possibly, the greatest menace to the church of our Lord. While many of them claim to have some regard for the Bible and are not brazen enough to deny it in full, they do not hesitate to reject the very foundation of all of our hallowed hopes and holiest desires. Those who teach in our schools supported by taxes imposed upon Christian parents will claim to believe the Bible, but they deny first: the inspiration of God's book; second: the creation of men in the moral likeness of God; third: that man sinned and was lost; fourth: that Jesus was born of a virgin; fifth: that His blood atoned for sin; sixth: that He was raised from the dead; seventh: that He will come again and raise all the dead; eighth: That there will be a general judgment when the faithful will be rewarded and the wicked punished. This type of man would love to destroy the idea of appearing at the judgment seat of Christ.

The Bible, with these fundamentals rejected, is unworthy of serious consideration and offers no hope for a lost, ruined and recreant race. Let men say that the Bible is not true, if they will; that it is not inspired of God; that scholarship has proved it to be only a human, faulty, product made up of fable, legend and untrustworthy history; nevertheless, the Bible still stands as it will ever stand, the one great Book of God for all time, the book that is its own best defense, that can prove to any honest soul its own inspiration, that will not cease to speak for God, that cannot be taken away, that can ever protect the weak, direct the strong, bring joy and sunshine to the sorrowing, true happiness to the living, peace to the dying and light up the grave with the rainbow of hope.

Which Way Shall I Take?

R. Ervin Driskill

This is the question asked by the earnest traveler when he comes to the crossing of the roads. He knows full well that different roads lead to different destinations. And though he possesses the ability to choose a road which others tell him is right, and which he might sincerely believe to be right, such is not a guarantee that he will arrive at his desired destination by traveling the wrong road. So much for the travelers of time.

In the realm of religion there are many good people with honest hearts who come to the cross roads. Denominational churches with their various and contradictory teachings are held up as different ways leading to heaven. Men are told that, "All roads (churches) lead to heaven," and are admonished to join the "church of your choice," and that "one church is as good as another."

Now consider this: Suppose you are traveling to Chicago and should come to a point where a dozen highways crossed each other. Instead of signs being placed there to direct you, the highway department has placed a dozen men there to direct traffic. Upon inquiring which road leads to Chicago, you are told to take the road of your choice. One of these roads is as good as another. They all lead to Chicago! I can imagine what you would think of such advice as that. I'm sure you would soon busy yourself in consulting a road map to find the right road to Chicago.

Just so, why not use the same common sense when you hear preachers and others say, "All the different churches are just different ways leading to heaven, so join the church of your choice?" Why not get your road map—the New Testament—and see whether the Lord has said anything about different ways, different churches, different creeds, and different ways of worship? We have just as much use for a road map that we do not consult on a trip as we have for a Bible that we do not read to direct us in the way of life.

God never intended that we be governed and guided by the wisdom of men in religion. "The world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21) and the ways of men are incompatible with the ways of God (Isa. 55:6-8). "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

Anciently, God said, “I will give them one heart and one way” (Jer. 23:29). Jesus was the fulfillment of that prophecy, for He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6). Now according to this there is just one way, for there is but one Christ. It would be just as reasonable and as scriptural to preach many Christs, as to preach many ways to heaven.

Read your Bible. Believe what it teaches—humbly do what it requires and that will make you a Christian. As such, you will be a member of the only church of which the New Testament speaks—the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47). This will put you in the right way—the way of the Lord—and if you continue faithfully therein unto death you will be saved eternally in heaven.

“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**.

Three Kingdoms

Ralph L. Starling

Three kingdoms are revealed and described more or less in detail in the New Testament.

The Devil's Kingdom

The first is noted in the letter to the Colossians. Paul, speaking of God, says, “Who hath delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love” (Col 1:13). There was some spiritual rule or dominion which Paul called “the power of darkness.” In another place he called it “the darkness of this world.” (Eph. 6:12).

A kingdom is ruled or governed by a head, called a *king*. It is from this that the term *kingdom* comes. If there is a spiritual dominion of an evil nature, it is natural to expect it to have some governing head, or king. Such is the case. This king is spoken of by Jesus when he says, “If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?” (Luke 11:18). It is by Satan, then, that this kingdom of spiritual darkness is governed. It was of this ruler that the Lord further said, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44). With a king of this character, it is not surprising to learn that the kingdom is made up of evil, sin, wickedness of all sorts, degrees, and varieties. It was through Satan that sin entered the earth; it is through him that it is perpetuated.

If we choose, we may become citizens of Satan's kingdom. As a matter of fact vast multitudes are citizens of his kingdom, and have aligned themselves on the side that degrades men rather than builds them up, brings sadness instead of joy, and hate instead of love. We find that:

...the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you, as I have also told you in the past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19).

Christ's Kingdom

In contrast to Satan's kingdom is the kingdom of Christ, also mentioned in the Colossian letter. This “kingdom of the Son of his love” is often referred to in the Gospels as the “kingdom of heaven” but throughout the rest of the New Testament it is usually called simply “the church.” Christ is the Head, or King, and was placed in this position by God Himself. “Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, o God, is forever and forever. A

scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom” (Heb. 1:8). All authority has been given to Christ according to His own statement. (Matt. 28:18-19.) This complete rule is further indicated in the words of Hebrews, “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not under him” (Heb. 2:8).

The nature of Christ's kingdom is the very opposite of that of the kingdom of Satan. “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb. 1:9). The fruit of the Spirit “is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law” (Gal 5:22-23). Satan's kingdom represents all that is evil, while Christ's kingdom represents all that is good.

How to Enter Christ's Kingdom

How may one become a member of this kingdom of Christ? That, too, is clear and easily understood. When a fearful man cried out, “What must I do to be saved?” he was told to “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). The Apostle Peter, in answering this same inquiry, put to him by men who **already believed**, replied, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38). When a penitent believer has confessed his faith in Christ (Rom. 10:10; Matt. 10:32), he is no longer a fit subject for the devil's kingdom, but is ready to take the final and culminating step which will bring him into the kingdom of Christ. That step is baptism. Paul says, “For in one Spirit were ye all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13); and further, “Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (Rom. 6:3).

Having become citizens of the kingdom of Christ, it is our duty as faithful and worthy servants to carry out the instruction given, “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection...” (Heb. 6:1.)

The Eternal Kingdom

The third kingdom referred to in the New Testament is called “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11). It is the same kingdom we have just discussed, except that at the last day the Kingship shall be passed to another—from Christ to God. Christ will no longer rule as King with all authority, but will deliver up,

the kingdom to God, even the Father when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death...And when all things shall be subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-25 28).

Therefore, God shall be all in all, King of the kingdom. Naturally, we all desire to be a part of that eternal kingdom. The way into it is made manifest. If we are faithful citizens and servants in Christ's kingdom on this earth, then we shall be given the “abundant entrance” into the everlasting kingdom. When Peter set forth the Christian virtues, he concluded by saying “Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:10-11).

Thus, we have the three kingdoms before us—that of Satan, of Christ, and the everlasting kingdom of God. It is left to each of us to make a choice as to which kingdom we accept on this earth, whether of Satan or of Christ. But let every man remember that once his choice is made on this earth, by the same token, his choice is made for eternity. Which shall it be?

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**“The Thing That Hath Been...”: The Cycle of Apostasy
Volume 2, Enlarged and Revised**

By Jerry C. Brewer

“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be...and there is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9). Nineteenth century apostasy has come full circle in churches of Christ and this book exposes it for all who will learn the lessons of history.

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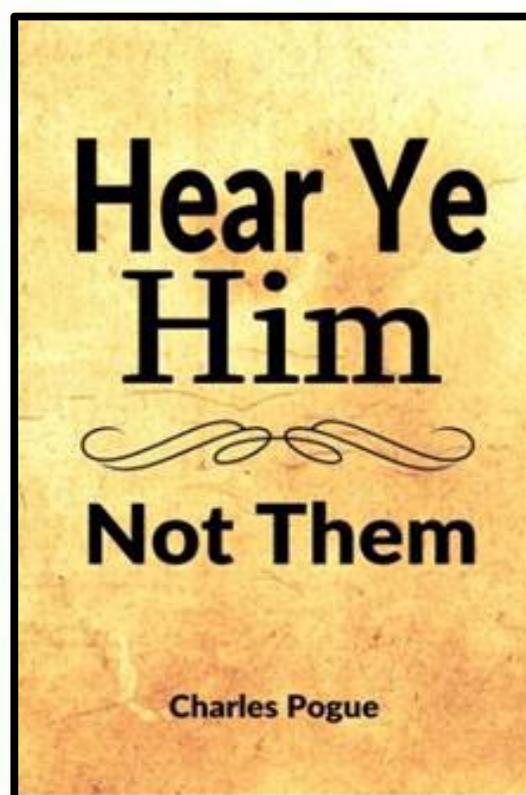
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by Charles Pogue*



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