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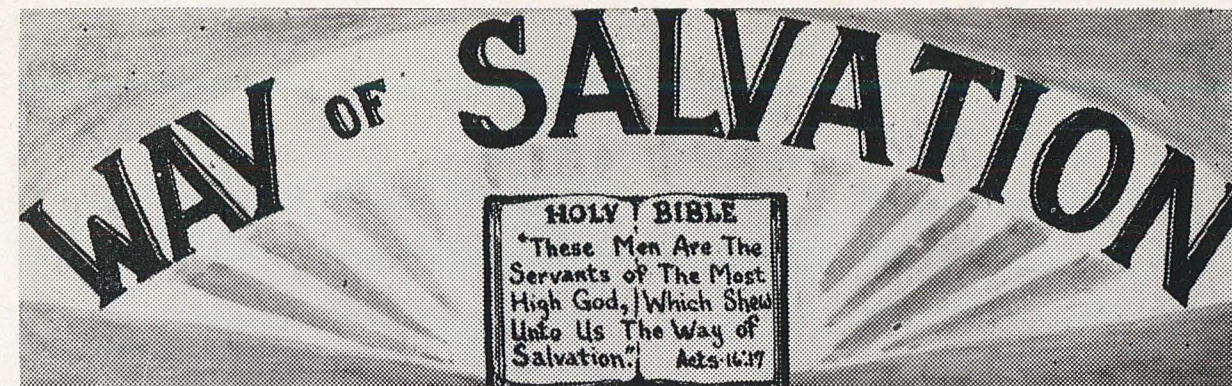
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What Is The Standard?

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

An Apparent Reality

It is a matter of obvious fact that it is not always easy to determine what is right in a given situation. This is true concerning moral, legal, and religious actions.

Some people believe it is right in certain situations to kill, or take human life. Others believe under certain conditions it is right to steal. The foregoing considerations should impress upon us the urgency of studying what should be the standard of determining right and wrong.



Three Wrongs

It is possible for an action to be wrong in either of three ways: *morally, legally, or religiously*. Of course, there may be some overlapping of these things. That is, something may be both religiously and morally wrong, etc.

The Law

The apostle John states the fundamental cause of any wrong action, I Jno. 3:4. In this passage John affirms that sin is the transgression of the law.

It will be observed that any moral wrong is a transgression of a certain moral law or standard.

Any legal wrong is a transgression of a certain civil law.

Every religious wrong is a certain transgression of some religious law.

Might Be Right Morally

It needs to be shown that a certain action might be right morally but wrong religiously.

Drinking buttermilk is right morally. But drinking buttermilk as an element of the Lord's Supper would be religiously wrong because it would be a transgression of what is written in I Cor. 11:23-26; Luke 22:17, 18.

Playing a piano in the home is morally right, but doing the same in Christian worship is religiously wrong, because it is an addition to the type of music authorized in Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16 and other passages.

Reason Cannot Determine

Human reason unaided cannot possibly determine what is either morally, legally, or religiously wrong.

Were it not for God's Revelation, reason would not know it is wrong to murder. I do not believe there is any such thing as moral law that human reason can discover without God. If such were true, cannibals would inherently know it is wrong to take human life. But it is just a matter of fact that they take human life just as readily as they take a rabbit's life.

Every rational person knows that human reason as such cannot determine what is wrong legally. Do we know instinctively when to buy car tags and hunting licenses?

Similarly, every rational person should know that human reason unguided cannot determine what is right religiously. Yet, people glibly say it doesn't matter what one believes religiously just so he is sincere. Isaiah tells us that our thoughts are not God's, Isa. 55:8, 9.

What Is the Standard?

Probably most people would say that the conscience is the supreme standard of right in religion.

However, it is simply a matter of fact that the conscience does not determine what is right. It just approves or disapproves our actions according to what our reason accepts or rejects as right or wrong. Before his conversion Paul the apostle did what his conscience told him was right. However, his actions at that time were wrong, Acts 23:1; 26:9.

The Bible

The only standard for determining what is right is the Bible; for the Bible is an expression of God's nature. Murder, a moral wrong, is wrong because it transgresses Gal. 5:21, etc. Disobeying civil laws is wrong because it transgresses Rom. 13:1. Refusing to be baptized in becoming a Christian is wrong because it transgresses Mark 16:16.

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GOD'S POWER TO SAVE

All agree that God exercises power in the conviction and conversion of every sinner. But there is much controversy in the religious world as to the power used. There are those who teach that God, through the Holy Spirit, operates directly and miraculously upon the heart of the sinner in conversion, apart from the gospel.



PERVIE NICHOLS

The Real Issue

There is no controversy as to whether sinners are converted by the Holy Spirit. Every gospel preacher teaches this fact. If the sinner is converted, it will be through the operation of the Holy Spirit. But the question is: **How does the Holy Spirit operate in conversion?** All agree that He operates. But **HOW DOES HE OPERATE?** This is the real issue.

Gospel Is God's Power

To the Romans Paul declared, "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." (Rom. 1:16). There are those who reject this Scripture; they pray for God to send down saving power, just as though God had no such power on earth. They speak of the gospel as being powerless to bring anyone unto salvation. Although they compass land and sea to preach to sinners, they counter act the power of their own preaching by telling the lost that they cannot obey the gospel without a direct and miraculous enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Such doctrine contradicts Paul's statement that the gospel is God's power to save.

Holy Spirit Uses Gospel-Words

The Holy Spirit operates by means of the gospel in the conversion of sinners. This is the reason the Lord commanded that the "gospel" be preached "to every creature" (Mk. 16:15), to "all nations" (Matt. 28:19). But if the Holy Spirit converts the lost by direct operation, independent of the gospel, why preach the gospel to every creature, or to anyone? Paul did not say that the gospel, plus the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, plus a still small voice, plus dreams and

imaginings, is God's power to save. He said the gospel is "the" power of God unto salvation.

Conversion is a moral change, or process, and is brought about by moral means, not miraculous. The facts, commands, warnings and promises of the gospel are powerful incentives to induce men to turn from sin and live right; the gospel is God's magnet to draw men unto Christ. (Jno. 6:44-45; Rom. 1:16).

The gospel is not the mere words of the writers, but is the message of the Holy Spirit, addressed unto men. The Scriptures are referred to as the words of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:16; 28:25-27; Neh. 9:30; 1 Cor. 2:13; Rev. 2:7). Paul called God's word "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). The gospel was preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." (1 Pet. 1:12). (See also Acts 2:1-47). Whatever the gospel accomplishes, it does by the Holy Spirit, which delivered the word through inspired men. (Jno. 13:13; 14:26; Acts 2). The Spirit guided the apostles "into all truth" as they spoke and wrote the Scriptures of the New Testament, which contains the gospel of Christ. Therefore, the Spirit operates through the word, the "sword of the Spirit."

Gospel in Conversion

1. The Holy Spirit gives faith through means of His word. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17; Jno. 20:30-31).

2. The Spirit begets sinners and brings about the new birth through the word. "Of His own will beget He us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18); "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:23); "For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15).

3. Sinners are saved by the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The Corinthians were saved by the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-6). Cornelius and his household were saved by "words" of the gospel as preached by Peter. (Acts 11:14).

4. People are sanctified by the word, and not by a miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit. "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth." (Jno. 17:17-19).

5. The Holy Spirit tells the sinner what to do to be saved, but His instructions are recorded in the New Testament. (2 Tim. 3:16-18). The commands of the gospel to the alien sinner consists of the following: 1. Believe in Christ (Jno. 8:21-24; Acts 16:30). 2. Repent of all sins (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; 3:19). 3. Confess Jesus to be the Son of God (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:36). 4. Be baptized "into Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:3), "For the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). Those who reject these instructions of the Holy Spirit and expect Him to convict and convert them by some mysterious or miraculous operation will be sadly disappointed in this life and lost eternally.

In every case of conversion in the New Testament the gospel was first preached. (See the book of Acts). Therefore, without the gospel there can be no conversion, no salvation. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21).

THE SIN OF UNBELIEF

By SAM BINKLEY

The Lord Contrasts Belief With Unbelief

In the third chapter of the gospel according to John our Lord draws a contrast between belief and unbelief. In verse eighteen He shows that he that believeth is not condemned, but he that does not believe is condemned already because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And in verse thirty-six He shows the promise of everlasting life to the believer and condemnation to those who believe not the Son: "but the wrath of God abideth in him."

From these statements we would conclude that unbelief is the world's crowning sin, and from the human point of view belief is the fundamental requirement of justification. This position is further sustained by Heb. 12:1; James 2:20-24; and Romans 1:5.

The Lord Provides for Us a Way to Overcome This Sin

When Jesus convinced the woman whom he met at Jacob's well in Samaria that He was the Christ, the promised Messiah, she went and told others. "And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on Him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that ever I did. So when the Samaritans came unto Him, they besought Him to abide with them: and He abode there two days. And many more believed because of His word; and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." (John 4:39-42). Peter said, "Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." (Acts 15:7b). Paul and Barnabas so spake at Iconium that a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed. (Acts 14:1). Of course, we do not have Jesus or His apostles alive here today to speak to us that we might believe, but that does not mean that we are without opportunities to believe.

In Romans 10:17 we learn that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Now study John 20:30-31, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." Therefore, we believe today because of that which is written in the Scriptures which are inspired of God. There is more evidence to cause us to believe than there is to cause us to disbelieve. Will you examine the Scriptures? The evidence you need to produce faith or to increase your faith may be found therein.

Examples of Unbelief

At this point, it may be well for us to consider that one does not have to be an atheist to be guilty of the sin of unbelief at some time in his life. The word that is rendered in the King James Version of the Bible as unbelief is often translated disobedient

in the American Standard Version. Many examples in the Bible will serve to show us the possibility of us being guilty of this sin.

Adam and Eve apparently were guilty of this sin, for had they believed that God would surely punish them as a result of their disobedience, they would not have eaten of the forbidden fruit.

Lot's wife would not have looked back had she believed that God meant for them to depart from the city of Sodom and go into the mountains and not look back.

The children of Israel were guilty of this sin of unbelief as evident from the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews.

Many are they who show their guilt of this sin today by refusing to obey the commands of God, and by doing those things which are contrary to His will.

Punishment of Unbelievers

Moses and Aaron were not permitted to enter the land of promise because of unbelief. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Numbers 20:12). And the Israelites who sinned in the wilderness could not enter that land. "For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3:16-19). Read Hebrews 4:6-11 and see that the example of the Israelites is given to warn us not to fall after the same example of unbelief, but there remaineth a rest to the people of God.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that "without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6). And Jesus said that if we believe not that He is the Christ, we will die in our sins and that where He is there we cannot come. (John 8:21, 24). The kind of faith necessary to the saving of our souls is "faith which worketh by love." (Gal. 5:6). If you have ever entertained any doubts in your mind with respect to the existence of God or of the necessity of obeying His every command, may I urge you to remove those doubts by a careful study of His word and complete obedience to His will and trust in Him to give you that place of rest promised to those who love and obey Him.

—o—
"Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one;
And it will surprise you,
What the Lord hath done."
—o—

A QUESTION

If I really, really trust Him,
Shall I ever fret?
If I really do expect Him,
Can I e'er forget?
If by faith I really see Him,
Shall I doubt His aid?
If I really, really love Him,
Can I be afraid?

—Anonymous

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

Today with many divisions and much confusion, this subject is usually overlooked in the study of faith. Paul said, "Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH." (Rom. 16:25-26). When the Gospel of Christ is preached today to earnest, honest souls, it causes the same Obedience of Faith as did the Bible examples; "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were OBEDIENT TO THE FAITH." (Acts 6:7).

The True Faith

There are hundreds of faiths in the world today that are not found in the Bible which are without approval and are of no value to the salvation of one's soul. . . . Also as Jude pointed out, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints." (Judge 3). The true faith is the Gospel of Christ, which is the New Testament. This is the faith that we should contend for.

Salvation Through Obedience of Faith

To receive the blessings of God an individual must be obedient to the commands of Christ in the Word of God. Paul speaking of Christ said, "And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM." (Heb. 5:9). On the other hand those who refuse to obey the faith will receive eternal condemnation: Paul said, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thes. 1:8). "Obedience to the faith" is an obedience to the Word of God. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom. 10:17). To know how to obey Him, we must search the Word of God diligently, in order to LEARN HOW to be among those "obedient to the faith." The first few chapters of the Book of Acts will help us much to understand how to be "obedient to faith." The apostles though the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit preached the "death, burial and resurrection of Christ" and later put these teachings in writing, which is the New Testament, that we today might have the same opportunity to be saved, "—with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. 5:26). Paul said, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried and that He rose the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Too many people today are trying to be saved by a faith that does not work, a faith in which there is no obedience; a dead faith. Evidently, God expected such teachings to arise, as the inspired James declares, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith

NEW BITS

We have several copies of the June issue of the *Way of Salvation*, which was the special issue dealing with the subject: *How to Find the New Testament Church*. They are priced at \$3.75 per 100. We have received several letters commending that issue. If you can use copies of that issue, please order your copies at once. We'll be glad to bill you later.

TRACT PRINTED

The material in the June issue on HOW TO FIND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH is being printed in tract form. This tract could be used effectively in personal work. It is written primarily to instruct the average person, who knows little or nothing about the Church of Christ. This booklet will contain 24 pages. Its overall size 3½ inches by 6 inches. The price will be about \$5.00 per 100.

Free sample copies of tracts and papers will be sent upon request.

IS THERE REALLY A CHRIST?

Is it true . . . do we believe it?
Was there a babe in Bethlehem,
Who came to be the King of Israel
And to rescue fallen men?

Did He walk upon the water?
Did He bear His cross in grief?
After feeding many thousands,
Was He murdered with a thief?

Yes it's true but we don't prove it
By our conduct here each day.
We act as if it might have happened,
Or it might have been some other way.

He has brought us all salvation
If we His requirements fill.
It is not to a few that's chosen
But it is who-so-ever will.

So let us all now reconsider.
Let's keep praying as we go.
We can make our own way brighter
While we the way to others show.

Now let's read it, tell it, teach it,
Let us live it on our way.
Yes, proclaim it, talk it, preach it,
Till the last eternal day.

—Alden E. Hanna

save him?" (James 2:14). "Even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:14). "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY." (James 2:4). In the wonderful chapter on faith, Hebrews 11, where a list of heroes of faith are recorded, notice the accomplishments and triumphs of faith and see that in every case from righteous Abel on down that faith brought the blessing only when the individual responded in OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD. Therefore, trust no longer in a dead faith. Move by faith in OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE WILL.

RELICS OF THE LAW

By GUS NICHOLS

It seems difficult for some people to give up all of those things which characterized the old law, not found in the new covenant under which we live. They seem not to know that the old law ended at the cross, and that the New Testament went in force after the death of Christ. (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:14-16; 2 Cor. 3:6-14; Rom. 7:4-6, 6:14). In the days of the apostles there was no little trouble over the fact that many wanted to bring Judaism and bind it with Christianity upon people (not under the law) but under grace.

Circumcision of the Law

There were those who wanted to bind circumcision upon Christians. (Acts 15:1-24). Such was not required in the New Testament. Literal circumcision of the old covenant gave way to the spiritual circumcision under the new. Circumcision does not mean a thing under the new. (Gal. 5:6). In fact, it would be sinful to practice it now as an act of religion. (Gal. 5:1-5). It was a relic of the old law some wanted to bring over and bind upon Christians. But it must be left behind in the old covenant, where God left it when He gave us the new.

Sabbath Keeping

The Sabbath of the law was the "Seventh day of the week," the day corresponding to our Saturday. (Ex. 20:10; Deut. 5:14). When the law was nailed to the cross of Christ and taken away, the Sabbath ended with it, and no man can now demand us to keep the Sabbath. (Col. 2:14-17). We now have a new day, "The Lord's Day," or "The first day of the week," commonly called "Sunday," upon which to worship together, as Christians. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 2:42; Rev. 1:10). Under the new covenant, no one is authorized to keep the seventh day of the week holy. Those who teach Sabbath keeping now are simply clinging to an old relic of the law that has been abolished. (Col. 2:14-17).

Plurality of Wives

Polygamy has been brought over from the old covenant by some few people. But it is nothing but a relic of the law, and was never authorized, but only permitted, or tolerated, in a few instances under the old law, but is not to be found under the new covenant. (Mat. 19:1-9; Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 7:39; Rom. 7:1-4). It is absurd to quote the Old Testament as authority now for having a plurality of wives, when the old covenant itself is abolished (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:4).

Burning Incense

Likewise, the burning of incense in worship now is a relic of the old law, which some have gone back and brought over into Christianity. But they pervert the word of God when they thus use such an item in Christian worship. No apostle ever taught, or practiced such, and they were guided by the Holy Spirit "Into all truth." (Jn. 16:13; 14:26). It is a relic of

the law which some are trying to tack to the New Testament worship. Such additions are nothing but the commandments of men. We are under the New Testament, and not under the old. (Heb. 8:5-13; Heb. 9:15-17; 10:9-10).

Priesthood and Robes

Under Christ and the New Testament every Christian is a priest and is to offer his own worship to God. (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:5-6; Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 13:15). The papal priesthood is without New Testament authority. Those who now strut around in the robes of an Aaronic priesthood are going back to the law, and are fallen from grace, and are debtors to do the whole law. (Gal. 5:1-5). Robed priests have no authority in the New Testament, for it actually forbids one to call any man on earth "Father" in a religious sense. (Mat. 23:9). Robed choirs are also without the sanction of New Testament authority.

Instrumental Music in Worship

Instrumental music in worship is not authorized in the New Testament. There is no command to use it in our worship. And there is no approved example of its use in New Testament worship. Neither is there any necessary inference for its use. It is a relic of the law which no church used in its worship before about the Seventh Century of the Christian era. At first the various denominational churches opposed it. Calvin, Spurgeon, Wesley, and many others were conscientiously opposed to such music "IN WORSHIP." Adam Clark, the great commentator, likewise opposed such perversion of music. To quote the Old Testament as authority for such music now, when it is not authorized in the New Testament, under which we live, is to try to prove something is binding in the covenant which is not in that covenant at all. Such music "IN WORSHIP" is at best a relic of the law which many are bringing over and binding upon Christians, just as has been done by others with the other relics of the law discussed herein. Let us go back to the New Testament. Let us not detour around the New Testament and go on back to the law that is abolished for our authority in matters of religion. (Gal. 5:1-5; Rom. 6:14-15). We are under Christ, not under Moses. (Jn. 1:17).

SELF-DENYING LOVE

He might have reared a palace at a word,
He who sometimes had no where to lay His dead;
Time was when He who nourished crowds with bread
Would not one meal unto Himself afford.
Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
Were at His beck, the scorned and buffeted;
He healed another's scratch, His own side bled—
Side, feet, and hands with cruel piercings gored.
Oh, wonderful the wonders left undone!
And scarce less wonderful than those He wrought;
Oh, self-restraint, passing all human thought,
To have all power, and be as having none
Oh, self-denying love, which felt alone
For needs of others, never for its own!

—Selected

You Owe It to Yourself to Obey The Gospel

By TOM ESTES

By this phrase "obey the gospel" we mean to become a Christian. This is a Scriptural phrase found in II Thess. 1:7-9, "... taking vengeance on them that know not God and OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL..." What is the gospel? It is the "good news" of the Bible to a world lost in sin and includes facts to be believed (I Cor. 15:1-4, among these facts being the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, commands to be obeyed (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9), and promises to be enjoyed (Rev. 22:14).

If we would think for a few minutes on what it will mean to be eternally lost, we would readily lay aside all prejudices and stubborn wills to gladly accept God through His Word. In the world today it is difficult to know what God wants you to do, unless you study your Bible carefully, because many are preaching "another gospel which is not another" (Gal. 1:6-7), i.e., they have not an entirely new gospel, but have perverted the original. They have not (in the main) denied the "facts to be believed" nor have they changed the "promises to be enjoyed," but they have substituted and omitted requirements of God from the "commands to be obeyed." If in our doctrine and life we take away from these commands to be obeyed, we will necessarily take away our part from the promises to be enjoyed, cf. Rev. 22:19, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy (referring especially to the book of Revelation, but applicable to the whole Bible) God shall take away His part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book."

The Bible teaches that it takes all the following things to put one into Christ where he can have the forgiveness of sins by the blood: 1) FAITH in God and Christ, Heb. 11:6; John 8:24. 2) REPENTANCE of past sins, Acts 17:30. 3) CONFESSION of faith in Christ, Rom. 10:10. 4) BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27. Note: Baptism for any other purpose fails to qualify as baptism unto Christ. Acts 19:1-5.

When you obey this gospel of Jesus, you become simply a Christian, and are in full fellowship with all who are Christians only. You cannot afford to separate yourself from the unity and fellowship with all who are Christians only by becoming a member of a man-made religious organization, for this disregards the Lord's prayer (John 17:21, "That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.") This also disregards Paul's command (I Cor. 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.")

As a New Testament Christian, you should worship God with other New Testament Christians, rendering the same worship every first day of the week that the church rendered under the guidance of inspired apostles, namely, singing, teaching, praying, giving, and eating of the Lord's Supper.

"REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD DILIGENTLY STUDY THE BIBLE"

1. TO BE PLEASING TO GOD, we must study our Bible. Not haphazardly, or hop and skip, but regularly. (2 Tim. 2:15)—"Study to show thyself approved unto God. . . ."
2. We must study so as not to be embarrassed or ASHAMED in a religious discussion. Have you ever been embarrassed when you could not defend what you believed? (2 Tim. 2:15). "... a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. . . ."
3. We must study to know how to rightly DIVIDE the word of truth. Do you know how to divide the Bible as to its proper divisions? So you know enough about the Bible to explain the "so-called" contradictions? (2 Tim. 2:15) "... rightly dividing the truth."
4. You should study that you might not be carried about by every wind of doctrine and new thing. (Eph. 4:15) "... be no more children—carried about with every wind of doctrine. . . ."
5. We must study to gain and possess a greater knowledge of the eternal truth of God. (2 Pet. 3:18) "But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."
6. We must study that we may not sin, gaining knowledge of what not to do. (1 Jn. 2:1) "My little children, these things write unto you, that ye sin not. . . ."
7. You must study to gain that abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. (2 Pet. 1:10) "... for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: v. 11, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom." 2 Pet. 1:5) "... and to virtue knowledge. . . ."

—C. Caudle

ATTENTION
SEND
THE WAY OF SALVATION
TO A FRIEND AND HELP TEACH HIM
THE TRUTH

Yes, you owe it to yourself to obey the gospel, especially in view that the Bible teaches you are lost without it; and especially considering the fact that God and Jesus want so much for you to be saved. (II Pet. 3:9; Rom. 5:6-8). The reasons for your not having obeyed the gospel before now may be many: some relative may have been overbearing; some preacher, insulting; some professed Christian, a hypocrite, etc., but this doesn't excuse you for not doing what you know to be right, for the Lord shall come "taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

FROM HEAVEN OR OF MEN?

When Jesus asked the chief priests and elders the question, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?" He taught the importance of considering the origin, authority, and source of things. To enter into and practice things religiously without considering these things leads to destruction (Matt. 15:9-13; 7:22-23). We learn whether a thing is "from heaven or of men" by looking to the New Testament, for Christ speaks through His word and God has spoken unto us by His Son (Heb. 1:1-2). This important question, then, should be raised concerning all religious matters. Let us so consider it.

The Church You Are a Member of—Is It From Heaven or of Men?

Can you read about it in the Bible? It matters not how honest and sincere you may be, if you cannot read about it in the Bible, then it must be of men. Jesus said in Matt. 16:18, "And upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now, did Jesus build all the churches that exist in the world today, or did they originate with men? If Jesus built them all, then He contradicts His own teaching about a house being divided against itself. If He is the builder of them all, then He built some to deny what He built others to teach.

Jesus only promised to build one church. In Col. 1:18, we are told that the church is the body, and in Eph. 4:4, Paul says there is "one body." Now, what was this one body or church called in the New Testament? Paul says to the Ephesian Elders—"Feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28). He addressed a letter to the church at Corinth in this way—"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth." (1 Cor. 1:2). In closing his letter to the Romans he said—"The churches of Christ salute you." (Rom. 16:16). Here, he was not referring to a number of churches of different faiths, but to a number of local congregations of the same faith—of the "one body."

The Name You Wear Religiously — Is It From Heaven or of Men?

The name people wear religiously is important, even though some do say there is nothing in a name. In Isa. 62:1-2, we find this prophecy, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." After the conversion of Cornelius and his household, who were Gentiles (Acts 10), we are not surprised then to read in Acts 11:26 "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." The Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 4:16, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf"—(in this name R.V.). Since Peter says this is the name in which God is to be glorified, then we should wear it and no other. Now, from whence came your religious name? From heaven or of men? Following men and wearing human names had its origin at Corinth, but

was quickly put down by Paul. "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; I am of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Friends, we urge you to investigate the Origin, Authority, and source of your religious affiliations and activities. Honestly ask yourself the question—Are these things from heaven or of men? It does make a difference.

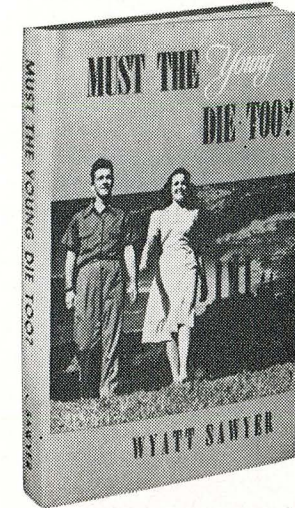
o
" If you were busy being kind,
Before you knew it, you would find
You'd soon forget to think 'twas true
That someone was unkind to you."

LIFE

o
Forenoon and afternoon and night—
And day is gone—
So short a span of time there is
'Twixt dawn and evensong.
Young-middle age-old age—
And life is past—
So live each day that God shall say,
" Well done! " at last.

—Edward Rowland Sill

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