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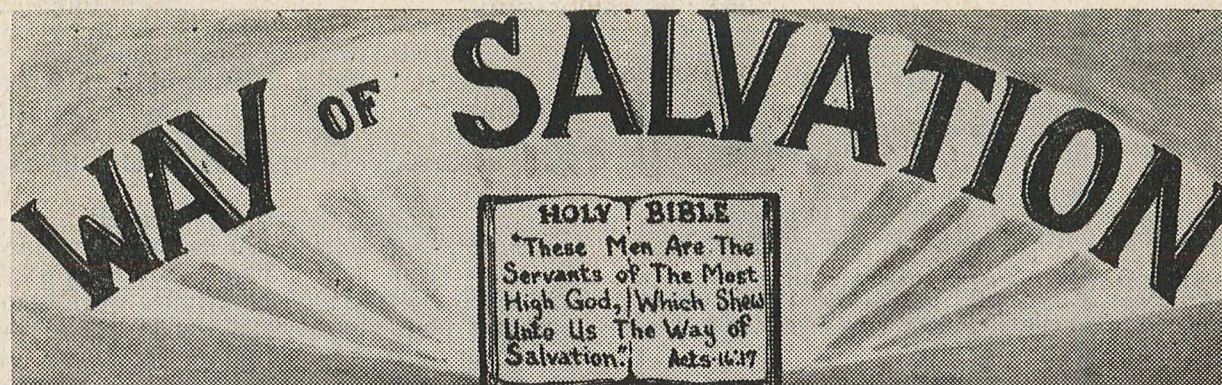
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The Relationship Between and Purpose of the Old and New Testaments

By BILL CREWS

Everyone who begins a study of the Bible immediately learns that there are two grand division of God's word: the Old Testament and the New Testament. If he continues this study, he will learn why there are two Testaments, what relationship they bear to one another, and the purposes of each. To fail to learn these is to pave the way for misunderstanding and confusion. Let us note:

Some Names and Terms Applied to the Two Testaments

The Old Testament is also referred to as the old or "first covenant" (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:7); "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms" (Luke 24:44); "the law and the prophets" (Matt. 5:17; 22:44) and sometimes as simply "the law" (Matt. 5:18; John 10:34). The New Testament is referred to in like manner as "the new covenant" (Jer. 31:31; 2 Cor. 3:6); "the second" covenant (Heb. 8:7; 10:9); "a better covenant" (Heb. 8:6); "the gospel" of Christ (Mark 16:15; Col. 1:23) and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2).

To Whom the Old Covenant Was Given

It was made with Israel (the Jews) after God through Moses led them out of Egyptian bondage. Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:1-3; Jeremiah 31:31-32; Romans 3:1-2. The Jews were expected to serve God under this covenant without either adding to or taking from. Deut. 4:1-2.

Why the Old Covenant Was Made

It was given in order to point out sin, and thus make the people conscious of their sinfulness. Gal. 3:19; Rom. 3:20; 7:7. Being conscious of their sins, the people would long for a savior to relieve their burden; therefore, the old covenant was given also to lead the way to the Christ who was to come. Gal. 3:24. Through the old covenant God preserved unto Himself a people through whom He sent the Christ. John 4:22. (Christ was a Jew according to the flesh.)

The Duration of the Old Covenant

When God made the first covenant with the Jews, His chosen people, how long did He intend for that

covenant to be binding? The answer: Until the promised seed, who was Christ, should come. Gal. 3:19, 16. God purposed that the old covenant should be binding as His law until its prophecies and promises were fulfilled in and by Christ. Matt. 5:18-18. Jeremiah 31:31-34 declares that God would make a new covenant with His people.

The Removal of the Old Covenant as God's Law For His People

Read Gal. 3:24-25. The old covenant is referred to as a tutor or schoolmaster, and it is said that we are no longer under it. Read Col. 2:13-14. It is called the "bond written in ordinances" which was "blotted out," "taken away," "nailed to the cross" by Christ. Read Eph. 2:14-16. As the "middle wall of partition" (separating Jew and Gentile), it was broken down; as "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," it was abolished in the death of Christ. Read also 2 Cor. 3:7-14.

The Grand Fact That We Are Under the New Covenant or Testament

Read Heb. 10:9; 7:22; 8:6. Read of the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews 8:7-12. Since the priesthood was changed from the Levitical to that of Christ, the law was also changed. Heb. 7:12. This New Testament was made binding by the death of Christ. Heb. 9:16-17. The new covenant is the covenant that God now makes through Christ with all, both Jew and Gentile, who will serve Him. It is perfect (James 1:25); it contains all that the servant of God needs by which to serve his maker. To turn elsewhere, even to the old covenant, in an effort to find Divine approval for religious doctrine and practice not authorized in this perfect covenant is vain.

The Purpose the Old Covenant Now Serves

There is much for us to glean from the examples and lessons revealed therein. 1 Cor. 10:1-11. It was written for our learning. Rom. 15:4. It would be virtually impossible for one to truly appreciate the new covenant without the history and unfolding prophecies of the old covenant. It does not, however, tell us how to become a Christian and how to worship and serve God through Christ, for such was never its purpose.

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"KEYS OF THE KINGDOM"

An "interested reader" asks, "What is the meaning of 'the keys of the kingdom' in Matt. 16:19?"

After promising to build His church, Christ then said to Peter: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whomsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

"The keys" is a figure of speech, as may be readily seen from a study of the following scriptures: Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7; Lk. 11:52; Rev. 1:18, 9:1, 20:1. Hence, "keys of the kingdom" is another way of saying, "I will give unto thee the terms of admitting people into the church or kingdom." The plurality of "keys" has no particular significance other than it represents the power to admit into the kingdom or church.



PERVIE NICHOLS

Keys Used on Pentecost

On the day of Pentecost, Peter, with authority, announced to the Jewish people present the terms of admission into the church (Acts 2). He preached Christ unto them, and when these believers desired to know what to do to be freed from sin, he told them to "repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:37-38). Here Peter was using the "keys"—binding the terms of admittance—when he told them how to be saved and enter the church, which is the kingdom. All who complied with the terms stated by Peter were admitted into the kingdom or church. (Acts 2:38-47).

Used to Admit the Gentiles

Peter also announced first the terms of admission of the Gentiles into the church. (Acts 10). He used the same "keys," or stated the same terms of entrance when he preached to the Gentiles as on the day of Pentecost. What Peter told those Jews on Pentecost to do to be saved and enter the kingdom or church also applied to the Gentiles. Hence, the same terms were announced to both classes.

Same Terms or Conditions Now

The same terms or conditions of entrance into the kingdom that were bound upon those in the first century are also binding upon us. The same keys used to admit them must also be used to admit people now.

Must Follow Key-Keeper

Since salvation is in Christ and His church or kingdom (Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:10; Eph. 5:23-26), and since the terms of admittance were issued by one who had "the keys of the kingdom" — the power or authority to state the terms of entrance—all who desire to be saved and enter the kingdom must follow the key-keeper.

When Peter used the "keys" on Pentecost, about three thousand complied with the terms of entrance stated by him. (Acts 2). They accepted the instructions of one who had the keys of the kingdom. When the gospel plan of salvation is preached now the "keys of the kingdom" are used—the terms of entrance are stated by the gospel preacher, one who has the authority to preach the truth, to set forth the plan of salvation and terms of entrance into the kingdom or church, as taught by Peter and others in the first century.

There are those who claim to state the terms or conditions of entrance into the kingdom, but in reality they are "blind guides," false teachers and deceivers. Instead of guiding people into the kingdom of Christ they lead them into some denomination. They conclude that the terms of entrance announced by the key-keeper (Acts 2 and 10) are unimportant, that one does not have to comply with the conditions of entrance to get into the kingdom or church.

When Peter told believing enquirers on the day of Pentecost to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), about three thousand "gladly received his word" and were baptized. (Acts. 2:41). They did not scoff at these terms, and ridicule baptism as essential to salvation. They realized that these terms stood between them and entrance into the kingdom, hence, they gladly followed the instructions of the key-keeper.

When one teaches that repentance or baptism is not essential to salvation or entrance into the kingdom or church, be assured that he is not using the same keys Peter and other inspired men used. Such teachers lead people away from the kingdom of our Lord rather than into it. To follow such people is to reject the gospel of Christ.

TRACT PRINTED

The material in the June issue on HOW TO FIND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH has been 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 contains 24 pages. Its overall size 3½ inches by 6 inches. The price \$5.00 per 100.

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

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?

Permit me to take this opportunity to ask you to consider a very vital question. You may be tempted to throw this away, but I hope that your sincerity and your intention to face life squarely will persuade you otherwise.

In everyone's life there comes a time when he separates himself from God through disobedience just as man did in Eden, for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Whether your sin has been great or small, you in common with all men need salvation. You may say in all sincerity that you have Christ, that you go to church, and that you are good to your neighbor. But are you SURE you are a CHRISTIAN?

You know that there are counterfeits of almost all valuable things. A counterfeit bill has so many characteristics of the genuine that many of us cannot tell the difference. The size, dates, color, texture and markings seem all to coincide. In merchandise and even friendships counterfeits are to be found. The greatest counterfeiter of all — the devil — has brought into the world many counterfeit religions to confuse men and to lead them away from God. In Matt. 15:9 it says, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." We must worship God "in spirit and in truth."

If you are a member of any lodge or fraternal order you know that to become a member one has to go through an initiation. To remain a member he must keep its laws. To become a soldier a man must take the pledge of allegiance and be inducted into an army. To become a wife, a woman must go through the marriage ceremony. She has no right to take the man's name until she has complied with this requirement of the law. When she is married to him she has no right to wear the name of anyone but her husband.

The application is clear. A man has no right to call himself a Christian until he has been properly initiated into the fraternity of which Christ is head—the church. He cannot call himself a soldier in the army of Jesus until he has surrendered his life to Him, willingly giving it in the service of Christ, just as Christ was first willing to die for us. We cannot be married to Christ without going through the ceremony. The church is the bride of Christ and wears His name and ONLY His name. We have not the right to call ourselves members of Christ's church or to wear His name as Christians unless we have been properly married to Him, as a bride becomes the possession of her husband, so we become Christ's possession.

The initiation into the Divine fraternity, the submitting to the authority of Christ to become a soldier of His spiritual army, and becoming a member of that body which is the bride of Christ are illustrations of what is embraced in our obedience to the gospel.

The gospel is the good news of Christ's coming to die for us, the just for the unjust, that He was buried, and rose again being exalted to sit at God's right hand; that He will come and receive His own.

We must obey the gospel for Christ will come taking vengeance on them who obey it not (2 Thess. 1:8). The gospel facts we can believe, but they cannot be obeyed. Only commands can be obeyed. Hence, the gospel contains commandments. We are commanded to repent (Acts 2:38; 2 Peter 3:9). We are

to confess Christ (Rom. 10:10). We are commanded to be baptized. See Acts 10:48, also Acts 2:38 and Gal. 3:27.

This is the initiation into the fraternity where Jesus Christ is our elder Brother. Have you been initiated into this relationship? Have you thus become a Christian? Have you observed this ceremony according to the word of God? It is only by being able to answer "yes," honestly and truthfully, to these questions that you can say with a confidence born of the word of God, I AM A CHRISTIAN.

—Apostolic Times

News Bits

MEETINGS: Pete H. Hoge of Ashville, Alabama, sends the following announcement: "Our fall meeting, with Brother William B. Murrell preaching, will be held October 1 through 7. Services will be at 7:30 each evening. Brother Murrell has done a splendid job since moving to Willow Branch in Jacksonville, Florida, on December 1, 1955, and did a fine work here for about two years before that. We look forward to a good meeting."


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FOLLOWING HUMAN CREEDS

By THOMAS J. WAGNER

The term creeds means, what one believes. Every one, therefore, has a creed, for every one has some conception concerning matters religious. There are only two sources from which creeds can come; namely, from the mind of man and from the mind of God. Hence it is inevitable that man is either following a human creed or the divine one, depending upon the source from which the doctrine or system of religion comes.

There are many human creeds but only one divine creed. Following a human creed makes and keeps one a member of a human institution, or denomination. Following the divine creed makes and keeps one a member of the church of Christ, a divine institution. It is impossible to become a member of the church of Christ by following some human creed; and it is likewise impossible to become a member of a human institution by following the divine creed, which is the Gospel of Christ.

In Luke 8:11 Jesus tells that the seed of the kingdom is the word of God. The kingdom of God, or kingdom of heaven, is the church. The seed of the kingdom is incorruptible (1 Peter 1:23). It is one of God's immutable laws of nature that all seed shall produce after its kind. It is as true in the spiritual realm as in the physical.

We Cannot Go to Heaven Without a Divine Guide

Jeremiah says: "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps." For one to try to chart his own course through life and expect to reach the port of heaven is even more absurd than for a sailor to attempt to cross the mighty Atlantic with no instruments to guide him, and depending upon his feelings, or his knowledge of the stars, to direct him safely to a foreign port. God's divine chart will direct our course unerringly if we follow it implicitly. It is a perfect guide. It has always been sufficient to meet our every spiritual need, and will ever do the same, for it is the perfect law of liberty. (Jas. 1:27).

God's Measuring Reed

In Revelation 11:1, 2 is recorded a statement that will add to the force of the foregoing. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar and them that worship therein." This was a measuring standard established by the God of heaven. No man was able to produce such a standard of measurement.

Following this divine guide we find churches of Christ set in order throughout the country, each congregation being independent of others, with its elders and deacons to guide and feed the flock of God. No confederation of congregations can be formed into district, state, or national organizations so long as the divine creed is followed. To learn how to become a Methodist, Baptist, or Congregationalist, one must consult the human creed that is written by and for these religious groups. Since the divine law says nothing about either of them, it follows that one cannot become a member of either of them, if he follows the New Testament alone. It seems to me that this fact alone ought to convince one that denominationalism is wrong.

Certainly we all want to go to heaven, but since there is just one law to guide us, there is only one

SERMON OUTLINE

A NEW CREATURE

By PERVIE NICHOLS

Introduction:

1. To become a Christian—to be saved—one must become a new creature. (2 Cor. 5:17).
2. To be a new creature (new creation) one must be in Christ. (Col. 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:17).
3. To get into Christ one must obey the following commands:
 - (a) Believe in Christ (Rom. 10:9; 2 Cor. 5:21).
 - (b) Repent of all sins (Acts 3:19; 17:30).
 - (c) Confess or acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God. (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:36).
 - (d) Be baptized "into" Christ. (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; Rom. 6:3-5).
4. When one obeys those commands he is then a new creature, but not before.

Discussion:

- A. Consider some new things about this new creature.
 - (1) *He has a new life.* He has put off the sinful life and put on a new life. (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:8-10).
 - (2) *He is in a new kingdom.*
 - (a) This kingdom established in A.D. 33. (Acts 2).
 - (b) Christ is his king; Christ is now reigning. (1 Cor. 15).
 - (c) Not a worldly kingdom (Jno. 18:36), but a "holy nation." (1 Pet. 2:9).
 - (d) All new creatures have been translated into kingdom. (Col. 1:13).
 3. *He is under a new law.*
 - (a) Old Testament law—law of Moses abolished at cross. (Eph. 2:14; Cor. 2).
 - (b) The New Testament—law of Christ now in force. (Heb. 9:15; 10:9).
 4. *He has a new name.*
 - (a) (Isa. 6:2, 56:5).
 - (b) "Christian" the new name. (Acts. 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16—R.V.).
 - (c) All new creatures to wear this new name.
 5. *He is given a new service.*
 - (a) Once served sin. Now servants of righteousness. (Rom. 6:16).
 - (b) This service requires:
 - (1) Energetic service. (Rom. 12:11).
 - (2) Efficient service. (1 Cor. 14:12).
 - (3) Continual service. (Acts 2:42).

Conclusion:

- B. Are you a new creature. If not, you are urged to comply with the conditions of pardon and be saved today.

way to be saved. When I follow that divine creed and obey the gospel of Christ, the Lord will add me to the church that He purchased by His blood. Every one else who does the same, will be added by the same Lord to the same church. It is impossible for denominationalism to exist where the New Testament alone is followed.

Human creeds have always been the bone of contention in religion. The religious world would be vastly better off if every creed of man were destroyed and could not be reproduced. Back to the Bible is our slogan. The most progressive age of the church was when the Bible alone was the guide in religion.

IS MAN BORN WITH A CORRUPT NATURE?

Barry L. Anderson, Florence, Ala.

We are discussing in this article what is sometimes known as hereditary total depravity. This doctrine affirms that man is born with a totally corrupt nature inherited ultimately from Adam through his foreparents. The Westminster Confession of Faith (Presbyterian), speaking of Adam and Eve, puts it this way: "By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation."

According to this doctrine every act of the unsaved man is sin. Ben M. Bogard, Missionary Baptist preacher, put it in these words: "The best thing you ever do before you are saved is sin. If you pay your debts, it is sin. If you do not pay your debts it is a worse sin. If you provide for your family, it is sin; if you do not provide for your family it is a worse sin. If you eat, it is sin." (Total Depravity, pg. 4.)

This doctrine is responsible for and the information of a host of false doctrines and practices, though many people in the religious world do not know it and many preachers do not admit the connection. I can think of twelve such doctrines and practices and there may be more. For instance, the idea that God must work a miracle upon the sinner's heart to regenerate him, and that the totally depraved sinner is passive in the hands of divine omnipotence, is a sample. The prevalent opposition to baptism for the remission of sins stems from the assumption that man is wholly inclined to evil works — he cannot do good works — and baptism is a good work, therefore, the unregenerate man cannot perform it.

It is a good work done by the child of God, one who has had the corrupt nature removed by a direct work of grace. This is fallacious, because baptism is not to be classed as a good work to be done by the child of God. All such must be done over and over but baptism is only performed once. And even if we should call it a work it is not one of merit. Furthermore the unregenerate man, as we shall show, is not wholly inclined to evil — he can do some good things, and if so he can certainly submit to baptism when properly taught.

It is contended that the expression "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), proves that man is by nature a sinner, or it is natural for man to sin. However, that this is not so will be seen from considering Rom. 1:26, 27. Paul here teaches that when these Gentiles changed "the natural use into that which is against nature" they sinned. What is natural is right but what is unnatural is wrong. Then in verse 31 Paul describes these Gentiles as being without "natural affection." If it is natural for man to sin why did Paul condemn them for doing what was right!? It is natural and right for a mother to love her children, but is unnatural and wrong for her not to love them. Every natural desire and emotion

of the human constitution is right of itself. Only when it is abused or misused does it become sinful. We challenge the inherent depravity advocates to find an exception to this rule.

In Rom. 2:14 Paul again says the Gentiles "do by nature the things contained in the law." In Rom. 7:12 he says the law is holy, just and good. Hence the Gentiles did BY NATURE what is holy, just and good! Jesus speaks of unsaved people having "honest and good hearts." (Lk. 8:15) How could this be if when they were born they were born totally corrupt? But what does Paul mean (Eph. 2:3) by the expression "by nature children of wrath?" The expressions, "walked according to the course of this world" (vs. 2), and "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (vs. 3), help us to understand that "by nature" means by pursuing a sinful course of life. Or by becoming accustomed to veiling to evil desires. Or we might say sinning became "second nature" with them.

But someone says, "Don't we sin because of our nature?" Yes, because of human nature, but not corrupt nature. What caused Adam to sin? Was it corrupt nature? If so, it must have come from God, since the Devil had nothing to do with creating him. God made Adam in His own image. Is God's image corrupt in nature? Perish the thought!

But it is said that David said he was born in sin in Ps. 51:1. "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. (R.V.) One or two questions will readily show this passage has nothing in it for the inherent depravity idea. Through whom is sin transmitted, father or mother? If you say father, Ps. 51:1 is the wrong passage; it says "mother." If you say mother, what will we do about Jesus? He had a fleshly mother. Did he inherit a corrupt nature from her? Or are we going to accept the Catholic idea of Immaculate Conception, or freedom of Mary from original sin? It would be foolish to try to cover up the contradictions of one false doctrine by inventing another as our Catholic friends have done. No, friends, David was conceived in sin but sin was not conceived IN HIM! To be "brought forth in iniquity" is tantamount to saying he was born in a world filled with sin. My children were born in a hospital, but they were not born with a hospital in them! People are said to be born "in a tongue" or language. (Acts 2:8) This means, not that they were born talking, but born where a certain language is spoken.

In Ezk. 28:15 we read, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." This was spoken of the king of Tyre. It flatly contradicts the inherent depravity doctrine. It proves that there is a period of time, from one's creation (conception, birth) till acts of sin are committed, during which man is perfect in his ways. This is the period of infancy and early childhood. The doctrines of original sin says that when the little infant cries, or fusses, or kicks, that such is indicative of a corrupt nature. Ezek. 28:15 plainly teaches to the contrary. I John 3:4 says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." Little children do not transgress of God's law, hence are not guilty of sin.

(Continued on Page Four)

ACTS 2 and RELIGIOUS ERRORS

By E. V. SRYGLEY

Refutes Error

The second chapter of Acts is one of the most notable of all the Bible. In this great chapter one finds prophecy becoming reality, as Isa. 2:2, 3; Dan. 2:44; and Joel 2:28-32 find their fulfillment in the events of Acts 2.

Acts 2 also adequately refutes several common religious errors. To this refutation the reader's attention is directed in this article.

Premillennialism

Acts 2 refutes the premillennial, or future kingdom, theory. One of the pillars of this theory is an unwarranted lifting of certain Old Testament prophecies and their subsequent application to a future kingdom.

However, Acts 2 reveals that these prophecies (Isa. 2:2, 3; Dan. 2:44; Joel 2:38-32, etc.) were fulfilled in the establishment of the church. This I affirm because, as Isaiah said, the Word of the Lord did begin as a Gospel of fact in Jerusalem, Acts 2:36-40.

Furthermore, since the events of Acts 2 occurred during the reign of the Roman kings; and since the church and the kingdom are one and the same; and since the church is first spoken of as a reality in Acts 2:47, I affirm that Dan. 2:44 finds fulfillment in Acts 2.

Peter himself applies Joel 2:28-32 to the events of Acts 2, cf. Acts 2:16-21.

Faith Only

Acts 2 refutes the common doctrine of salvation by faith only.

It is affirmed by many that salvation is at the very point or moment of faith; without further acts of obedience. However, the very expression "salvation by faith only" voices an apparent contradiction. For those who believe in "faith only" most assuredly believe also in the necessity of repentance.

Acts 2:38 reveals a requirement even beyond faith and repentance: baptism for the remission of sins. Hence, salvation is not by faith only.

Design of Baptism

It is common to hear sectarian preachers say, "Get saved and then be baptized."

To the contrary, Acts 2:38 convinces any fair-minded person that baptism is in order to our salvation. That is, baptism comes before; not after salvation.

It is clear that in Acts 2:38 the design of repentance and baptism is onefold: the remission of sins. Therefore, the purpose of repentance is also the reason for baptism. Do we repent because God has already saved us? If not, then we do not receive baptism because God has already saved us.

Salvation and Church Membership

Frequently, one hears a sectarian say, "Aunt Molly got saved and joined the church."

True, one must do more than the Bible requires to become a Baptist, Methodist, etc. But in apostolic times salvation and church membership were accom-



Should We Pray to Mary?

One came to Jesus and said, "Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee. But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Why is my mother, and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Matt. 12:47-50. See also Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 8:19-21. This same great truth is taught also in Luke 11:27-28.

In this teaching, Jesus did not fail to honor His mother, but He elevated to equal honor all those faithful Christians who do God's will. He stressed that flesh-and-blood relationship, even to His mother, was not more important to Him than the close relationship of obedient followers.

Since Jesus did not place His mother on a pedestal above other Godly women, let us consider whether we should pray to Mary or through her name. We are told that there is only one mediator between God and man, and that is Christ. 1 Tim. 2:5.

Should we bow down to Mary? There is no account in the Bible of anyone ever bowing down before her. It was not considered pleasing to God for one to kneel in adoration before anyone but God. Peter would not allow others to bow down to him. Acts 10:25-26. When John bowed down before the angel, he was rebuked, "See thou do it not . . . worship God." Rev. 19:10. Christians do not bow down to Peter, or angels, or Mary. They worship God. Christians pray to God through Christ, not through Mary.

If we will have the same attitude toward Mary that Jesus did, we will honor all Godly women as much as we honor Mary.

IS MAN BORN WITH A CORRUPT NATURE?

(Continued from Page Three)

In I Cor. 14:20 Paul says, "Brethren, be not children in understanding, howbeit in wickedness be ye babes; but in understanding be men." Was Paul exhorting the Corinthians to be wicked? He was if the inherent depravity theory is correct. Surely Paul was telling people to be as free from wickedness as are the little children.

We have no disagreement with anyone over the fact that men are depraved and some desperately so. But they become sinners through their own trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) and not because of some inherited corruption.

plished by the very same process, Acts. 2:47. When a person responded to the terms of Acts 2:38 he not only received remission of sins but also received membership in the New Testament church: the saved body. He became a Christian without prefix and without suffix.

ATTENTION

SEND

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

WHAT IS SIN?

No. 1

By CURTISS E. FLATT

(NOTE: The article which follows is part of a speech delivered by the author on the 1956 Lecture program at Florida Christian College. This is the first of three installments.—EDITOR).

My subject for discussion tonight is, "What Is Sin?" If we treat this subject lightly or if we look at it casually, it will seem easy to give a proper and an adequate definition of the word. I am quite sure that any person whom we might chance to ask to define sin would immediately tell us that he could give a correct definition of sin. And as prevalent as sin is, everyone certainly should be able to define it, for in Romans 3:23 Paul says, "For all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God." And yet, the truth of the matter is, many people cannot give a comprehensive and satisfactory definition of this word. The reason people cannot define it is that there are so many cloudy notions and so many false conceptions of sin. Some people think sin is little more than public condemnation and that if a thing is socially acceptable there can be but little wrong with it. Others think sin is just an attitude. In the church some think a thing is a sin only if the preacher says it is a sin and if he does not classify it as sin, then it isn't sin. I am sure that most all of us know that we live in a time when the definition of sin to some is determined by the attitude of various groups among us. These false conceptions of sin are too numerous and too involved for us to discuss at this time, but they do provoke the necessity for a study of this kind. What does the Bible actually reveal about sin? That is what we are interested in at this time.



Sin Separates

WHAT IS SIN? First of all, I know this about sin. I know that sin is that which separates between man and God and hides God's face from man. In Isaiah 59:1-2, I read, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save: neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear." That scripture makes it clear that sin is the thing which separates man from God so far as acceptable relationship with Him is concerned. Before sin was, Adam and Eve were personally acquainted with God. They talked to Him and He talked to them. They knew Him. But they sinned. That sin came between them and God. That sin caused God to hide His face from them. No longer did this former relationship prevail. Let us remember this as we attempt to define sin tonight. Sin is that which stands between man and God.

Neglect of Duty

WHAT IS SIN? James gives us a definition of sin. He defines sin as neglect of duty. In James 4:17, I read, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do

good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Now what is sin? James says that sin is to know to do good and then not do it. That is plain enough. The only possible question that could arise from that would be an inquiry as to what is good. In III John 11, I read, "Follow not that which is evil but that which is good." Good, then, is the opposite of evil. Right and truth and such things are things which are good. James says that to know to do these things and then not to do them is sin. Of course, that is a negative definition. John gives us a like definition. In I John 5:17 he says, "All unrighteousness is sin." If unrighteousness is sin, then the only question here is what is righteousness and unrighteousness? That is answered in Psalms 119:172, "All thy commandments are righteousness." Now if to do righteousness is to do God's commandments, then to do unrighteousness is not to do God's commandments. That is another negative definition of sin. The form that sin takes according to the definition of these scriptures is what we commonly speak of as omission. That's as good a way to express it as I know. But what do we mean by sins of omission? I can remember when I was just a boy listening to the prayers of some of the older brethren who would ask for forgiveness of all sins, both of commission and omission. I wondered then what they were talking about. Omission literally means the act of omitting or the act of leaving out or the act of leaving undone. That is exactly what both James and John say sin is. James said sin was to know to do good and not to do it and John said sin is unrighteousness. Sins of omission are prevalent among us. We know what is good. We know God's commandments. We know how to become a Christian. We know how to live a Christian life. We know what the work of the Lord is. We know that we must go into all the world and preach the gospel and we know that we must restore those who fall by the wayside and we know that various works of benevolence are obligatory upon us. We are conscious that often so many of us omit some of these things even when ability and opportunity and all such things are favorable. And if we are conscious of this, then we know exactly what sin is so far as what James and John have to say. Now in view of that, and in view of the fact that we know sin separates between man and God, it behooves us to give all diligence to keep His commandments. Blessings come to those who do. Condemnation comes to those who do not. Listen to James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed." "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." "All unrighteousness is sin."