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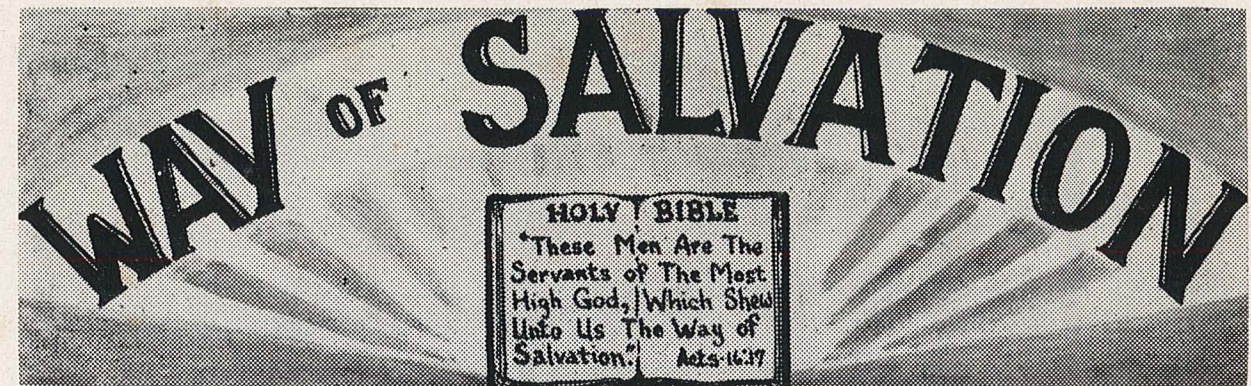
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Vol. 4

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA — JANUARY, 1957

No. 7

# The Holy Spirit In Conversion

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

## The Problem

Among religious people there is considerable discussion relative to the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion. It is distinctly affirmed by many that the Spirit operates upon the unregenerate sinner in a direct, miraculous way that is entirely separate and apart from preaching.

In a recent issue of a Tampa newspaper there appeared an article entitled "Baptists Believe." In this article it is implied that in conversion the Spirit exercises an influence that is distinct and incomprehensible.

## The Real Issue

It must be understood that the real issue in this matter is not regarding the possibility of the Spirit's work in conversion. The basic issue involves the manner or means of the Spirit's work.

I believe firmly that the Spirit works in conversion. But I deny that the Spirit manifests Himself in a direct and miraculous manner.

## The Point Here

The point I affirm here is simply this: In conversion the Spirit accomplishes His work through the Gospel and not directly and miraculously.

In this article the reader is invited to consider some thoughts pertaining to the manner of the Spirit's work in conversion.

## Not Necessary

A direct operation of the Spirit in conversion is just not necessary. What would such an experience accomplish? Of course, it is affirmed that such an experience is needed because of the depravity of the sinner. But in John 5:24 Jesus affirms that the sinner may pass from death unto life by hearing and believing. Also, in such passages as Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 the sinner is called upon to obey certain commandments. The sinner is not asked to pray for a miracle of the Spirit.

## The Human Will

A direct operation of the Spirit in conversion cannot be harmonized with the teaching regarding the human will.



Either of two alternatives is disastrous to the direct operation theory.

It man *can* will to be saved, the miracle of the Spirit would serve only to make man *more* willing.

On the other hand, if the sinner *cannot* will to be saved, then the operation of the Spirit disregards the human will and saves the sinner even though the sinner doesn't *want* to be saved.

However, Acts 2:38 and every single passage commanding the sinner to do something to be saved, are arguments in favor of the freedom of the human will.

And if the sinner can *will* to be saved, a miracle of the Spirit is entirely unnecessary.

## No Conversions

One of the greatest and simplest arguments against the direct operation theory is this: if the Spirit converts *without* the Word, we should expect to find Christians in lands where the Bible *has not gone*. But it is simply a matter of fact that there are no Christians in lands where the Bible has not gone, directly or indirectly.

## James 1:18

James 1:18 states emphatically that we are begotten with the Word of Truth.

Now, there are either *two* begettals (one by the Word and one by the Spirit) or, the Spirit begets *by* or *through* the Word.

Surely, no rational student of the Bible believes there are *two* begettals in the new birth.

## I Peter 1:23

I Peter 1:23 states clearly that we are born again by the Word of God.

Again, unless there are *two* begettals, it must follow that we are born again by the Spirit *through* the Word. That is, the Gospel is the means used by the Spirit in saving the soul.

## For Example

This whole controversy would be ended by a *single* New Testament example of an unregenerate sinner praying at the mourner's bench for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

There is no such example because there is no such teaching in the New Testament.

## Way of Salvation

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## "Is Christianity a Failure?"

This challenging question, which is heard frequently in these days, is perhaps prompted by world conditions. It demands thoughtful consideration.

### The Picture

Only a few years ago we emerged from the bloodiest and most expensive war in the history of mankind, which, we were told, was fought to preserve our freedom, to end war and make the world a safe place in which to live. But before the casualty lists were completed political discord began brewing again, and we were plunged into another war, the Korean "mess." Since then war has been a constant threat. The rights of others are being ignored and the value of human life is depreciating.



PERVIE NICHOLS

Millions of Americans seem to be unconcerned about impending dangers; they play the proverbial fiddle while the world is threatened by the destructive flames of unholy passions. Our nation has glorified gambling and made drinking and drunkenness a dignified pastime. It is rapidly becoming a land of divorces, with some children "having so many parents they need a filing system." Crime, accidents, broken homes, adult and juvenile delinquency are becoming greater by the week.

And the picture is almost as bad in the religious realm. In spite of the Saviour's prayer for unity (Jno. 17:20, 21) the religious world is divided. In the United States alone there are about three hundred denominations, in competition with each other, yet each claiming to belong to Christ.

So, with such existing conditions it is not surprising to hear the question, "Is Christianity a failure?", or "Did the mission of Christ upon earth fail?"

Knowledge of the purpose and mission of Jesus and His program for peace will help us to answer the question.

## Purpose and Mission of Christ

Jesus came into the world to bring light to a world steeped in darkness of sin (Jno. 1:4). He said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (Jno. 8:12). He came to free the world from blind superstition, declaring, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32). God sent His Son "that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:16-17).

The message of Christ was one of hope (Lk. 2:10, 11). His mission was one of mercy, peace and good-will toward men. "He came to get heaven into men here that men may get into heaven hereafter." He taught men to "love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44), "love thy neighbor as thyself" and to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:36-40). He denounced man's selfish greed by declaring, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth" (Matt. 6:19).

Jesus gave to the world the only remedy for man's ailments. This remedy, the gospel message of salvation, was extended to every race and color, and knows no geographical bounds (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 1:16). Having completed his mission on earth, Christ ascended to the Father's right hand, established His church and gave to it His New Testament with the charge to carry the gospel message of salvation to all nations.

Did Christ come to this earth, live and die in vain? "Is Christianity a failure?"

### The Answer

If one takes the word "Christianity" to mean the corrupted form of religion as practiced by "professing Christians," the answer is "Yes, Christianity has failed." However, if one thinks of "Christianity" in its scriptural sense, as the gospel system for which Jesus died, a system of teaching or doctrine with Christ as the teacher, a life with Christ as the model, a life produced by the preaching and practice of the gospel of Christ, the answer is "No, Christianity has not failed." Merely calling one a "Christian" does not make him one. Neither does branding a false or counterfeit religion with the name "Christian" make it what the name implies.

### Placing the Blame

Who is responsible for world conditions, for self-styled "Christians" following half-gods, and money-mad church members serving "the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25)? Who is to be blamed for the wave of greed and ungodliness sweeping the world? Whose fault is it that the religious world is divided? Let us be assured that neither God, Christ nor His true followers are responsible for such conditions. Doing the will of God does not make men sin, rather it makes bad men good and good men better. Hence, the blame for sinful conditions must be placed upon those who have defied God's Word and disregarded the message of His Son.

(Continued on Page Three)

## "I Am Satisfied With My Religion"

By BILL CREWS

How often, when talking to someone about religious matters, do we hear it said: "I am satisfied with my religion. I don't care to make any changes." This usually means: "I have found what I want; I am content with what I have. There is no use in your trying to change me, because my mind is made up and closed to further investigation."

Neighbor, we are not for a moment suggesting that you should live religiously without a feeling of confidence and assurance as far as your salvation is concerned, but the real question should be not are you satisfied, but *is God satisfied with your religion*. The assurance must come from God through His word and not from your own feelings. Jeremiah declared: "O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23). Solomon said: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12). We may select our automobiles by the rule of what satisfies us in the way of a car, but, friends, religion is unlike driving a car. Religion pertains to the welfare of our souls, to the life beyond the grave as well as this life. God is to be pleased and man is to please; God is to direct and man is to follow.

Our religious service may be perfectly satisfactory to us, but displeasing to God. In fact the Bible is replete with examples wherein men were satisfied with what they were doing, but God was not. Cain was satisfied with the sacrifice he offered unto God, but God would not accept it. (Genesis 4:3-5). Nadab and Abihu were satisfied with the strange fire with which they consumed the incense, but God destroyed them for not obeying His will. (Leviticus 10:1-2). King Saul was satisfied that he had carried out Jehovah's will with the Amalekites, but God rejected him and his descendants as kings of Israel. (I Samuel 15:1-23). Saul of Tarsus was satisfied that he was being zealous for God and protecting God's holy will and worship when he persecuted the followers of Jesus, but he learned that he had in fact been persecuting God's own Son. (Acts 7:58; 8:3; 9; 22:3-5). Whatever satisfies man will not satisfy God, but whatever God has specified, with that man ought to be satisfied.

God reaches men by making them dissatisfied with sin, human wisdom, man's ways and appointments and by leading them to be satisfied with God's will and ways and plans. So the question, friends, is not are you satisfied that you are a Christian, that you have obeyed the Lord's will, with your worship and your service, but is God satisfied.

It is peculiar how some people stimulate our mind and others paralyze it.

### ATTENTION

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

## WHICH LAW IS DEAD?

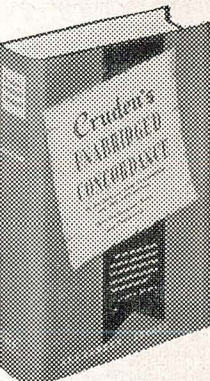
The Seventh Day Adventists love to confuse the minds of honest people by teaching that the ten commandments were never taken away. They insist that only the "ordinances" imposed by the law were removed and that the decalogue remains as much alive today as when it was given to Moses on shaking Sinai. Paul says the law of Moses, including the ten commandments, is dead. Here are his very words: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7:6, 7).

Did Paul learn that he must not covet by the "extra ordinances" or did he learn this from the ten commandments? He learned it from the tenth commandment! The law from which he learned it is dead. Paul said so! The law that taught the children of Israel they must not covet was the law that was nailed to the cross. (Col. 2:14). It was abolished. (Col. 2:15; Heb. 8:13).

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## Way of Salvation

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## THE WAY

By J. FRANK INGRAM

In the New Testament, Christianity is spoken of as "the Way." Jesus calls it "the Way" in Matt. 7:13-14. Paul speaks of "the more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31), and of the "new and living way" (Heb. 10:20). Felix, "having more perfect knowledge of the way," protected Paul from the Jews (Acts 24:22). Appolos had been imperfectly instructed in the Way of the Lord, so Aquila and Pricilla "expounded unto him the Way of God more perfectly." (Acts 18:24-28). The maiden at Philippi cried, "These are the servants of the Most High God, who show us the Way of Salvation." (Acts 16:16-18). Peter speaks of the Way as the Way of Truth in 2 Peter 22.

Isaiah gave us a prophetic description of this way hundreds of years before it was opened up (Isa. 35:8-10). John the Baptist was to cry in the wilderness: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Isa. 40:3; Lk. 3:43, and Jesus says: "I am the Way" (Jno. 14:6).

How sad indeed that Christianity has come to be looked upon as a system of philosophy, as a succession of creeds, or a chaos of domas! How sad indeed that men have put churchanity above Christianity, thus causing sectarianism in the religious world, and rendering asunder the body of Christ! How sad indeed that the way, said to be too plain for error (Isa. 35:8), has been clouded by the dogmas and tradition of men! What a message for a people who plead for a return to THE WAY—the primitive conception of Christianity! So consider the following three things of THE WAY:

### The Description of the Way

Before we enter the Way, we should desire to know something about it. First it is a plain way (Isa. 35:8) and is simple to follow. There is no controversy in the religious world regarding Christ as not being the way. The controversy has arisen concerning things about the Way. An old pilot was asked if he knew all the rocks and reefs along the river. "No," he replied, "but I know where they are not." Any earnest man can find the Way and travel it by taking the Bible as his ONLY guide.

Secondly, it is "the way of holiness" (Isa. 35:8-10). No unclean person—that is, no one who has not been cleansed by the blood of Christ (1 Jno. 1:7), shall walk therein. The redeemed shall walk therein—not the perfect, for that would exclude all mankind and leave Jesus alone in the Way (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jno. 1:8; Heb. 4:15). Only those who have been redeemed through the blood of Christ shall walk in the Way. (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:12).

Thirdly, it is the Way that leads upward. The Christian life is a growth (Phil. 3:12-14). Christ states this fact in a parable (Mk. 4:28). We enter the Way as babes in Christ who must be matured by the "sincere milk of the word"; by and by we can then stand meat, or sound doctrine (1 Cor. 3:1, 2). The downward Way is pictured in Gal. 5:19-21; while the upward Way is pictured in Gal. 5:22, 23, and in 2 Pet. 1:5-11. It is the more excellent way of love. (1 Cor. 12:31).

Fourth, it is a Way where the gate is narrow and the Way straightened (Mt. 7:13-14). Any Way that leads upward must be narrow and straight. Any-

thing that cost nothing is worth nothing. A religion that cost nothing is worth nothing. That which is worthwhile can be attained only by zeal with knowledge and perseverance. Every way of progress is straight and narrow. Because it is the way of progress, it is also the way of joy (Isa. 35:10). It is a way of Joy because Christ is all in all (Phil. 1:21). Knowing the description of the Way, we inquire next as to:

### How to Get in the Way

Christ is the Way. Hence to be in Christ is to be in the Way. We therefore ask the question how does one get into Christ? (1) By reading of the Death, Burial, and Ressurrection of Christ—or the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21). (2) By believing in Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 16:31; Acts 8:37). (3) By repenting, or turning from the evil way to Christ (Jonah 3; Acts 2:38). (4) Then being baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27). The members of the church at Rome had obeyed "from the heart that form of doctrine" which had been delivered unto them (Rom. 6:17, 18). What was the doctrine? The fact that Jesus had died, was buried and had arisen from the dead (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Therefore the form of the doctrine had to be an action which symbolized the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. As Christ died, the sinner dies to the love and practice of sin (Rom. 6:1). As Jesus was laid away in the tomb and resurrected on the third day by the power of God, so the sinner is laid away in the watery grave and resurrected to walk in newness of life. This is the action by which the sinner is made free from sin to become a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:18). Once in the Way we need to consider:

### How to Keep in the Way

A way begins at a certain point and leads to another point. The Way of Salvation leads from the world to the Father, and the Way is Christ. It is a Way of reconciliation (Rom. 5:10; Tph. 2:16; Col. 1:20). Christ suffered and died in order to open up this new and living way back to God (Jno. 14:1-6). This end can be gained by faithful continuance in well doing (Rom. 2:7). How? (1) By studying the Word (Acts 2:41; 2 Tim. 2:15). Not preachers only, but every one in Christ should heed this admonition. (2) By prayer (Acts 2:42; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17; Jas. 5:16). (3) By the communion (Acts 2:42; Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:26; Acts 20:7). The purpose of this command is to test the loyalty of the Christian (Heb. 10:25; Jno. 6:53-54), in commemorating His Death, Burial and Resurrection till He comes again. (4) By service. A way is to be traveled; it is not a place to go to sleep. We must be constantly on the move for fear we drift or wander off in some bypath (1 Cor. 16:2; Jas. 2:17; Heb. 2:3, 4). In the last day every man shall be judged according to his works (Rev. 20:13; 14:32). To endure to the end, we must constantly have on the whole armor of God. (Eph. 6:10-20).

To those who have grown old in the way, there is sweet peace in the words of Paul (2 Tim. 4:6-8). To those who have once traveled the way, but have wandered off into some bypaths we quote Acts 8:22 and Jno. 1:9. To those who have never entered the Way, the Master is standing with open arms pleading for you to come now (Mat. 11:28; Rev. 22:17; 2 Cor. 6:2).

## Remember Lot's Wife

By TED W. McELROY

This article is the summary of a sermon. In Lk. 17:22-37 Jesus taught some lessons concerning His second coming: like lightning it will be sudden and far-reaching, reaching to all parts of the earth at the same instant; the moral condition of the people will be similar to what it was in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot; that even on that awful day some will be more interested in temporal treasure than eternal life and will go into their houses to see about their goods; the saints will be mingling with others in the affairs of life and will be taken while their wicked companions will be left; to demonstrate the certainty of punishment to the wicked, Jesus gave a picturesque illustration, "Where the body is, thither will the eagle also be gathered together," that as the decaying carcass attracts the buzzards and vultures, so will sin attract punishment. This vivid description of His second coming should fill us with fear, reverence and awe.

In the three words of verse 32 Jesus suggested some poignant lessons, "Remember Lot's wife." Oftentimes a name stands for a stype of character or a principle, and sometimes a name is remembered for a single deed or event of the person. Such is the case of Lot's wife. The Jews to whom Jesus spoke in Lk. 17 were well acquainted with their national history, and the mention of Lot's wife instantly brought a series of events to their minds. In Gen. 19 the history is given: (1) Lot lived in Sodom. Gen. 13 tells his motive and of his journey to that sinful city; (2) Gen. 19:1-11, angels, as men, came to the city and Lot shows them hospitality and protection; (3) the angels warned Lot and his family of the destruction of Sodom and when they hesitated about leaving "brought them out." They were instructed to flee from the city and not look back; (4) Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. When we "Remember Lot's wife," four lessons are forcibly impressed upon our attention:

### 1. God's Wrath and Justice

It is true that "God is love." His love was demonstrated in the visit of the angels and their warning, and by the deliverance of Lot and his family. The destruction of Sodom shows the wrath of God against sin, the desolate, scorched soil of that region, even unto this day, cries a warning against sin. "Remember Lot's wife," that she became the object of divine wrath and was changed to a pillar of salt because of her disobedience. All who disobey take warning here. With all the soft sentimental preaching about the love of God, remember also that God is a God of wrath. (Ex. 20:5-6; Heb. 12:28-29; Rom. 1:18; 2 Thes. 1:7-8).

### 2. God's Requirements May Seem Foolish

Examining the command "not to look back" from the viewpoint of worldly wisdom, Lot's wife could see no harm in just one look back. But when she followed the worldly wisdom, she became a pillar of salt. "Remember Lot's wife" as a caution against substituting human reasoning for the commands of God. Here some other examples of God's requirements appearing foolish in human reasonings, but when obeyed the Lord gave the needed blessings. (Josh. 6:3-5; 2 Kings 5:1-14; Jno. 9:1-7). God's commands are to

be obeyed, not questioned. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8-9). "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." (1 Cor. 1:25-27). The worldly wise count the atonement foolishness, but since it is stated in the word of God we must believe it. The world says baptism is non-essential, but God has promised to bless us in it. (Col. 2:12).

### 3. God Demands Strict and Complete Obedience

Some in the church, by their action, seem to think that a partial obedience to the New Testament will get them by. "Remember Lot's wife," she was leaving the city in obedience to the Lord, and it was a small matter of disobedience when she looked back, but she became a pillar of salt. A great many brethren need to take warning here—they are partly obeying the Lord but the other part of their life is neglect and disobedience. Partial obedience will not please the Lord any more now than it did from Lot's wife; our obedience must be strict and complete. Here is what I mean: some are good to minister to the sick and that is fine, but they are neglectful of the worship and that is terrible. Other examples and scriptures on this point: Lev. 10:1; 2 Jno. 9-11.

### 4. Treasures Must Be in the Right Place

I think there is implied in the "looking back" that Lot's wife desired and longed for the possessions and pleasures and friends of Sodom, that she looked back to her earthly treasures. She may even have been considering the lost sons-in-law "to be," who scorned and mocked the warning of the angels and were left to be destroyed in Sodom. "Remember Lot's wife," she stands as a warning to all those who are tempted to look back from the Christian life to the possessions and pleasures of the world of sin. If we fix our treasure in the right place we will keep looking in the right direction. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, neither moth nor rust doth consume and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will be thy heart also." (Mt. 6:19-21).

## "IS CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE"

(Continued from Page Two)

No, the religion of Christ has not failed. Man has failed to exemplify the religion of Christ.

### The Way Out

Even though the global picture is not good, we should not become pessimistic. There is a way out. The gospel message is still God's power to save. It has successfully attacked infidelity and lust. It has broken down the barriers of ignorance and fought against religious division. Hence, it has no greater enemies today than it had centuries ago. The only way out of the present situation is for all to turn to the "Prince of Peace" and His Will, believe and obey Him in all things.

Men have failed in their pretense of Christianity, but true Christianity will never fail.

## Why Try to Change People?

"You are always trying to change other people!" That is a stock complaint preachers hear. Because a preacher tries to change other people he is often judged as evil, narrow and sectarian.

Any preacher that does not try to change other people is not worthy of his task. The first message Jesus started preaching was one demanding a change on the part of every person that heard Him. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He even declared that unless they all did make changes they would perish. "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish."

No preacher can long follow the example of Christ without trying to change other people. Man, as he is, is his own enemy, and the enemy of God. Man changed to the likeness of Christ is his own friend and a friend of God.

Here is a man who does not believe in Jehovah God. Should he be changed? "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Rev. 21:8. It would be cruelty and inconsideration beyond words not to try to change him. A soul is at stake, and "he that winneth souls is wise."

Here is a man who does not believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But Jesus said, "Except ye believe that I am He ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24. Is it right to try to convince this one that Jesus is the Christ or is it right to complacently see him die in his sins?

Here is one who is following human doctrines in religion. For his brand of worship he finds no divine authority. Certain items of his worship are directly traceable to human authority. Jesus said, "In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." Matt. 15:9. Is it right to refrain from correcting such people of their error? Jesus said, "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. No other worship will suffice.

Paul found people worshipping in ignorance in Athens, and "his spirit was provoked within him." Acts 17:16. He reasoned in the synagogues and market place every day with everyone that met him. Though they said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods," he simply preached Jesus and the resurrection. He told them that their worship was in ignorance (vs. 23) and that God would not overlook their ignorance (vs. 30). He tried to change them. He miserably failed with them because they mocked or procrastinated, but others believed him and were saved. Here was his reward for a task well done.

There are five distinct classes of people who should be changed and who must be changed if ever they are to walk on the street of gold. Their religion must undergo strict alterations.

1. Those who are zealous for God but not according to knowledge. Of such people, Paul said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. For I bear

them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." Rom. 10:1-3. The Athenians of Acts 17 were in this class also.

2. Those serving human creeds, wearing human names and worshipping and working in human churches. Every denomination under heaven is in this class, and every person in every denomination must have his religion changed from these human things to the divine things in order to be saved.

3. Those who believe the truth and will not obey it. In John 12:42, 43, it is said: "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God."

4. Children of God fallen from grace and derelict to duty. It is the divine injunction to Christians that: "If a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6:1. It is not proper or right to ignore the lost condition of a fallen brother.

5. Those who choose their own ways in religion. "Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their souls delighteth in their abominations: I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, non did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did that which was evil in mine eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not." Isa. 66:3, 4. It is merciful, considerate, and Christian to risk friendship, goodwill, popularity or anything else in all the world in an effort to save such people.

Pleasers of God rather than pleasers of men are willing to do that. Pleasers of men rather than pleasers of God cry out against him who would try to change him from the way that is wrong. "The way of the transgressor is hard," and the greatest citizen of all the earth came to turn men from their transgressions. No man can call him Lord who will not follow his example.

This explains the aggressiveness of the church of Christ and of her ministers. This explains why we are misunderstood and misrepresented. For no selfish purposes at all do we reveal error and defend the truth. Always it is for the glory of God and the salvation of men. "Am I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" Gal. 4:16.

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## Don't Make These Mistakes In Seeking Salvation

Most of the mistakes that are made relative to what a person must do in order to be saved come from a misunderstanding of God and His attitude toward men. Some old religionists claimed that God's absolute sovereignty left no room for man's own free moral agency. It was then that the doctrine of predestination began. They taught that man was unconditionally elected to salvation or reprobated by Jehovah.

The Universalist did not arrive at his doctrine of universal salvation by a study of the Scriptures that speak of the destiny of man. He did it by theorizing on the love of God. And while they do read that God is love, they fail to read that he is a consuming fire, likewise. Hebrews 12:29.

These two classes do not seek for salvation. The predestinarian does not seek it for he thinks he cannot do anything about it. The Universalist does not seek it, for he thinks he will invariably be saved without doing anything.

Another error of religion is that God must be reconciled to man. The Methodist Discipline says: that Jesus is "very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried to *reconcile His Father to us.*" This does not agree with what Paul said: "To wit. that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation." And he continued: "We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." II Cor. 5:18-20.

Out of the error that God was to be reconciled to us grew the mourner's bench system, which still is practiced by many. Sinners come to plead and pray for God to be reconciled to them and to receive them into His favor. God's favor has already been adequately proved in His sacrifice of His Son. Our task is not in getting God to be reconciled to us, but in becoming reconciled to God.

The mourners' bench is fast disappearing, but still the sinner is urged to pray for salvation. He is told to kneel down before the radio, or wherever he is and ask the Lord to save him. It is nothing but a hangover from a fundamental error of the creed makers and theologians.

The Bible plan of salvation is not via the mourner's bench nor any other effort to get God to love and be merciful toward man. It is a matter of obeying the divinely given plan of salvation. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16.

Another hurtful error is closely related to these mentioned. It is the idea that the seeker for salvation must have the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in order to be saved. It is based also on fundamental error.

For many years Calvinists contended that the sinner is so dead in his sins that he cannot obey the gospel without the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. This theory, if true, would limit God's power. God says that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), but if the sinner could not hear it, believe and obey it, it could not be the power. We believe God's gospel is strong enough to save.

One of the most popular errors is that a man is today saved by faith only, or that a person is saved

the very moment he believes and without any further acts of obedience. But there is not one case on record where God ever blessed anybody on the condition of faith only.

Some one says that Romans 5:1 says we are justified by faith. So it does. But it does not say we are justified by faith only. People who teach that we are saved by faith only, in an effort to avoid the essentiality of baptism, by the same arguments that they use to mark off baptism as essential likewise mark off the essentiality of repentance, love of God, and faithful living and praying. In running from baptism, they must also leave these other essentials to the religion of Jesus Christ.

Such a conclusion is not reached through a desire to do the whole counsel of God. It is through a failure to seek the full will of God. Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him (Hebrews 5:9), and said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?"

Don't fall into these errors in religion that will condemn your soul. Obey the entire will of God just as it is written and be saved.

Every man is his own ancestor and every man his own heir. He devises his own future and he inherits his own past.—Hedge.

## "What of the Future?"

By FOSTER RAMSAY

The future holds a peculiar fascination for most people. Large sums of money are spent annually upon palm-readers, fortune tellers, soothe-sayers, and others who claim the ability to foretell the future. That this money is worse than thrown away goes without saying. Those who claim the ability to brush aside the curtain of time, and look into the great beyond are claiming a power which they do not possess. They should not be patronized by those who are trying to live the Christian life since their work is included in the works of the flesh mentioned by Paul in Gal. 5:19-21.

The word of the Lord tells of the future of two classes of people. Since there are only two classes in the world at this time, all can find their future there. Those who do that which is evil will be condemned to eternal punishment. This is the future of those who are living contrary to the commands of the Son of God. Those who are obedient to the gospel will receive everlasting life. We are not left in doubt as to what is meant by living a righteous life, for the Bible plainly states, "All thy commandments are righteousness." This much of the future is given to us. Are we interested in it enough to live the Christian life so that we shall at last be given the reward of the faithful?

We are helped by helping others;  
If we give, we always get;  
Seeing others as our brothers,  
Is life's safest, surest bet!

If we give what folks are needing,  
It will help us in the end,  
And we just can't helping succeeding  
In the game of life, my friends!