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"The Church of Christ Salute You"

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GOD WANTS TO SAVE YOU!

By Harold Turner

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (I Tim. 2:4)

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

No tragedy could be greater than that of being eternally lost. And the saddest thing about this tragedy is that no one has to be lost. God has made provisions to save every person. In I John 2:2, John wrote, saying that Jesus Christ "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for us only, but also for the sins of the whole world." In propitiating for our sins, he has so dealt with sin that he can show mercy to the believing sinner in the removal of his guilt and the remission of his sins. Thus, Christ has made remission of sins available to every person who wants to be saved.

Since provisions have been made to forgive the sins of the whole world, one might ask, Why then are so many people lost? No doubt there will be many people lost because they have not had the opportunity to hear the gospel, which is essential to their salvation, but, on the other hand, there are many others who are lost by their own choice. They have heard, and have refused to respond in humble obedience to the Lord. Many of these may have the idea that some day they are going to obey the Lord, but there are just too many things at the present to keep them from obeying. Actually, they love sin more than righteousness. In John 3:19-21, Jesus said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." These people, like so many today, had the opportunity to come to the Lord, but they made the choice to continue in sin. They loved sin more than they loved the Lord.

Have you ever seriously considered the thought of being eternally lost? In Matt.

25:41, Jesus stated that an everlasting fire had been prepared for the devil and his angels. Jesus warned that all who refused and rejected him will likewise be cast into this fire. In Mark 9:43-48 he warned that it would be better to enter life without hands, feet, and eyes, than to be "cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The Bible does not teach that in hell man will be in a state of unconsciousness, but just the opposite. In II Thess. 1:7-9 Paul wrote, saying, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." It is not possible to punish something that has no life. The fire is an expression of the vengeance of the Lord to punish those who refuse to obey the gospel. Vengeance and punishment indicate suffering to be experienced. Jesus described hell as a place where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:30.) No experience of suffering known to the human mind is comparable to the description of hell. Hell is a place from which there is no release, and in which there is no comfort or ease.

God has done everything heavenly pos-

sible to keep each of us from going to hell, but he will not force us. We have the right to choose where we will spend our eternity. Jesus experienced what was probably the greatest suffering known to man in this life, to keep us from being lost eternally. He has given us every possible reason for believing in him, but the choice is left to us.

God wants to save you. He wants to save every person, but he has made this salvation conditional. The conditions are not to make salvation difficult, but rather to test whether or not we want to be saved and serve him. For example, look at some of the conditions. In John 8:24, Jesus said, "ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Through the gospel, evidences have been sufficiently given to cause us to believe in him. Our salvation then, is conditioned to believing that Jesus is the Christ, and no matter what else we might believe and do, we cannot be saved apart from believing in him. Another condition is seen in the words of Jesus in Luke 13:3, where he said, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." No person can be saved who continues to live in sin. We must repent and turn from our sins, and, unless we do this we will perish. In Matt. 10:32-33, Jesus gave another condition to our being saved when he said, "Whosoever therefore shall

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"Bible Preaching?"

By Mike Pace

I'm not sure how up-to-date you are on current events in the Lord's church. There are many brotherhood papers that carry much of this contemporary news concerning the body. (Publications such as the *Firm Foundation*, *Gospel Advocate* and *Contending For The Faith*, and so many others, too numerous to mention.) Also, many bulletins published by local congregations, on occasion, contain articles that keep you and I abreast with the latest news among the "Churches of Christ". Sometimes these papers and bulletin articles are optimistic and good for edifying; sometimes they are informa-

tive and feed our intellect; however, sometimes they are quite negative, and prone to discourage, disallusion and even disappoint the reader. Perhaps there is a sense in which vital issues facing the church should be addressed in these papers, but there is developing a spirit of competition arising which is not spiritually healthy for the church. It appears that what is happening is that brethren, men, editors, preachers and others are taking sides, so-to-speak on these "latest" issues and using these papers and articles as the medium to express their views.

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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EDITOR Mike Pace

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GOD WANTS TO SAVE YOU

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confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." In Romans 10:9-10 Paul said that this confession is made unto salvation. No matter how much we may believe in Christ and hate sin, unless we are willing to confess him before others, we cannot be saved. Then in Mark 16:16 Jesus stated that our being saved includes the condition of being baptized, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." According to Rom. 6:3 and Gal. 3:27 we are baptized into Christ. It is only in Christ that we are promised salvation, and the hope of eternal life. Those outside of Christ have no hope according to Eph. 2:12. So my coming to Christ for salvation is conditioned upon my believing in him, repenting of sins, confessing his name before others, and being baptized. This is by no means all the conditions required in order for us to receive eternal life, but these bring us into the place where we can begin living and serving God acceptably. Through the gospel he continues to teach us how to live and serve him.

God wants to save you. No more important truth has ever been stated. He wants this enough to let his only begotten son suffer the death of the cross to pay the price our sins demanded. "The wages of sin is death." And because of this, God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (II Cor. 5:21.) The price has already been paid for your sins, but the benefit of that price depends upon you. In Christ you can be free from your debt of sin. You can be freed from the condemnation that your sins have brought upon you. God wants to save you, but whether or not he does depends upon you. Are you willing to express your faith and love by doing the things he requests of you? In John 14:15 Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

"The Sin of Hypocrisy"

By J. Wayne Kilpatrick

We Americans may not agree on many things, but we probably come as close to uniting in our attitude against hypocrisy as against anything else. I don't know of anybody who doesn't despise hypocrisy.

The wife who has been deserted by a husband, who left with another woman, surely despises the hypocrisy that he manifested during the "cover-up" period. One wife said, following her husband's affair, "I can forgive his immoral conduct but I'm having serious trouble forgetting the lies he has told and the sneaking around he has done." Wives also despise the hypocritical words of love that the unfaithful husband says to her that merely keep her blindfolded as to the true state of things.

People also despise the hypocrisy of the supposedly religious family that has so much trouble at home, and that is hard to get along with in the neighborhood. So do they that person who has pulled many crooked business deals, but is the "big cheese" at church. Oh, how they do despise such a person! And you can't blame them too much.

Jesus was gentle with those who were overpowered with sin, but he had no patience with those who were sinners in reality, but who posed as righteous persons. With what group was Jesus dealing in those scathing words recorded in Matthew 23? With hypocrites! Over and over he said in that chapter, when about to bring up something against the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" The fact that Jesus was never more stern, more severe with his words than he was in this chapter, indicates that the Lord, himself, bitterly opposes hypocrisy. From all indications, there will be no mercy shown to the hypocrite.

As we look at the other side, we see that everybody praises sincerity. Who is the most respected person in the community? The person who has the utmost sincerity. A co-worker of mine a few years ago was most successful as a soul winner, not because of his knowledge of the Bible, for many persons with whom he studied knew the Bible much better than he. Not because he was so eloquent, for many were superior in this area. He was most effective because of his sincer-

ity. He came across as being genuine. Even when he did not make a convert, he was spoken of highly by the ones with whom he had studied. Why? Because of his sincerity. Have you ever heard someone say, "I can't agree with him, but I will defend his right to believe as he does." They never speak this way about a hypocrite. People feel toward a hypocrite about the same way the Jews felt about Paul: "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. And . . . they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air," (Acts 23:22, 23), to show the violence of their feelings.

Hypocrisy has been a chief stumbling block to many people. When people have no faith in the sincerity of someone in the church, they often allow it to keep them out of the family of God. What a tragedy! It is a terrible thing to be a stumbling block. In Matthew 18:6, Jesus said, "But whoso shall offend (cause to stumble) one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

It is so very discouraging to go out and try to win sinners to Jesus over the bad examples of some who profess to be Christians. Those who are trying to win sinners surely deplore hypocrisy to the limit. They know the damage it is doing to those whom they are striving to win.

Let me now say a word to those who may be using the inconsistency of others as an excuse to keep from doing God's will. If you hate hypocrisy so much, why don't you become a genuine Christian, be an honorable part of the church, and help drive hypocrisy out of the ranks of God's people? This is what the rest of us have done and are doing.

"The best way to ease our own burden is to bear the burden of another."

"When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on."

"Before you find fault with the house another has built, build a better one."

Things The Devil Wants To Do

By Clovis Ragsdale

The following article is a reprint of an article by Bro. Clovis Ragsdale.

From the beginning of man's existence on earth a continual struggle has been waged by the spirit of evil as represented by the devil to capture the hearts of men so that they may serve him in his kingdom. Satan was victorious in the Garden of Eden when he persuaded mother Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit. In the hearts of most of the people of the earth Satan was able to rule for many centuries to come. Yet the advantage that he seemed to have with capturing the souls of men was to come to an end, when God sent his Son into this world to shed his blood upon the cross and make possible a way of escape from sin. This way of escape was made known to the world on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit, speaking through Peter and the other apostles, revealed how man could obtain remission of his sins. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). In the closing verse of this chapter we learn that the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

From that time on the devil has laboured to keep people out of the church. Why is this so? Simply because in obeying the gospel and becoming a Christian we come in contact with the blood of Christ. The

blood of Christ is the only thing that can cleanse man from his sin. (I John 1:7). When man is freed from his sins he is no longer in Satan's kingdom.

Another reason he wants to keep people out of the church is that in the church we glorify God. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus through out all ages, world without end." (Eph. 3:21). In the church and the church only can man worship God today. No other way has been authorized by God, and to worship him in any other way is rank disobedience to his written word. Further we learn that in the church the gospel is preached. Romans 1:16 tells us that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth to the Jew first and also to the Greek. The preaching of the gospel is the greatest responsibility that the church has to perform. (Eph. 3:10). When Satan can keep the church from fulfilling this solemn responsibility he wins a great victory. He will settle for only part of the truth being taught. In our day when we observe the many different churches and doctrines, we realize that Satan is winning some battles, for God's word teaches that we are not to be divided. "Now I beseech you, brethren, 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." (I Cor. 1:10). In Galatians 1:8, we are

told of the curse of God being placed upon those who would preach any other gospel than the apostles taught. As if to give further warning the same words are repeated in the following verse.

Finally, Satan wants to keep people out of the church because Christ is the head of the church, and as the head he is to be obeyed. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body." (Eph. 5:23,) Christ as king of his kingdom requires his subjects to be loyal unto his commands. As long as we are loyal unto Christ, there will be no room in our hearts for Satan to dwell. Why not escape the terrible fate that awaits those who serve Satan by repenting (Acts 17:30), confessing faith in Christ, (Rom. 10:10), and then complete your obedience by being buried with your Lord in baptism as is commanded in Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, and taught in Rom. 6:3-7, Gal. 3:27, I Peter 3:21, and many other passages in the New Testament. The Lord will add you to the church in which you are to live faithfully all your days, then heaven will be your home through all the ceaseless ages to come.

Ten Questions

HOW MANY OF THESE CAN YOU ANSWER?

1. Name of the angel that told Mary she would have a son? (Luke 1:26-31)
2. At a very early age Jesus was found in the temple conversing with the "doctors". How old was Jesus and in what city was this? (Luke 2:42-49)
3. Which one of the apostles was known as the "beloved disciple"? (John 13:23)
4. In the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25:1-4, do you know how many there were and how many had oil in their lamps?
5. The first king of Israel was named. (I Sam. 10:1)
6. Why was John the Baptist baptizing in Aenon near to Salim? (John 3:23)
7. In the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) did both Philip and the eunuch "go down into the water"?
8. What question did Peter ask at the household of Cornelius, prior to baptizing his household? (Acts 10:47)
9. How many baptisms did Paul say were in effect when he wrote his letter to the Ephesians? (Eph. 4:5)
10. Jesus commanded his apostles to go into all nations, preaching and teaching and them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. 28:19-20)

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"BIBLE PREACHING?"

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One of these editors recently printed in his editorial, *"Thank God, a spirit of conciliation is growing. Anything that promises more than the methods we are now using deserves consideration."* He then goes on to say in obvious reference to the "Crossroads Movement" and the campus ministries of the "Crossroads Movement", and I again quote, *"There can be great campus ministries throughout the country, and there ought to be. We need them and the world needs them."* Let me tell you though what the world needs, and it's not campus ministries, it's Jesus Christ and the pure Word of God. We don't need a spirit of conciliation, or a spirit of compromise, nor a spirit of toleration in the Lord's church. In fact that's the very root of many of our problems in the church today. Many are flirting with dangerous methods and techniques that on the surface give the impression of being productive, useful, effective means of spreading the Gospel, and make those who promote such ideas to be the "saviors" of the church today. Many of these "saviors" are really capitalizing on these newly discovered methods and are making quite a name and reputation for themselves. Why can't we just go back to doing things the way that God wants it done. Perhaps we should heed the wise man's warning in Proverbs 22:8 *"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."*

Not too long ago, at one of our "workshops" one speaker made this comment: He stated, "There are some things that we don't have to give book, chapter and verse for." He then went on to explain that such things fall into the realm of expediences. Most assuredly there are some things that do fall into the realm of expediences, but preaching and teaching ALL of God's Word, ONLY God's Word is not an expedience. Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,"* (John 8:32). Read carefully the apostle Paul's warning to the preacher Timothy as is recorded in II Tim. 4:1-4. What we need today is not another Gospel (Galatians 1:6-10); but we need more of that Gospel preaching that will save us (Romans 1:16).

It's even becoming more difficult to find a preacher filling a pulpit who will preach the power that's contained in God's Word. Often times, we hear preachers who fill their sermons with references to famous theologians and philosophers; make mention of catchy quotes, rhythmic sayings instead of leaving the "changing" of men's lives to the Word of God. My plea is this, let's get back once again to doing Bible things Bible ways!! It's the only hope for the world and the salvation of the church. Listen to Paul's reference to the kind of preaching we need, "and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom of this world, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power." (I Cor. 2:4). Such

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

The most important question ever asked is: *"What must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30.) Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2.) This faith comes by the hearing of the word of God. (Rom. 10:17.) *"But 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.) With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."* (Acts 17:30.) In repentance, we come out of our sinful condition, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord.

(Matt. 3:8; Luke 13:3.) With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* (Rom. 10:9-10.) Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* (Gal. 3:27.) Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26.)

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

flowery and impressive sermons of "our" preachers of today are on a par with the other great "speakers" of today, but this kind of preaching won't save a single soul! So when we stoop to the carnal appeal and carnival atmosphere of mundane, secular focus we have surrendered our right to New Testament Christianity.

Brethren, it's past time that we return to plain, straight-forward, simple unadulterated, Bible-centered Gospel preaching and teaching. Of old, Jeremiah the prophet warned God's people of that day, "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the

ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jeremiah 6:16). May God help us to always use His Word as a "lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Psalms 119:105). When we preach and teach God's Word and omit our own "think-so's" and personal philosophies as to how God's Word can be put across, and leave the rest up to God, we'll be accomplishing what God has set our for us to do. You know what we need to do with God's Word Preach it! Preach it! Preach it! Now and Forevermore!