

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Church of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 15

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

July, 1982

No. 11

You Can Live A Christian Life

By Harold Turner

On numerous occasions we have heard people express their plans to become a Christian, but they plan to wait until they are sure they can live it. These may be commended for their desire not to be a hypocrite. Without question, becoming a Christian is the most serious and important step one will ever take in life. Therefore it is only natural that one should want to be successful in living this new life. And, too, it is only natural that there be certain fears connected with the idea of becoming a Christian. The fear of failure is one of the most common fears in life, and it is one of the major reasons that keeps people from undertaking challenging tasks in life. The thought of failure is distasteful, therefore it is only natural that one should want to be as successful as possible.

While one may attempt numerous tasks and not be successful, this does not have to be the case with becoming a Christian. Every person can be successful in living the Christian life if they really want to. God has assured us that we can win the victory through Jesus. In 1 John 4:4 he promised, "*Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" Too, in Romans 8:31-39 Paul gave the same assurance. He began by asking some thought provoking questions: "*If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ: shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword?*" Paul then answered these questions in a very positive way, saying, "*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord.*" From these promises, how can we fail if we really want to live the Christian life?

The success of living the Christian life is not dependent upon my power

alone, but by uniting what little power I have with the unlimited power of God. In Jude 24 we are assured that God is able to keep us from falling. In 1 Peter 1:5 we have the promise that Christians are "*Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*" In Romans 14:4 Paul assures us that God is able to make us stand. We are not saved and left to stand alone by our own power, but as Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:10, "*Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*" When we face difficulties God is there to help us overcome. He promised in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but*

will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." There is no force or power that can cause me to fail if I really want to live a Christian life.

But what about the sinful things in our life, along with all the bad habits, weaknesses, and problems? Can we be sure that we can overcome these? Won't we still commit sin at times? Yes, we will through weakness and lack of understanding, and for other reasons do things that are wrong. But we cannot overcome our habits, weaknesses, and sins by ourselves. Satan is stronger than we are. When we become a Christian we have the

Continued on Page 2

Do Elders Rule By Default?

By Ordell Heavin

I truly believe that an elder must be scripturally qualified. But why do so many fail to rule well? Let's look at a few things that hinder. The qualifications of Bishops must be met and executed as revealed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Those who qualify and are appointed by the congregation of the Church must oversee the duties and responsibilities as the scriptures teach. Bishops who fail to meet the qualifications; elders who fail to function, lead and execute the teachings as the Bible reveals, nothing more or less, are guilty of default. They are toying with the most precious thing in all the world, souls. Instead of Aaron speaking and taking a stand for the truth of God, he allowed the people to make a golden calf and a feast day. Both were forbidden by scripture. (Exodus 32:1-6). Look at the contrast of Samuel, when the children of Israel wanted a king. He immediately asked God about the matter. He didn't say let's go ahead, we can lay the blame on some one else. (1 Samuel 8:6). Pilate was not the last man "who washed his

hands" of decisions by default. (Matt. 27:24.) Paul would not let the apostle Peter get by (Galatians 2:11). How many times do elders turn their head and pretend they don't "see"; bury their heads in the sand of default. In many congregations, we have members living in adultery and drinking alcoholic beverages, just to mention two of the many sins and many elders make little effort to fulfill their obligations as the New Testament teaches. In many cases it depends on who it is. I have heard it said, "Oh, they are the best givers." Ladies and gentlemen the Lord does not depend on the devil's money. How many congregations have divided because the elders did not stop false teachers. "Just leave them alone and maybe they will change." It's about like Little Bo Peep's sheep in so many places. Service by default is a common answer when Bishops are asked about such problems. Instead of functioning as the scriptures teach, they do nothing but offer their own ideas. Ignoring a problem

Continued on page 4

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

... is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name be SURE to include the Zip Code Number. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know the financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request.

EDITOR Mike Pace

Publication No. 211780

Another Look At The Sabbath

By J.J. Turner

From time to time, Christians come in contact with members of various Sabbatarian groups who teach that we must observe the Sabbath (Saturday) today in order to be pleasing unto God. Questions about Sabbath-keeping are becoming more and more frequent, especially with the rise in popularity and coverage of Herbert W. Armstrong's radio programs which propagate the doctrine of Sabbath-keeping.

In past years, the false doctrine of Sabbath-keeping was met and defeated in debates and well written articles by capable gospel preachers. However, for some reason today very little is said or written about this false doctrine which is experiencing a new growth in popularity. Many Christians have become confused over this issue; some have even become members of Sabbatarian groups. Therefore, it becomes necessary from time to time to reexamine and study certain doctrinal truths. Also, each generation must be taught the truth in every area. With this in mind, let us take another look at the Biblical teaching on the Sabbath.

The first mention of the seventh day is in Genesis 2:1-3. These verses state that God rested on the seventh day and sanctified it. There is no mention of God commanding man to keep the seventh day. Therefore, the Sabbatarians are wrong when they say that man has kept the Sabbath from creation. Read the book of Genesis and you will not find a single example of man keeping the Sabbath.

The first time we come upon the word Sabbath in God's word is in Exodus 16:22-36. This is well over two thousand years after Genesis 2. On this occasion in Exodus 16, God is requiring Israel to rest from their trials in the wilderness. A careful reading of this section will reveal that evidently they had not been used to keeping the Sabbath before. According to Nehemiah 9:7-14, God made the Sabbath known to Israel when they were in the wilderness.

At Mt. Sinai God gave Israel the commandment to keep the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11). It was given to Israel as a memorial to remember her deliverance out of Egyptian bondage (Deut. 5:12-15). The Sabbath was also a sign of God's covenant with Israel (Ex. 31:11-18). Ezekiel 20:10-12 makes it very clear that the Sabbath was not given to all men. Therefore, the keeping of the Sabbath was given only to Israel as a memorial to remember when God delivered them out of slavery and made his covenant with them.

Modern-day Sabbatarians try to bind the Sabbath as a day of worship. The Bible nowhere teaches that the Sabbath was given as a day of worship. It was a day of rest upon which Israel, with free time upon her hands, could remember what God has done for her. Our memorial today is the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; I Cor. 11: 23-34). It is especially on this occasion that we remember what Christ has done for us. A casual look at today's Sabbath keeper will reveal that he does not consistently keep the Sabbath as God commanded Israel to keep it. To keep the Sabbath as God commanded, they must stone Sabbath violators to death (Ex. 35:2). Therefore, the only similarity between modern Sabbath keepers and Israel in the long ago is in name only.

Sabbatarians claim that the Sabbath was given by God to all men, including the Gentiles, as a perpetual command. They use the following passage as their proof text:

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant (Ex. 31:16).

This passage certainly teaches that as long as God's covenant with Israel remains, the Sabbath remains binding upon them. Jeremiah 31:31-34 plainly teaches that God promised to make a new covenant. The Hebrew writer makes it clear that we are now under that new covenant (Heb. 8:6-13). Therefore, the perpetual nature of the Sabbath ended when the old covenant ended. To be consistent with their dogmatic use of the word perpetual, the Sabbatarians should also burn incense (Ex. 30:8), keep the Aaronic priesthood (Ex. 29:9), practice the ritual of purification (Num. 19:11-22) meal offering (Lev. 6:30), etc., because they are all said to be perpetual too.

Another popular argument presented by Sabbatarians is that the Law of Moses has been done away with, but the Ten Commandments are still binding today. We have already noticed that the Sabbath was part of the Law given to Israel at Sinai and was addressed only to them. Paul states in Romans 7:1-4 that the Law is dead and we are delivered from it. To illustrate his point, Paul compares the Law to a wife who is free to marry another because her former husband is dead. Paul states in verse 7 that the Law to which we are dead is the one which said, "Thou shalt not covet." This is found in the Ten

Continued on page 3

Christian

Continued from page 1

help of Christ, and by his power, not our own, we are able to overcome. As a Christian, we can say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13).

When we do sin as a Christian, it doesn't mean that we are at that point discarded and cast aside as a failure. God is longsuffering and patient, ever ready to forgive our sins. In Romans 8:1, Paul wrote, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." God is not eager to condemn, and will not condemn as long as we are really trying to live as he directs. In fact, John stated that as long as we are walking in the light of Christ, his blood will keep on cleansing us from our sins, 1 John 1:7. Whether we succeed or fail largely depends on whether or not we want to succeed. If we really want to and will keep on trying we will succeed. If you have been waiting until you are sure that you can overcome Satan's forces, stop waiting and let Jesus help you.

CONTRIBUTIONS

INDIVIDUALS

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Six	\$20.00
Ruth Denton	5.00
Anonymous	10.00
George & Betty Gean	5.00
Ethel McFadden	10.00
EE. McFadden	10.00
Carrie Anderson	10.00
Wm. C. Anderson	10.00

CONGREGATIONS

Garfield Church of Christ	15.00
Jeff Church of Christ	10.00
Agnos Church of Christ	5.00
Viola Church of Christ	5.00
Sitka Church of Christ	10.00
Williford Church of Christ	60.00
Gamaliel Church of Christ	10.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ	5.00

KNOWLEDGE AND LIFE

By O.H. Tabor

We can have no doubt that a certain kind of knowledge is necessary in order for one to have eternal life for Jesus said in his prayer, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). If one's eternal life depends upon a perfect knowledge of God then there could be no salvation. We know, however, that he knows us perfectly well. The psalmist said, "thou art acquainted with all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." One said, "He readest the secrets of every heart and telleth the number of the stars." It is wonderful that we can know him at all.

The greatest minds are baffled in studying the works of God. It seems that the more man finds out about his works the deeper becomes the mysteries of his creation. It is said that King Hiero asked the philosopher Simonides, "Who is God?" The wise man asked for a day to reflect and to prepare an answer. Finding this time insufficient, he asked for a week, and then a year. But time and meditation brought no light and the question went unanswered.

The mirror of nature as Paul mentions in his letter to the Romans, gives a clear image of God but not complete. He said, "Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's

Sabbath Continued from page 2

Commandment Law (Ex. 20:17). Therefore according to this verse, and many others, we are dead to the Law which contained the Sabbath (2 Cor. 3:11, 12; Heb. 7:12; 8:6-13).

The Bible and secular history clearly state that the early church met upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Ignatius (107 A.D.) is reported to have said: "And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's day." Justin Martyr (145 A.D.) said: "But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly."

Paul makes it clear that we will fall from grace if we go back under the Law for justification (Gal. 5:4). This is exactly what Sabbatarians are doing. Therefore, let no one bind the keeping of the Sabbath upon you (Col. 2:16).

visible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

But his revelation furnishes the clearest view and is sufficient for all man needs to know in order to have life. The revelation shows Christ as the perfect image of God. When we have once seen God in his dear Son, we recognize his presence everywhere and in all things. It is the highest knowledge which awakens the highest aspirations of man that has been shown in Christ.

We can know very little about Jesus before his incarnation and we know very little about him as he now reigns in glory for such knowledge is too wonderful: However, we have the beautiful life of Jesus for our study and to see him in his earthly person causes us to become acquainted with him in a very personal sense. Jesus Christ, is by far, the most interesting figure in history. He is truly the most challenging character who ever lived on earth. When one sees the humanity of Jesus one feels very startled at what he said and what he did but one also feels that he comes to know him. When we open the Old Testament we get a view of Jesus through the prophets. He is there, the "seed of Abraham"; The "Mighty one of Jacob" Isa. 60:16; The "Lion of the tribe of Judah." The "Messiah of Daniel"; The "Shepherd of David"; The "Immanuel of Isaiah", and the "Son of righteousness" of Malachi.

When we open the New Testament we get a view of his humanity. There is a tendency to think of Jesus as different from human beings. It is easy to forget what he had to face; trial, temptation, heartaches, loneliness, weariness of body, but he faced them all as any human being. He was born of a poor virgin, in a manger, in a little town. He was reared in a hated city, worked in Joseph's wood shop and knew what it meant to get bruises and splinters and to become weary, hungry and thirsty. He began as other boys and grew, learned, played, depended upon his mother to soothe his hurts. He learned valuable lessons such as submission, meekness, patience, obedience. He learned from nature about grass, flowers, fowls, animals and used these in his illustrations. He learned about mixing dough, patching garments, and from farmers he learned about soil, seed, weeds, wheat, tares and harvest and used all these in his parables. Jesus had friends

and loved them dearly. He was touched when others sorrowed. He cared when he saw suffering and he was very sensitive to pain of body and soul. He often wept with people and he sometimes groaned with agony. He knew the salty taste of pain. He had a body in which every nerve racked with agony and anguish while on the cross.

Jesus was beautiful in his manhood. He was a man who was very calm and relaxed. He could meet the problems of life with ease. When before the Pharisees, the lawyers and Pilate and during the days of the gathering storm it stood calm with no sign of wavering. He was a man of great courage, he spoke with confidence and conviction. He was unafraid to speak the truth. He was a man of deep sympathy and some of his greatest works were done among the lost, outcasts, hungry, weak and poor. He always showed that he cared. Jesus was a man of deep sincerity. Every duty to him was a religious duty. To him it was just as religious to help someone as to pray in the temple. The record of his life is given in these few words, "He went about doing Good," He was a man who could love deeply. He was never shallow in his love and showed he could love the strangest and unlovable people. He was always busy preaching, in the sun and in the rain, in the heat and in the cold, on the mountains, and in the valleys, on the shores and on the ships, in the town and in the country and mostly on lessons of faith, forgiveness and obedience.

Jesus was a man who could see good in people and knew how to bring that goodness out. He was a man who was lovely as he lived with good people and they wanted to be near him to see his good deeds and hear his words; of encouragement. To know Jesus means more than just to know some things about him.

It is possible to know about him in every detail recorded and still now know him as Paul longed to know. The difference between "knowing a person" and "knowing about a person" must never be forgotten. We may know a great deal about a person whose acquaintance-ship we never acquire. We may, in the same way, know a great deal about Christ; we may be erudite, scholarly theologians; and yet if we do not "know him" as our incomparable acquaintance, our Saviour, our best friend, all will be in vain. Paul got acquainted with Jesus and cultivated that friendship by prayer, meditation, and cooperation in work. "This is life eternal to know him, to be acquainted with him, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To know him is to love him and obey him and live, "in him" as a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Elders

Continued from page 1

will not solve it.

In this service by default, the false doctrines spread rapidly. Congregations divide; therefore, the church is set back for years. (I Cor. 5:6-7). When the fine line between truth and error must be drawn, many elders instead of holding faithful to the truth, do as Aaron did, let their favorite members have their own way only to allow the church to weaken. Many times this happens in appointing elders and deacons. Instead of "contending for the faith", they serve by default and the office of elder and deacon become more corrupt by men, who aren't qualified to begin with. In appointing elders, deacons, selecting teachers, upholding preachers who don't preach a thirty second cousin to the truth. How many times has the record been padded with men who will be "puppets" in their hands instead of capable and qualified people? The eldership is not a self-perpetuating office. (Acts 6:2-7; Acts 15:22-24; I Cor. 16:3; II Cor. 8:19-21).

How many times do they cater to men of wealth? To allow any need of correction or instruction to lie dormant is service by default. We have lost much of our distinction and militance because of administration by default by those who have accepted the responsibility of overseeing the work of the church. The implementation of I Timothy 5:17 reads like this: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine", this would eliminate much, if not all, of the service of default. We will not restore Christianity as it was in the first century until we have elders, preachers, teachers and deacons who know the New Testament. In this permissive complex society with every facet of life a pressure point, we need elders who will devote their time to overseeing, feeding the flock. Look at (Acts 20 :28), "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer's to feed the church of God which he purchased with His own blood." Look at the next verse 29, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Verse 30, "Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30).

Brethren don't tell me we don't have

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

them. (Matt. 7:15; II Peter 2:1-4; I Peter 5:1-3). Here again you find "feed the flock". Many congregations have gone into apostasy simply due to failure of "feed the flock". Preachers are allowed to come in and peddle their wares. Classes are not checked to see if the material is the gospel truth. Tracts should be checked before public use. No truth can be injured by exposing false teaching or evil men. Do elders check the speakers on youth forum? wherever that came from. (John 8:32) "Ye shall know the truth and the truth will make you free". The greatest injury on truth is to yoke it with falsehood. God cannot be honored by covering up false teachers in the church.

To do this is to honor the devil and his servants. To expose error and bad men is to proclaim to the world that we seek truth, purity, holiness and godliness. "Take Heed" "Beware". The congregation cannot be disturbed when a strong group of elders is in control. When Bible elders are in complete unity, following nothing more, or less than the New Testament teaching, no harm nor divisions can interrupt the progress of the Lord's church. Remember the Bible is silent on "a senior elder" ruling over other elders. (Ephesians 4:11-16). Let's do it the Lord's way. It is the only safe way. It will make for unity here, and everlasting life in Christ throughout eternity.