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## IN CHRIST

By Harold Turner

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17.)*

The New Testament uses several expressions to convey the idea of becoming a child of God. In Matt. 18:3 Jesus speaks of this idea as conversion, saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." In John 3:5 he speaks of becoming a Christian as a new birth, saying, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And in the above text the idea is expressed as being in Christ. The main thing that each of these expressions have in common is that they show a radical change takes place when one becomes a child of God. This change is pictured as being delivered from darkness into a glorious light.

To become a child of God is to make a change in our relationship with Christ. The above Scripture suggests that "old things are passed away." To become a Christian is to die to the sinful past. In Romans 6:6 Paul said, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." And in Romans 6:11 he added, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Spiritually we pass from death into life in becoming a child of God.

In Eph. 2:12 Paul pictures man's life apart from Christ, saying, "That at that time ye were without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world." Outside Christ we have no hope of being saved, therefore being in Christ is the most important thing in this life.

God has provided blessings to fulfill every need in our spiritual life, but he has made them available to us only in Christ. In Eph. 1:3 Paul said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Paul continues in this chapter to show

many of the blessings extended to those in Christ. For example, in verse 7 he states, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." God does not promise redemption or forgiveness apart from Christ; we must be in Christ to receive these. Too, in Acts 4:12 Peter tells us that salvation is only in Christ, thus to be saved, we must be in Christ. And in 1 John 5:11-12 we read, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." These are only a few of the blessings that one enjoys by being in Christ, but it is obvious that outside Christ one cannot receive them.

Since one must be in Christ in order to be saved, our next concern should be, how does one get into Christ? There are several things required to bring a person unto Christ, but there is only one action that puts the person into Christ. The word "unto" means approaching, while "into" means to enter. We may come unto a house and never go into it. The same is true in our relationship with Christ. The gospel is the power of God UNTO salvation (Rom. 1:16). "With the heart man believeth UNTO righteousness" (Rom. 10:10). Repentance is UNTO life (Acts 11:18). And "with the mouth confession is made UNTO salvation" (Rom. 10:10). The gospel, faith, repentance, and the confession of one's faith are all essential in our approach of salvation. We certainly could not leave any of these requirements off and still reach salvation, however each of them is UNTO the blessings in Christ. One may do all these and still be outside Christ.

There are only two Scriptures which use the expression "Into Christ." In Romans 6:3 we read, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" The second passage is Gal. 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Both of these passages state that we are baptized INTO Christ. Yet multitudes will deny this. Multitudes

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## Do you know the Lord?

By Joe Sponaugle

It is not uncommon to hear people say today that they know the Lord. They will profess that they know him as their Lord and Savior. And that is good, if it is true. However it may be possible for one to say he knows the Lord, and not really know him at all. If one were to tell some that they do not know the Lord, they would refuse to believe it. In fact, they might accuse the person of judging them. It is true that we can seldom know the real motives of others. But this is not a matter of human judgment.

How then can one tell if he really knows the Lord? The answer is actually very simple. We read in 1 John 2:2, "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." Now that is not hard to understand, is it? While commandment keeping may seem to be too legalistic to suit many in the religious world today, yet this is what the Holy Spirit has given as a test or proof of our knowing the Lord. Therefore, we must conclude that those who refuse to keep the commandments of Christ do not know the Lord, in spite of their claim to the contrary. John confirms this in 1 John 2:4-5. "He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the word of God been perfected."

Those who claim to know the Lord but refuse to repent of their sins and be baptized into Christ (Luke 23:31 and Gal. 3:27) and a false claim. Water baptism is necessary for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and Acts 2:38 is repeated by Paul in spite of the fact that it is clearly commanded by the Lord (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16, and Acts 10:48). Since the new birth puts one into Christ and his kingdom (John 3:3 & 5), and that new birth incorporates water baptism, any may not immerse in water have not been born again. They do not know the Lord.

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**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**

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and Harold Turner

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**DO YOU KNOW THE LORD?**

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One must not only keep some of the commandments of Christ but one must strive to keep all of them that are given us today. Jesus asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) There are many Christians today who may call Lord, Lord, and yet they refuse to worship God faithfully (Heb. 10:25. Acts 2:47). They refuse to visit the sick (Matt. 25:35-36). They refuse to teach the lost (Mark 16:15-16). They have little interest in helping the

fatherless and widows in their afflictions (James 1:27). They also fail to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33). While these individuals may have at one time known the Lord, it is evident that they no longer know him. Again Jesus says, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity," (Matt. 7:21-23.) In order to continue to know the Lord one must continue to keep Christ's commandments.

# Jesus, Our Helper

By Erwin Cowen

*"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1).*

The expression, "we have an advocate", indicates one of the many ways in which Jesus helps and blesses us. When Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians, he said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:3.) God has provided for our every spiritual need in Christ. All Christians are in Christ (Gal. 3:27), and it is in him that they are made full or complete. Paul also wrote in Col. 2:10. "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

In Col. 2:9 Paul writes, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." To have access to God, one must be in Christ. All that enters into the idea of God is embodied, given concrete expression, and fully realized in Christ. And since all of God's people are in Christ, they have reached the source from which flows the stream of all spiritual blessings, which will supply every need which any Christian will ever have in this world or in the next. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.)

Christian people can do nothing better than to search the Scriptures in order to learn that which is available to them in Christ. Man was at first created in the image of his Maker, but when man allowed the evil one to alienate him from the source of all spiritual blessings, a new dimension was added to his fundamental needs. That of redemption from sin. To meet this need, man was given a Savior. This enables the initial step back to God and into his favor. In Heb. 7:25 the writer tells us that Jesus is the one who makes this step possible, saying, "Where-

fore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The emphasis of Heb. 7:25 is probably on his relationship to Christians, but the principle is the same whether with reference to salvation from alien sins, or to his ability to lead his people to eternal peace with God. This is seen in Heb. 5:9, where the writer states, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

There are many needs which Jesus is able to supply, and to which the children of God must give heed if he is to keep in harmony with the will of God. For one thing man must have someone who can speak to him who has absolute authority, that is, he must have an absolute ruler, which is what Jesus is to every saved person, see Matt. 28:18, and Eph. 1:22-23. Too, the child of God needs a teacher who speaks God's message to him, and again, this is what Jesus does. He is God's prophet and spokesman to us. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . ." (Heb. 1:2.) "And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23.) And as long as the Christian remains in the flesh he will be plagued by sin, from which he will be in need of continual cleansing. Jesus became our high priest to stand between man and God, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." (Heb. 4:14.)

Jesus is the Christian's helper. He is our prophet who has spoken God's message to us, he is our priest who has offered up himself for our sins, and he is our king to provide the guidance we need to please God. Certainly he meets our every need, and as such, we can trust him supremely and be assured that all is well with our souls.

Obedience is seldom an easy lesson to learn. Jesus himself had to learn the lesson of obedience "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5:8-9.) In heaven Christ gave the orders, but on earth he had to learn to take them. We are not exempt from the lesson of obedience. Those who learn to obey the Lord may say they know the Lord. Those who do not obey Christ have no right to claim they know him.

Commandment keeping may seem sterile to many but John says it is not. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected." (1 John 2:5.) Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) Thus we prove our love for Christ by keeping his commandments. Those who fail to keep his commandments prove they do not love him, and that they do not know him. Those who do not keep his commandments prove they do not have faith in him. For James says, "faith without works is dead." James 2:26.) And without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

Do you know the Lord? Have you obeyed his gospel? If so, are you still trusting him and obeying him? If so, you are greatly blessed by Christ. If not, you need to obtain enough faith to obey him before it is too late. It is truly wonderful to know the Lord and to be saved from the guilt and condemnation of sin.

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*"A lot of trouble in this world is caused by combining a narrow mind with a wide mouth."*

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*"No one can get fat on excuses, but every one gets fed up on them."*

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*"A good citizen will love his neighbor, but a first class Christian will love his enemy."*

# PERILOUS TIMES

By Terry Frizzell

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:1-7: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, dispisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

It is obvious that Paul is speaking of the days after the time of our Lord on the earth. When speaking of the final judgment the term used is "last day" and when referring to the last dispensation of time the term used is "last days". In this case Paul used the term "last days" thus referring to the time between the coming of the Savior and the final judgment.

It is obvious that perilous times would more than once occur, as we look back into history. However, it would seem that Paul is warning about a time that would grow worse than any before. Just as the Children of Israel went into apostasy on many occasions it is possible today for Christians to do the same and each time it gets worse than the time before.

In verse two, Paul says that men "shall be lovers of their own selves". In the perilous times, selfishness is the general characteristic of the time. This is mentioned first because it is the source of the other evils mentioned. In Phil. 2:21 it is stated: "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's". The thought is that men change what is Christ's to fit what they are, instead of changing their lives to fit what Christ would have them to be in life.

Paul speaks of men being "boasters, proud", that is, looking at themselves and thinking that all is well even though they are not following what the Lord instructs. Paul's description in 2 Tim. 6:4 fits very well the thought: "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings". It would seem that Paul was describing the time that is now at hand.

Also, in verse two the term "blasphemers" is used to describe the perilous times. The blasphemer is one who speaks against God and the work of his people. Many today in the Lord's Body are doing this very thing by refusing to abide by the authority of the Bible, rejecting God's law to establish their own.

While we are on the thought of authority look further into verse two and you will see the thought "disobedient to parents". Today parents have not forfeited their natural rights, and in all matters, except where obedience to God is not at stake, children are bound to yield them respect, obedience and tender affection. Look for a moment at the thought presented in Deut. 21:18-21: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not harken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die . . ." Does this sound hard or calloused to you? It may very well be to some, but you can believe that it got the attention of youth and caused them to respect the authority of their parents.

Children who begin life with disobedience to their parents, in most cases are ungrateful to all others who may show them kindness in their life. Ingratitude has always been regarded as one of the worst of crimes. How long has it been since you have seen someone that you thought was truly grateful for the privileges enjoyed in this life or for the grace of God bestowed on man? How can we expect those who do not respect their parents to respect God. These are people who through their lack of purity, being defiled by sin, and irreligious attitudes, scoff at holiness as a weakness of character rather than strength.

"Without natural affection" in verse three described both sides of the fence. Parents that do not love their children enough to care for them properly, do not care enough to discipline them properly. With growing strides it is heard of parents that take the life of their children because

they do some trivial thing that is annoying to the parents. Babies are deserted, and small children beaten and named for life. When parents do not show love and respect for their children how can we expect children to respect their parents or any authority?

In 2 Peter 2:10, Peter states: "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." We add Paul's statement in Phil. 3:19 to this, "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Those that are more ready to follow sensual pleasures than to follow the law of God. There are people who would make any sacrifice to procure a fleeting pleasure and who would give nothing up in order to do honor to God.

In verse five it is stated: "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof". There are those that put on the shell of a Christian but their heart is not pure. They want only enough godliness to soothe the conscience but not enough to save. In fact at this very time there are those that claim to be children of God that would pervert the truth and compromise the truth to fulfill their own lust. There are those who deny the authority of the scripture and deny that the gospel saves. They deny the diety by denying the virgin birth of Christ, and deny the scriptures by denying the power of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles. Paul writes further about this in 1 Tim. 5:8; "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." This does shed a better light on the subject. We should keep away from those that pervert the scriptures, and other than trying to teach them the truth have no fellowship with them, because they can only do us harm.

All who so live while claiming to be Christians have a "form", the profession of godliness, while they fail to live according to its laws. Those claiming to be Christians, showing a form of worship, living a life than seems pure and holy, but not according to the perfect law of liberty. Denying the power of God to lead and direct their life, or his authority in governing our conduct.

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"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Those who reject the authority of Jesus Christ and the law of God as the standard of right have no standard, and so led by their selfish desires and lusts are always reasoning, always speculating and always learning, but they are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Why? Because they have rejected the only standard by which to determine the truth. They have closed their eyes that they may not see and their ears that they may not hear the Word of God.

Somewhere in these seven verses have you seen your life? Do you see the world we now live in? It is time for all of us to do something about it. We must lay aside our wants and fleshly desires and come to the truth. We must obey Jesus Christ, and submit ourselves to his authority and power. Now is the time! Paul gives further warning in 2 Tim. 4:3-4. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Do you want preaching and teaching that will tickle your ears, or do you want that which will make your life pure and whole, in order that salvation may be yours when the judgment comes? Possibly by our actions we have already made the choice that will cause eternal damnation, but you that read this still have the time to change.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:5-7)

"One way to keep [ ] from jumping down your throat is to keep your mouth shut."

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"It's the aim that counts. Failure to hit the bulls-eye is never the fault of the target."

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"One of life's great blessings is that we n't have to believe everything to which are forced to listen."

Faith or Tradition?

By Ted Mountjoy

Many claim "spirituality" today, but few really are spiritual. "Spirituality" involves more than just a good feeling, or saying, "I am spiritual". If we are going to use Bible words in a religious way, we need to use definitions given to those words by the Bible.

Most will readily agree that anyone who possesses the fruit of the Spirit, as described in Galatians 5:22, 23 has spirituality. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Notice, "faithfulness" is very much a part of "spirituality". In order to be faithful, we must have faith. But in order to have faith, we must hear the Word of God, either by reading, teaching, or preaching. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). What does that have to do with spirituality? Much in every way: We cannot be spiritual without the fruit of the Spirit, which includes "faithfulness," and we certainly cannot be faithful without faith.

Therefore, in order for us to have "spirituality" we must be faithful to God and His Word. When "spirituality" is claimed by an individual, or groups of individuals, then it is expected that they would follow God's Word. The "spirituality" of any individual, group of individuals, or church, should be seriously questioned when they are shown differences in what they practice and what God's Word teaches, but still refuse to change. To become deeply offended, or to feel attacked, because God's Word conflicts with OUR practice, whether it be worship, daily life, or even salvation itself, is very unspiritual. The spiritual men we read about in the Bible were faithful men, who conformed to the Word of God.

We can claim "spirituality," but can we really have "spirituality" if we would rather hold on to our feelings and/or traditions, than to faithfully follow God's Word?

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MEMBERS OF CHRIST

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IN CHRIST

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are teaching that one is saved and should be baptized as an outward symbol of what has already taken place in the heart. The Bible teaches that salvation is only in Christ (Acts 4:12), that IN Christ we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins, and that we are baptized INTO Christ. How then could one be saved before his baptism? Some reply that the baptism that puts one into Christ is the baptism of the Spirit. If this is the case then there is no need for baptism in water because the Bible states that there is "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 4:5.) Too, consider Acts 2:38, "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." The promise of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost (Spirit) is to those who are baptized in the name of the Lord, which is in water (Acts 10:47-48). In Gal. 4:6 the Bible says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." The Spirit is not given to those who are not Christians, but to those who have become children of God in Christ Jesus.

There is one baptism, This baptism is in water. It is the act of baptism that puts one into Christ. All spiritual blessings are in Christ. Those who have not been baptized into Christ have not been saved, and they are not children of God. In Christ we become new creatures, having been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

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"When a man talkes because he enjoys hearing himself, he will soon find that others are willing to let him have all the pleasure."

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